

A READY DEFENSE: T.U.L.I.P. CALVINISM

INTRODUCTION

A. 1st Peter 3:15

We have a command to offer a ready defense to those who ask.

B. Common false doctrines encountered in religious discussion are the five points of T.U.L.I.P. Calvinism. The error taught by John Calvin is embodied in the T.U.L.I.P. acronym, namely:

1. Total hereditary depravity,
2. Unconditional election,
3. Limited atonement,
4. Irresistible grace, and
5. Perseverance of the saints

I. TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY

“Total hereditary depravity” is the doctrine of original sin, teaching that all children are born sinners, having inherited their parents’ sinful nature, going all the way back to Adam and Eve.

A. Romans 5:12

The children of Adam are not sinners because we inherited our ancestor’s sin, but because we have each chosen to sin.

B. Ezekiel 18:1-20; Deuteronomy 24:16

Under no circumstances do children deserve to be punished for their parents’ sins.

C. Matthew 18:1-4; 1st Corinthians 14:20

Children are regarded as safe by God inasmuch as we are required to become childlike in order to be saved!

D. Ezekiel 28:15; Ecclesiastes 7:29

God makes man perfect and upright. It is man who chooses to sin.

II. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

“Unconditional election” is a complete misunderstanding of the biblical doctrine of predestination, suggesting that God arbitrarily decides who will be saved and who will be lost, man having no choice in the matter whatsoever.

A. **Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:3-12**

Make no mistake; predestination is a true, scriptural concept. Sadly, however, it is a grossly misunderstood idea.

B. **2nd Thessalonians 2:13**

The choice that God makes as to who will be saved is determined by two things: the first is sanctification by the Spirit, and the second is belief in the truth.

1. **1st Peter 1:15-16**

To sanctify is to set apart, that is: to be holy. Holiness is a command which can be obeyed or disobeyed, chosen or disregarded. God chooses those who choose to be holy!

2. **2nd Thessalonians 2:11-12**

Belief in the truth is also a choice. We either believe the truth or have pleasure in unrighteousness. God chooses those who choose to believe!

D. **2nd Peter 1:10-11**

We are empowered to make sure of our call and election. If election were unconditional, we would have no ability at all to ensure it.

E. **Isaiah 42:9; 46:9-10**

God can see the end from the beginning, but His foreknowledge does not diminish, in the least, our right to choose whether or not to serve Him. The fact that He is aware of what choice we will make does not mean He has chosen for us.

III. LIMITED ATONEMENT

“Limited atonement” is the doctrine that salvation is available to a limited few and that Christ’s death is not effective for all sinners.

A. **Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11; 1st Peter 1:17; Colossians 3:23-25**

God is impartial.

B. **1st Timothy 2:3-4; Titus 2:11; 2nd Peter 3:9**

It is God’s desire to save all people.

C. **1st Timothy 4:9-10; 1st John 2:2**

The saved are reminded that salvation is not intended for us alone, but for everyone, even those yet unsaved.

D. **Hebrews 2:9; John 1:29**

Jesus’ death was meant for everyone.

E. **Revelation 22:17**

The Lord offers a universal invitation to be saved. It is not limited in its scope!

IV. IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

“Irresistible grace” is the doctrine that those chosen by God to be saved cannot resist the grace offered them by the Holy Spirit. Supposedly, they have no choice but to accept it.

A. **Acts 6:8-10; 7:51-60**

Actually, the Holy Spirit can be resisted.

B. **Joshua 24:15; 1st Kings 18:21**

The scriptures affirm man’s free will. Why would Joshua instruct Israel to choose either God or idols if God did not allow them the ability to do so? Why would Elijah refer to the service of God or idols as opinions if the people were powerless to choose?

V. PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

“Perseverance of the saints” is the doctrine of eternal security, teaching that once a person is saved, that person is forevermore saved and cannot so sin as to lose his salvation.

A. Hebrews 10:26-31; 2nd Peter 2:20-22

Actually, a person can find himself in a **worse** spiritual condition than having never been saved by turning away from salvation after having received it.

B. Acts 4:32-5:11; 8:4-24

Why are there examples of previously saved believers dying in their sins or being bound by iniquity if such is not possible?

C. 1st Corinthians 10:12

Why would we be warned not to fall if we cannot fall?

D. John 15:4-6

It is possible to stop abiding in Christ and be punished for it. All that is necessary to be saved can be forsaken.

1. John 8:24; 2nd Timothy 2:18

Faith saves, but can be overthrown.

2. Ephesians 2:8; Galatians 5:4

Grace saves, but can be fallen from.

3. Matthew 1:21; 2nd Peter 2:1

Jesus saves, but can be denied.

4. Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 10:29

The blood of Christ saves, but can be disregarded.

5. Romans 8:24; Colossians 1:23

Hope saves, but can be moved away from.

6. John 8:32; James 5:19

Truth saves, but can be wandered from.

7. Romans 1:16; 1st Corinthians 15:1-2

The gospel saves, but can be believed in vain.

8. 1st Timothy 2:3-4; Hebrews 3:12

God saves, but can be departed from.

CONCLUSION

A. Matthew 28:19; Romans 10:14; 1st Corinthians 1:21

Calvinism – the idea that God decides who He will save and who He will condemn without consideration of their obedience or disobedience – renders gospel preaching pointless. Nevertheless, the Lord still requires it and describes it as a necessary part of salvation.

B. Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20

Calvinism – which teaches that believers cannot fall into apostasy – renders restoration of the erring pointless. Nevertheless, those who wander must be brought back, according to the scriptures.