

Calvinism and TULIP: ‘Five-Point Calvinism’
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INTRODUCTION

Some believe if God be sovereign, then His grace cannot be resisted, otherwise He is not sovereign. The error in this reasoning is; if God cannot limit His sovereignty, then He is not sovereign. A true sovereign can limit himself,¹ which God has in giving man the choice to accept His invitation.

God’s salvation is qualified only by our response. God *elects* whosoever *elects* to accept His invitation, those who *choose* to respond, God *chooses* to save. The unregenerate is not ignorant of God’s call; rather they *choose* to ignore it in favor of their own wisdom, and God let’s them do so as His Word reveals.

Observe in the scriptures below how universal God’s call is to sinners: “*Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates.*”² There’s no election or qualification represented here in God’s invitation, He makes Himself freely known and available to “*whosoever will*”.

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always *resist* oppose the Holy Ghost:...”
(Acts 7:51a)

“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? *Turn* come back you at *my reproof* [appeals]: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Because I have *called* [invited], and ye *refused* [declined]; I have *stretched out* [offered] my hand [myself], and no man *regarded* [heeded]; But ye have set at *nought* [ignored] all my *counsel* [advice], and *would* [not yield] none of *my reproof* [appeals]: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer³; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they *hated* [enemy of] *knowledge* [my wisdom], and did not *choose* [elect] the fear reverence of the LORD: They would *would* [not yield] none of my *counsel* [advice]: they despised all *my reproof* [appeals]: Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own *devices* [plans; choices]. For the *turning away* [apostasy] of the simple shall slay them, and the *prosperity* [false peace] of fools shall destroy them. But whoso *hearkeneth* [consent] unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.” (Proverbs 1:20-33; see Pro 8:13; 9:10)

The Word of God clearly teaches us the unregenerate man knowingly rejects God’s offer of Himself. Also, observe how God repeats the actions of His appeals and their disregard. God does not waste words, He rehearses His points for emphasis.

¹ This is illustrated in the ‘law of the Medes and Persians’, which when sealed by the King, could not be reversed: Daniel 6:15 “Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, that no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.” See Ester 8:8.

² Compare with Proverbs 8

³ Why would God not answer when they called? The Word of God teaches us it is because their call is not one of repentance; to turn to Him; rather it’s to be delivered from the consequence of their choice. It’s a worldly, not godly sorrow; 2Cornithans 7:10: “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” God calls this response double-mindedness, and says He does not answer the prayer of such; James 1:5-8: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. **For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.** A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

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CALVISIM

John Calvin (1509-1564) allied himself to the **Reformation** in 1532 and was only 26 years old when he wrote **Institutes of the Christian Religion**. At 32, he was recalled to Geneva to lead the **Reformation** effort there. He taught:

1. God is absolute sovereign in His creation.
2. God as sovereign both foreordains and foreknows all things, including man’s destiny.
3. Originally man was pure and made in the image of God but has fallen from this state through his own voluntary act (FNJ - hence, man has a free will).
4. Man can be saved only through the unmerited grace of God, as mediated to him through Christ. Man can do nothing to promote his own salvation, and no amount of good works can further it.
5. Those predestinated to salvation will be saved.

FIVE-POINT CALVINISM - T.U.L.I.P

Five-point Calvinism (T.U.L.I.P.) can be summarized below and its five points are represented in the **acrostic**:

1. Because the whole race has fallen in Adam and become corrupt and powerless to believe, God draws out of condemnation those whom he has chosen unto salvation, passing by the others.
2. The children of believers, as long as they do not manifest the contrary, are to be reckoned among God’s elect.
3. God has decreed to bestow faith and perseverance and thus save only those whom he has chosen to salvation.

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

SUMMARY

***Foreknowledge* doesn’t Predestinate, Pre-determine our Choice; however God’s Omniscience, His all knowing *Foresees* our Choice.**

For example, we may foreknow that our two children, in our absence may do something which we have instructed them not to do. An oversimplification would be for them to get cookies out of the jar. However, our *foreknowledge* does not *predestine* them to their decision; they could still obey, if they choose (emphasis and brackets mine):

“(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of *works*, [i.e. birth right of the eldest] but of him that *calleth* [by faith in response to God’s call]⁴; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” (**Romans 9:11**)

⁴ **Habakkuk 2:4b**; “...the just shall live by his faith.”

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This above verse does *not* teach that Esau was without choice, rather that God’s omniscience foresaw Esau’s and Jacob’s choice, and God made His decision based on theirs; God *picks* those who *pick* Him; He *elects* those who *elect* to respond to His universal call. This is the theme of the song of King David as he recounted God’s favor on his life:

“And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: ***I was also upright before him***, and have kept myself from mine iniquity. And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me: and as for his statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight. With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright. With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.” (2Samuel:22:1-4; 21-27)

Election doesn’t Predestinate, Pre-determine our Choice; however God’s Mercy Predestinates, Pre-determines; Elects in Advance His Response to our Choice.

For example, in the earlier illustration; as a parent we have *chosen* [elected] to reward our two children based on their *choice* [obedience] to our word; as God did with Esau and Jacob, as well as Cain and Abel. The reward is *predetermined* [predestinated] by *their choice*, not *our foreknowledge*. God being *omniscience*, foreknows our choice before we make it, but His foreknowledge does not *predetermine* [predestinate] our choice.

Like us with our children, the only thing God has predetermined is the consequences of our choice. God has *chosen* [elected], to *predestinate* [predetermine] our reward in advance, based on our choice. The consequence of our choice is revealed to us beforehand through His Word to us, as we with our children.

“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.” (Romans 8:29)

God does not change, He’s always merciful to *all* who *choose* to respond to His call, and He calls *all*; however like Cain and Esau, all do not choose to respond, even though God personally invites them.

“And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.” (Genesis 4:6-8)

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God reciprocates in like-matter as we respond to Him.

“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ***Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty***; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. ([Exodus 34:6-7](#))⁵

***Foreordained* doesn't Predestinate our Choice; however God's Justice *Foreordains*, Predetermines the Consequence of our Choice**

One of the titles of God is Lawgiver, meaning, He tells us all in advance the reward of our choices, which *foreordains* [predetermines] our future by His righteous law. The final responsible for that choice rests solely upon us, not Him. This is what is meant by the ‘fear of the Lord’; our choices have consequences, whereas we are free to determine our choice, God is *sovereign* over the consequences of our choice, analogous to us with our children.

“For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.” ([Proverbs 1:29-31](#); see [Pro 8:13](#); [9:10](#))

Five-point Calvinism is contrary to the revealed Word and character of God who calls Himself our Heavenly Father. Throughout scripture, God beckons us to draw upon this Father analogy in our understanding of His love for us.

“Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” ([Matthew 7:9-11](#))

For example, if our two children we're in a sinking boat, which of us standing on the shore would not do all in our power to save them. Furthermore, would it ever cross our mind to save one, but not the other- ***never!*** In light of whom God says He is, there's not a doctrine which strikes closer to the heart of who God is, than this erroneous doctrine; it's stands among the most odious portraits of our heavenly Father one might conceive. Think for a moment, what if we as a Father were portrayed this way, how would we feel; that's how God feels as well.

In closing, in order to understand scripture, we must *rightly divide* the word of truth ([2Timothy 2:15](#)), meaning we're to interpret the *obscure* in light of the *obvious*; not overthrow the *obvious* with the *obscure*. Five point Calvinism denigrates the sovereignty of God it seeks to defend, by not rightly dividing the Word of God between His sovereignty and grace; if God cannot limit His sovereignty, He is not sovereign. A true sovereign can limit himself, which God has in giving man the *choice* to accept His invitation of grace or *resist* it.

⁵ See: [Luke 6:38](#)