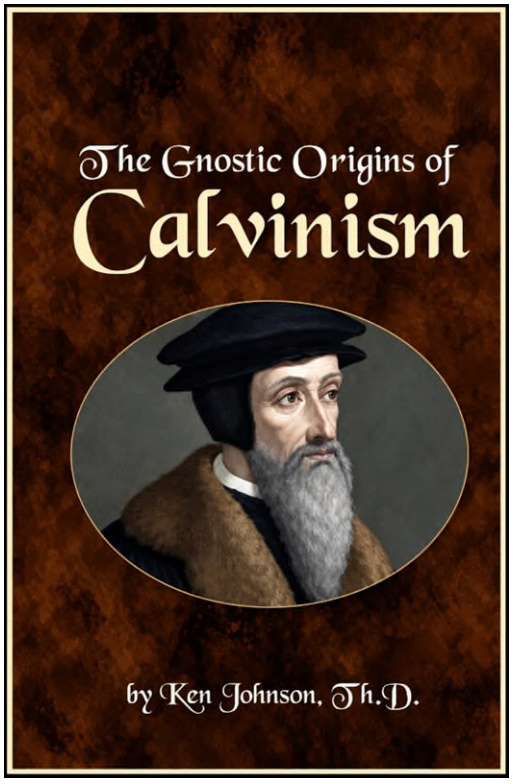
Major Points - TULIP



As we said, Calvinism consists of five major points which can be remembered using the acronym TULIP. Calvinism says we are **T**otally depraved, meaning we could not accept God's gift of salvation even if we wanted to. God must **U**nconditionally elect those He wants saved because we cannot do anything to be saved. God **L**imited the atonement to only those few He wanted to save. All the rest He consigned to hell. None of those He wants to be saved can refuse their salvation, because God uses an **I**rresistible grace. That being the case, God forces the **P**erseverance of the saints, making sure they cannot lose their salvation. In addition to these there are minor points: Calvinistic Foreknowledge and Calvinistic Predestination.

In contrast, Arminianism teaches that everyone is born with a sin nature, but each has the free will to accept or reject Christ as their Savior. Salvation is available to all on the condition that each accepts Christ as his Savior. The Atonement of salvation is open to all, so that "whosoever will" may be saved. The Atonement is not limited to a select few. God draws all individuals to salvation by grace, but grace can be resisted by free will.

Some Arminian denominations teach that you can lose your salvation and other Arminian denominations teach you cannot. But even those who believe you cannot lose your salvation base it on God's love for us, not His predestination, as Calvinists and Gnostics do.

The extreme forms of Calvinism and Arminianism are Universalism (the belief that everyone will eventually be saved) and Pelagianism. [Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.27]

Being a Calvinist does not make you a non-Christian heretic. It simply shows that part of your doctrine is not perfect. It should be noted that to be a Calvinist you must accept all five points of Calvinism, or that doctrine falls apart. Some denominations state they are *partial* Calvinists, but in reality they simply redefine two or three points and accept the rest as Arminian theology. With this in mind, we need to look at the five major and three minor points of Calvinism and its related theology and compare them to the Bible and what the ancient church fathers taught.

Total Depravity

Calvinist Definition WRONG

Each man is so totally depraved that he could not accept the gift of salvation God would give him because he has no free will to do so. Therefore, God simply decreed before the creation of man that some individuals would be saved. God then intervenes in their lives to force them to be saved. He decrees all the others will spend eternity in hell.

One argument is that Colossians 2 and Ephesians 2 state we are dead in trespasses and sin. The Calvinist will argue that the dead cannot make decisions. But if we look at the context, it says that we are all "dead men walking," so to speak. We all have sinned, and if God did not intervene, we would all parish.

Arminian Definition CORRECT

Each man is totally deprived in the sense that he cannot do anything to bring about his own salvation. But when God reveals Himself to that person, he has the ability, or free will, to accept the free gift of salvation God is offering him. Those who refuse the gift will spend eternity in hell.

Pelagian Definition WRONG

If you allow yourself to become corrupted by sin, you could become totally depraved, incapable of ever being saved.

Biblical Position

First John teaches all mankind is born with a sin nature. If you deny that, you are deceived. If you think you were not born with a sin nature and that you have been sinless all your life and do not need a savior, you are calling God a liar.

> "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." *1 John 1:8-10*

Paul says in Romans 3 that no one born is righteous or even tries to seek after God. Everyone has sinned (because of their sin nature) and is on their way to hell because of it.

> "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." *Romans 3:10-12*
>
> "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" *Romans 3:23*

This is sometimes called total depravity or total inability. But can a person accept the free gift of salvation by just believing in Jesus, or is that impossible for them as well?

> "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." *John 3:16*

Calvinists state that accepting a free gift would be a work, which amounts to a works salvation and not by God's grace. But Paul says accepting a free gift is not a work, instead it is simply belief.

> "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." *Romans 4:5*

So we are depraved in the sense that we can do nothing to save ourselves, but we are free to believe and accept God's gift of salvation.

> " … through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." *Acts 10:43*

"And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." *John 6:40*

Quotes of the Ancient Church Fathers

Justin Martyr, AD 165

> *Second Apology 7* – Man acts by his own free will and not by fate.
>
> *Dialogue 88* – Men and angels have free will. The human race from Adam had fallen under the power of death and the guile of the serpent, so that each one of us has committed personal transgression.
>
> *Dialogue 102* – He created both angels and men free to do that which is righteous, and He appointed periods of time during which He knew it would be good for them to have the exercise of free will; and because He likewise knew it would be good, He made general and particular judgments; each one's freedom of will, however, being guarded.
>
> *Dialogue 141* – God created men and angels free to do righteousness; possessing reason, that they may know by whom they are created, and through whom they, not existing formerly, do now exist; and with a law that they should be judged by Him, if they do anything contrary to right reason: and of ourselves we, men and angels, shall be convicted of having acted sinfully, unless we repent beforehand. But if the word of God foretells that some angels and men shall be certainly punished, it did so because

it foreknew that they would be unchangeably wicked, but not because God had created them so.

Tatian, AD 165

Greeks 7 – Jesus created men and angels with free will. Jesus had foreknowledge of what free agents would do. There is no such thing as fate.

Greeks 9 – Demons invented the concept of fate with astrology to enslave man into worshiping them.

Greeks 11 – Our free will enslaved us to sin [Rom. 7], but we can choose to follow righteousness now.

Irenaeus, AD 177

Against Heresies 4.29 – God only blinds the minds of those who chose not to believe and have already rejected him. In Romans [1], those who would not retain God in their knowledge He gave them over to a reprobate mind. In 2 Thessalonians [2], strong delusion is sent to believe the lie. God knows the number of those who will not believe, since He foreknows all things, has given them over to unbelief. God has foreknowledge of all things.

Against Heresies 4.37 – God made man a free agent from the beginning. This is the ancient law of human liberty, for there is no coercion with God. In man, as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice. The Gnostic teaching that some men are born good, and others are born bad, is wrong. Everyone has the power to reject the Gospel. God has free will and we do, too, because we are made in His image. God preserved the will of man free and under his own control. We will be brought to perfection in the resurrection. Romans [8] refers to the church being predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Against Heresies 4.39 – Man has the ability to distinguish good from evil. He has the power by his own free will to perform God's commandments. This is taught in Romans [2]. God does not compel people to salvation, so those who have apostatized have done so through their own fault. God allows them to blind themselves.

Clement of Alexandria, AD 192

Stromata 2.3 – Christians teach saving faith is a gift that starts with God and is accepted by free choice.

Stromata 2.4 – The ability to freely choose salvation is a gift [started by] God, but true faith produces repentance.

Stromata 5.3 – Faith is the rational assent of the soul exercising free will.

Tertullian, AD 190-210

> *Marcion 2.5* – Man has free will.

Minucius Felix, AD 210

> *36* – The mind of man is free from birth and remains free throughout his life.

Origen, AD 230

> *Against Celsus 4:70* – Man has free will.

Mathetes AD 130

> *Epistle to Diognetus 7* – Jesus, who is God come in the flesh, came to persuade, not compel us, to salvation because violence has no part in the character of God.

Unconditional Election

Calvinist Definition WRONG

Man's election unto salvation is unconditional because he is incapable of accepting God's free gift. If he was able to accept or decline the gift, the gift would be on the condition that man accepted it.

Arminian Definition CORRECT

Man's election to salvation is conditional based on the condition that he accept the free gift from God by using his free will to believe. Accepting a gift is not a work.

Pelagian Definition WRONG

Man's election unto salvation is conditional. It is based on the condition that he not sin in this life and accept Jesus as Savior.

Biblical Position

Those who are saved are not saved by their own merit.

> "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" *Titus 3:5*
>
> "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," *2 Timothy 1:9*

In other words, there is nothing we can do to start, help, or finish the process of salvation. Salvation is not connected to any work or good deed we could do. It is entirely by God's grace.

> "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." *1 Timothy 2:4*
>
> "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." *2 Peter 3:9*

We are elect through belief.

> "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:" *2 Thessalonians 2:13*
>
> "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." *1 Peter 1:2*
>
> "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" *2 Peter 1:10*

You must watch yourself carefully to make your election real. This shows us a conditional election. You are part of the elect on the condition that you make it a sure thing. You do that by exercising your free will and accepting the gift God's wants to give you.

Paul said belief is not a work.

> "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." *Romans 4:5*
>
> "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." *John 6:44*
>
> "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." *Acts 13:48*
>
> "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*
>
> "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" *Ephesians 1:3-5*

We need to guard ourselves because salvation is based on belief.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." *Hebrews 3:12*

"Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:" *Hebrews 4:6*

"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." *Hebrews 4:11*

Quotes of the Ancient Church Fathers

Justin Martyr, AD 165

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Dialogue 141 – God created men and angels free to do righteousness; possessing reason, that they may know by whom they are created, and through whom they, not existing formerly, do now exist; and with a law that they should be judged by Him, if they do anything contrary to right reason: and of ourselves, we, men and angels, shall be convicted of having acted sinfully, unless we repent beforehand. But if the word of God foretells that some angels and men shall be certainly punished, it did so because it foreknew that they would be unchangeably wicked, but not because God had created them so.

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Stromata 5.3 – Faith is the rational assent of the soul exercising free will.

Stromata 5.12 – The Holy Spirit opens the minds of believers.

Stromata 7.2 – Jesus persuades, but never compels us to salvation.

Tertullian, AD 190-210

Marcion 2.5 – Man has free will.

Marcion 2.23 – It is not the mark of a good God to condemn beforehand persons who have not yet deserved condemnation. Who is so faultless among men, that God could always have him in His choice, and never be able to reject him? Or who, on the other hand, is so void of any good work, that God could reject him forever, and never be able to choose him?

Minucius Felix, AD 210

36 – The mind of man is free from birth and remains free throughout his life.

Origen, AD 230

Against Celsus 4:70 – Man has free will.

Against Celsus 7.50 – Jesus' sacrifice was for newborn infants also, since no one is born free from sin.

Limited Atonement

Calvinist Definition WRONG

Jesus' work on the cross atoned for the sins of only a select few. All the others have no chance to be saved and are predestined for hell.

Arminian Definition CORRECT

Jesus' work on the cross atoned for the sins of all mankind. Those who reject Him have no chance to be saved and are eternally lost.

Pelagian Definition WRONG

Jesus' work on the cross atoned for the sins of all mankind. This covers the sin nature and unintentional sins. You must pay for willful sins.

Biblical Position

Jesus' death on the cross paid for the sins of the whole world, not just a select few. This atonement is not limited. Peter says it is a heresy to state that the Lord did not die for all men. It is not His "good pleasure" to send anyone to hell.

"For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." *Ezekiel 18:32*

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." *1 Timothy 2:3-4*

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." *1 Timothy 2:5-6*

"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." *Hebrews 2:9*

"And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." *1 John 2:2*

> "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." *2 Peter 2:1*
>
> "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." *2 Corinthians 5:19*
>
> "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." *1 John 4:14*
>
> "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. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." *John 3:16-17*
>
> "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." *Romans 10:13 KJV*

Please notice Paul's comment in Romans 3. Salvation is to all that believe because all have sinned. Either salvation is obtainable to every single person for all have sinned, or, if Calvinism is true, salvation is to all the elect. Then only the elect have sinned. So the ones God condemns to hell are sinless?

> "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" *Romans 3:2123*

Assurance

Calvinism teaches that some are predestined for salvation and others to hell and that outcome cannot be changed. If this were true, no one would know if he or she were saved until after death. That's a scary thought; however, John says there is a way you can know for sure.

> "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." *1 John 5:13*

Quotes of the Ancient Church Fathers

Justin Martyr, AD 165

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Irresistible Grace

Calvinist Definition WRONG

God will draw only those whom He elects for salvation with an irresistible grace. There is no way they can refuse. Those whom He refuses to draw are those whom He has chosen to unelect, or destined for hell, because if He did draw them they would all be saved and that would not please Him.

Arminian Definition CORRECT

God's grace is resistible. God draws everyone by His grace. Those who respond will be granted eternal life and those who willfully choose not to respond to God's free gift will be damned.

Pelagian Definition WRONG

God does not need any kind of grace to draw people. Each individual can come to the conclusion on their own and accept salvation.

Biblical Position

The Holy Spirit draws men to Himself with grace.

> "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." *John 6:44*
>
> "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out… And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He

> hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." *John 6:37, 39*

But this drawing can be resisted.

> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" *Matthew 23:37 NKJV*

If the Calvinists were right, no one would know who the elect were and who they were not. But the apostle John states believers can know for sure that they are saved.

> "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." *1 John 5:13 NKJV*

It is Satan who takes away the Word from the minds of the people so they would not accept Christ by believing the gospel and become saved. It is not God who forces this to happen. God's grace is resistible.

> "Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." *Luke 8:12*

If grace cannot be resisted and God only selects a few, how can whole houses be saved just by believing?

> "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." *Acts 16:31*

Anyone who believes *will* be saved.

> "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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." *Romans 10:9-10*

We are sealed by the Holy Spirit after we confess and believe. Belief starts the process; it is not a result of being forced into regeneration.

> "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," *Ephesians 1:13*

Quotes of the Ancient Church Fathers

> "Man has the ability to distinguish good from evil. He has the power by his own free will to perform God's commandments. This is taught in Romans [chapter 2]. God

> does not compel people to salvation, so those who have apostatized have done so through their own fault. God allows them to blind themselves." Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.39
>
> "The ability to freely choose salvation is a gift given by God. True faith produces repentance." Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 2.4

Perseverance of the Saints

Calvinist Definition WRONG

The elect will persevere in Calvinism and doing good works. However, some of the unelect will confess Calvinism and do good works also. Therefore, no one can know for sure if they are truly saved in this life. We have to wait and see.

Arminian Definition CORRECT

Every single person who truly believes the gospel message and accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will be saved.

Pelagian Definition WRONG

Anyone who is careful to never sin is assured eternal life. Those who have sinned will not know for sure until the resurrection.

Gnostic Definition WRONG

Certain individuals who have a spirit that is a direct creation or emanation of a god or goddess have eternal life abiding in them. They always have had, and always will have, eternal life.

We are secure in the salvation given to us in Christ Jesus. We cannot accidently lose it. We do not have to wait and see if we will obtain it. We have it right now. John says:

> "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." *1 John 5:13*

The question then remains: how do we distinguish between those who are truly saved and those who just think they are? The Calvinist usually says it is by the fact that they endorse Calvinism and continue doing some form of good works. This is called the perseverance of the saints, which they get from Ephesians:

> "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" *Ephesians 6:18*

But wait. There are good and bad people predestined for hell, and both godly and evil people predestined for heaven, according to the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election. So if Calvinism is true, there is no way anyone can know for sure he is saved. It's very odd that Calvinists can state that it's all by God's grace, not by any works of man that we are saved. And yet they state we are the elect based on our good works!

Scripturally, we can know for sure we are saved:

> "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." *1 John 5:13*

And we can tell we are saved by:

> "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." *Matthew 24:13*

Everyone who continues to believe Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior currently has, and is guaranteed to continue to have, eternal life. It's by God's grace and your exercising your free will.

> "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." *John 15:4*

Eternal Security

Some have erroneously thought that the Calvinistic doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints is the same doctrine as the eternal security of the believer. This is the idea that a true believer cannot lose their salvation. While Calvinists must believe this because if a person cannot do anything about his salvation, and God chooses to force a person to be saved, then obviously you cannot do anything about losing it, either.

The non-Calvinists denominations are divided on the issue of whether or not people can lose their salvation. Compare the Baptists and the Holiness groups below.

Baptist denominations: no believer can walk away from being a member of the body of Christ and is therefore eternally secure in his or her salvation.

Holiness denominations: each believer can walk away from being a member of the body of Christ and can therefore loose his or her salvation.

Both groups are non-Calvinists and both agree that no one is decreed to be saved based on anything other than God's foreknowledge of who would accept the free gift of salvation and become a part of the body of Christ.

> "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." *James 2:17-18*

James is saying a true believer who has eternal life abiding in him will show it by good works, which are defined as continuing to believe that Jesus is Lord and continuing to follow His commands.

> "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." *1 Corinthians 15:1-2 KJV*

Neo-Calvinists

Today there are groups of what is being termed Neo-Calvinists, who no longer teach that holiness and good works mark those who are saved, but they are saved because they say so and there is no need to practice a lifestyle of holiness to prove they are the elect. These people are often heard using curse words from the pulpit and admitting they indulge in sinful acts without remorse. This is the same result the predestination theology had among the Gnostic cults.

Quotes of the Ancient Church Fathers

Ignatius, 30-107 AD

> *Ephesians 14* – No man truly making a profession of faith sins; nor does he that possesses love, hate anyone. The tree is made manifest by its fruit; so those that profess themselves to be Christians shall be recognized by their conduct. For there is not now a demand for mere profession, but that a man be found continuing in the power of faith to the end.

Tertullian, AD 200

> *Valintians 1.29* – [Valentinus taught] some are not predestined to be saved, but predestined for hell, but the rest might be saved through works.
>
> *Valintians 1.30* – [Valentinus taught] those predestined for salvation do not need to practice good works.

Minor Points

These are points that should be considered in dealing with Calvinism but are not part of the main five doctrines of TULIP. I think knowing about these will help in any debates that Calvinists might bring up.

Predestination

Calvinist Definition WRONG

Certain individuals are predestined for salvation, based solely on God's good pleasure. All others are damned to an eternal hell based solely on that same good pleasure of God.

Gnostic Definition WRONG

Certain individuals are predestined for salvation based solely on the fact that they are an emanation of a god or goddess. All others who are not a special creation of a god or goddess with a piece of that god or goddess in them, are destined to spend eternity in hell.

Arminian Definition CORRECT

The body of Christ as a whole is predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. Each person who uses his free will to accept the free gift of salvation (which God draws him to by His grace and by the power of the Holy Spirit) will be saved, becoming a part of that predestined body of Christ.

Pelagian Definition WRONG

Since God is not willing that any perish and He has predestined the body of Christ to be saved, it follows then that all men are already members of the body of Christ. Hence every person that has ever lived is saved.

Biblical Position

The Bible does use the word predestination; but, we need to define what the word means and not read into the text what is not there. The Calvinistic definition of predestination differs slightly from the Gnostic definition of predestination and a great deal from the Arminian / biblical definition of predestination.

The biblical position is that those who choose to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior obtain salvation. In Romans, Paul teaches that in some sense God foreordained or predestined them to be saved. This predestination was based on God's foreknowledge. See the chapter on foreknowledge for a complete definition. Here are the verses in Scripture that used the Greek word, *proorizō*, for predestination. I have underlined the words the KJV translates the Greek word as "predestinated" or "ordained."

> "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. 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." *Romans 8:29-30 KJV*
>
> Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, *Ephesians 1:5*
>
> In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: *Ephesians 1:11*
>
> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: *1 Corinthians 2:7*

The ancient church fathers called this Gnostic / Calvinistic concept of being sealed for salvation or damnation before you were even born, "fate."

Quotes of the Ancient Church Fathers

Justin Martyr, AD 165

> *Second Apology 7* – Man acts by his own free will and not by fate.
>
> *Dialogue 141* –But if the word of God foretells that some angels and men shall be certainly punished, it did so because it foreknew that they would be unchangeably wicked, but not because God had created them so.

Irenaeus, AD 177

> *Against Heresies 4.39* – Man has the ability to distinguish good from evil. God does not compel people to salvation, so those who have apostatized have done so through their own fault. God allows them to blind themselves.

Tatian, AD 165

> *Greeks 7* – Jesus created men and angels with free will. Jesus had foreknowledge of what free agents would do. There is no such thing as fate.

Mathetes AD 130

> *Epistle to Diognetus 7* – Jesus, who is God come in the flesh, came to persuade, not compel us, to salvation because violence has no part in the character of God.

Foreknowledge

Calvinist Definition WRONG

God foreknew those few He wished to pick to save and give eternal life to, and those He wished to send to hell.

Arminian Definition CORRECT

God knows what will happen in the future, including each person's choice to become a believer or to reject the gift of salvation. All believers, the whole body of Christ, will be saved. All the followers of other religions will not be saved.

Biblical Position

God elects some to salvation based on His foreknowledge.

> "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. 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. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who *can be* against us?" *Romans 8:29-31*
>
> "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." *Acts 13:48*

Calvinists argue that *individuals*, not the body of Christ, are predestined for salvation. In order to do this they must redefine "foreknowledge" to mean not knowledge of a future "event" but intimate knowledge of a "person." That would be the only way to prove that God does not elect people based on the "event," the moment they accepted Jesus as their Savior. Calvinists say these individuals have no choice in the matter.

If it can be demonstrated that the first century church and secular society before, during, and after the first century used the word "foreknowledge" to mean the knowledge of a future event, *and never used it in any other way*, then Calvinism falls apart. Look at these Scriptures and you will see God in His foreknowledge predestined the *body of Christ* to salvation.

> "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew." *Romans 11:2*
>
> "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." *1 Peter 1:18-21*
>
> "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved." *Ephesians 1:3-6*
>
> "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 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." *1 Peter 1:1-2*
>
> Calvinism bases its whole concept of foreknowledge on *one* verse in Scripture: Acts 2:23.
>
> "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:" *Acts 2:23*

The Greek of this passage is vague enough to mean either Jesus was delivered by the "council and foreknowledge" or by the "council which is the foreknowledge" of God. You will constantly hear Calvinists quote this verse and state that it proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the word "foreknowledge" never referred to God or a prophet knowing an "event," but knowing a "person."

The Bible is full of examples of prophets predicting events like earthquakes, so foreknowledge is God knowing everything, including events and people. The following quotes from the ancient church fathers prove they believed God had foreknowledge of *both* people and events.

Quotes of the Ancient Church Fathers

Clement of Rome, AD 90

> *1 Clement 44* – Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on account of the office of the Episcopate. For this reason, therefore, inasmuch as they had obtained a perfect foreknowledge of this, they appointed those [ministers] already mentioned, and afterwards gave instructions, that when these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed them in their ministry.

Justin Martyr, AD165

> *Dialogue with Trypho 35* – So that, in consequence of these events, we know that Jesus foreknew what would happen after Him, as well as in consequence of many other events which He foretold would befall those who believed on and confessed Him, the Christ.
>
> *Dialogue with Trypho 42* – I can demonstrate that they were types, and symbols, and declarations of those things which would happen to Christ, of those who it was

foreknown were to believe in Him, and of those things which would also be done by Christ Himself. *Dialogue with Trypho 70* – The people foreknown to believe in Him were foreknown to pursue diligently the fear of the Lord.

Dialogue with Trypho 82 – We know that He foreknew all that would happen to us after His resurrection.

Irenaeus, AD 177

Against Heresies 2.32.1 – [Christians] have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions.

Against Heresies 4.29 – God only blinds the minds of those who chose not to believe and have already rejected Him. In Romans [1], those who would not retain God in their knowledge He gave them over to a reprobate mind. In 2 Thessalonians [2], strong delusion is sent to them so they will believe the lie. God knows the number of those who will not believe, since He foreknows all things, and has given them over to unbelief. God has foreknowledge of all things.

Tatian, AD 166

Greeks 7 – Jesus created men and angels with free will. Jesus had foreknowledge of what free agents would do. There is no such thing as fate.

Clement of Alexandria, AD 190

Instructor 9 – [Jesus shows] His divinity in His foreknowledge of what would take place.

Stromata 12 – Again, prophecy is foreknowledge; and knowledge, the understanding of prophecy; being the knowledge of those things known before by the Lord who reveals all things.

Stromata 6:8 – The disciple of wisdom foreknows signs and omens, and the issues of seasons and of times.

Origen, AD 240

Of First Principles 3:13 – [God] knows the secret things of the heart, and foreknows the future.