

# Calvin's TULIP

Calvin: 1509-1564 A.D.

So why would we discuss this? Because the teaching of Calvin's Tulip has effected millions of people down through the centuries.

## The Bible teaches:

Deuteronomy 4:2 (NASB)

<sup>2</sup> "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Proverbs 30:5-6 (NASB)

<sup>5</sup> Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. <sup>6</sup> Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

Isaiah 8:19-20 (NASB)

<sup>19</sup> When they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter," should not a people consult their God? *Should they consult* the dead on behalf of the living? <sup>20</sup> To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

Revelation 22:18-19 (NASB)

<sup>18</sup> I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; <sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

Jesus said:

Matthew 15:3, 9 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your

tradition? <sup>9</sup> 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,  
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"

**2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)**

**<sup>15</sup> Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.**

The Greek word for “**accurately handling**” means, according to Thayer “to teach the truth correctly and directly. Vincent says that “the truth should be treated honestly and fully, in a straightforward manner.”

One “**accurately handles**” the word of Truth when he deals with it as God intends that he should. This means that we must always consider the context of a statement and teach what it teaches without reading into the Word of Truth our preconceived ideas or traditions or doctrines.

This requires “**diligence**,” which means to “exert one’s self, to endeavor, to make an effort.” We must “exert effort” to find out what God is saying to us in His Word. Do NOT take any man’s word for it! Find out for yourself.

**Acts 17:11 (NASB)**

**<sup>11</sup> they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.**

**James 3:1 (NASB)**

**<sup>1</sup> Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.**

**1 Corinthians 4:6 (NASB)**

**<sup>6</sup> Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.**

**Revelation 20:12 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before**

**the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.**

So, with all of that warning and exhortation, we must understand that it's the teachings of the Scriptures that will judge us, therefore we **MUST** reject the traditions of men that conflict with God's Word.

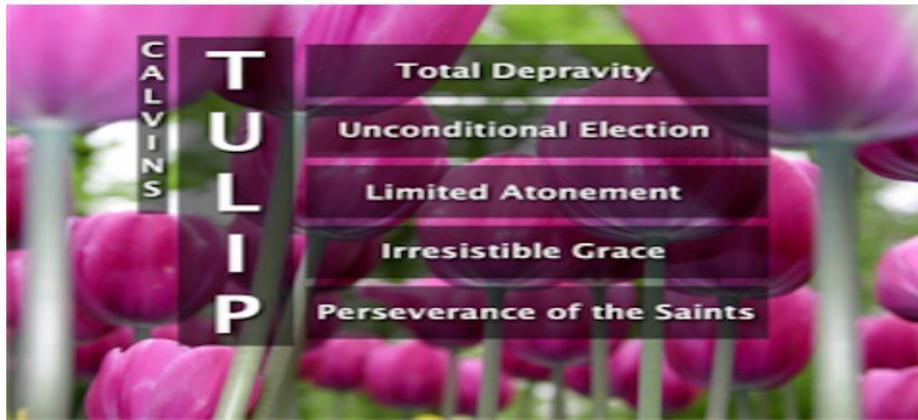
And there is no question that CALVIN'S TULIP is in conflict with God's Word.

Actually Calvin did not originally develop the system, but Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) in the fifth century came up with this false idea. Augustine tried in vain to live a celibate life but because of his many sexual and other sins he concluded that man was totally depraved from birth. Since he chose to lead a sinful lifestyle he tried to justify himself by developing a theology to substantiate it.

John Calvin took Augustine's theory and developed it into a system of five cardinal points that is defined by the word TULIP. There is no connection with the flower, but all five points are contrary and contradictory to God's plan of salvation in the Bible. Calvin's five cardinal points are:

**T= Total Depravity**  
**U= Unconditional Election**  
**L= Limited Atonement**  
**I= Irresistible Grace**  
**P= Perseverance Of The Saints.**

All five points of Calvin's theory either stand or fall together.



## **T= TOTAL DEPRAVITY OR INABILITY**

**Sin is in every part of man, in the mind, the will, the heart and the soul so that man cannot save himself.**

Man is fallen and everyone is born spiritually dead, helpless, and passive; indeed, everyone is worse than volitionally dead or unable to desire spiritual good but is actually enslaved to sin, positively and actively hostile to the things of the Spirit (Calvinists cite, e.g., John. 1:13; 8:43, 47; 10:26; 12:37-40; 18:37; Romans. 7:18; 8:5-8; 1 Corinthians. 2:9-14).

## **U= UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION**

**God chooses to save people unconditionally; that is they are not chosen on the basis of their own merit.**

This second point inescapably follows from the first: since one is born totally depraved and enslaved to sin, one's ELECTION cannot be dependent or CONTINGENT on any spiritually worthy actions one commits.

According to this point, God predestines or chooses to soften the hard, sin-enslaved hearts of certain fallen individuals and liberate them from their death not because of any merit they have but despite their demerits—i.e., He ELECTS to change their hearts (and thereby join them to Christ and His saving work) DESPITE the fact that they hate God and oppose Him and have hard hearts, not soft hearts, and have sin-enslaved wills, not free wills. Thus, believers have no reason to boast about themselves or their own actions: the only thing that differentiates them from Judas, Esau, or others who never respond in faith is that God gave them grace that He withheld from such

reprobates (Calvinists cite, e.g., Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:26-27; Rom. 9:11-18; 1 Cor. 4:7; Eph. 2:8-10; cf. Jn. 1:13; 15:16; Acts 13:48; 16:14; 18:27; Phil. 2:13).

## **L= LIMITED ATONEMENT or Particular Redemption**

**The Sacrifice of Christ on the cross was for the purpose of saving only the “elect.”**

This point says that while Christ’s blood—indeed, His entire life, death, and resurrection—is infinitely INTENSIVE in saving power and thus unlimited in one sense, it is not infinitely EXTENSIVE and is thus limited, not universal, in the extent of its application; for while everyone CONDITIONALLY or “provisionally” shares in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection (thus, if everyone believed, everyone would be joined or married to Christ), only members of Christ’s body or bride or flock (ELECT believers) actually share in His blood (Calvinists cite, e.g., Jn. 10:11, 15, 26; 17:9; cf. 6:37, 39; 17:2, 6, 24).

## **I= IRRESISTIBLE (SUFFICIENT) GRACE**

**When God has chosen to save someone, He will.**

This is virtually a synonym for Luther’s slogan “grace alone” (sola gratia) and is logically implied by points “T” and “U” above. It teaches that God’s INWARD CALL is perfectly EFFECTUAL or SUFFICIENT—a hard, fleshly, sinful heart need not add anything to God’s grace, such as “co-operation,” for this special call or grace is invincible, overpowering all hatred and melting all opposition (Calvinists cite, e.g., Jn. 3:6-8). Here Calvinists distinguish God’s inward, effectual call—i.e., IRRESISTIBLE GRACE or sufficient, effective grace—from His outward call, which is simply His commandments written on tablets of stone. The latter is eminently resistible, insufficient, and ineffective to give life to a dead soul or liberate a sin-enslaved heart (e.g., Acts 7:51; 13:39; Rom. 8:3).

## **P= PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS or Eternal Security**

**Those people God chooses cannot lose their salvation.** This is not the idea that no matter what a believer does he or she cannot lose his or her salvation but the idea that “...He who began a good work in you will

perfect it..." (Phil. 1:6 [NASB]; cf., e.g., Jn. 6:37, 39; 10:28-29; Rom. 8:31-39)– i.e., the idea that whenever God creates faith in our hearts and thereby joins us to Christ and His saving work, He will sustain that faith, that saving relationship with Christ, causing us, by His grace, to persevere in faith.

So there you have it, the 5 points of Calvinism. **Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.**

Now here's the problem, from a Biblical perspective, each of these points is **WRONG!**

**Total Depravity** contradicts the free moral agency of man and infers that no person can serve God of his own free will.

It teaches that every person inherits Adam's original sin at birth and comes into this world totally depraved. This doctrine is false because even though one is born into a world of sin he does not become a sinner until he reaches the age of accountability. We do not inherit sin but we are responsible for our own sins when we become accountable.

God says:

**Ezekiel 18:20 (NASB)**

**<sup>20</sup> "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.**

Jesus says,

**Matthew 18:2-3 (NASB)**

**<sup>2</sup> And He called a child to Himself and set him before them,**

**<sup>3</sup> and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**

Rather than condemning little children as sinners, Jesus commends them as examples of innocence. A little child is so pure; he already possesses the kingdom of heaven. Even though children are born into a world of sin, they have no knowledge of sin.

**Deuteronomy 1:39 (NASB)**

**39 'Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it.**

Only when children grow up and become accountable do they transgress God's law and begin to sin.

**Ezekiel 28:15 (NASB)**

**15 "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you.**

We do not inherit sin, but we commit sin.

**1 John 3:4 (NASB)**

**4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.**

**Unconditional Election** is wrong because it says that God predestined the salvation or damnation of every person without any regard to the good or evil he may do.

It teaches that God has arbitrarily chosen those He is going to save, even before they are born and everyone else is going to be eternally lost. It says that nothing a person does has any bearing at all on his salvation.

God wants all people to be saved:

**2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)**

**9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**

**Hebrews 5:9 (NASB)**

**9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,**

**2 Thessalonians 1:8 (NASB)**

**<sup>8</sup> dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**

**Acts 10:34-35 (NASB)**

**<sup>34</sup> Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality, <sup>35</sup> but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.**

**Mark 16:15-16 (NASB)**

**<sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. <sup>16</sup> "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.**

God wants all people to be saved and does not predestine anyone to be saved or lost. The only thing that God has predestined or predetermined is to save those who are obedient to His commands (**Hebrews 5:9**) and to punish those who are disobedient (**2 Thessalonians 1:8**). Unconditional Election accuses God of being partial and showing favoritism. But God's word says, "that God is not one to show partiality but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. (**Acts 10:34-35**).

This false doctrine makes every command, every warning, and every admonition of God useless. With Unconditional Election there is no reason to try to teach anyone the gospel of Christ if God has already arbitrarily decided who is going to be saved and who is going to be lost. This makes no sense. But Jesus says, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (**Mark 16:15**). God's offer of salvation is available to everyone, but each must choose whether he will accept or reject it.

**Limited Atonement** is wrong because it says that the blood of Christ is not available for all men.

**1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NASB)**

**<sup>3</sup> God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

**Hebrews 2:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> **But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.**

**1 John 2:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> **and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.**

Limited atonement says that only certain ones have been elected to salvation. If this is true, which it is not, then in **John 3:16**, “**God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son**” would not be true if God only loved part of the world.

It is God “who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (**1 Timothy 2:4**), not just some men to be saved. This doctrine falsely teaches that Christ died only for those He elected to save, but the Bible says concerning Christ, “that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (**Hebrews 2:9**).

Limited Atonement basically teaches that the blood of Christ is not available for all men. “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (**1 John 2:2**).

Christ died for the whole world, not for just some.

**Irresistible Grace** is wrong because it teaches the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of those God has chosen to save.

One error leads to another. If one who God has predestined to save is “Totally Depraved” and incapable of doing right, then how can his conversion be accomplished? You have to have “Irresistible Grace” involving the miraculous direct operation of the Holy Spirit which operates on the heart of those whom God has chosen to be saved so they cannot resist the salvation that God has unconditionally provided.

**Mark 16:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> **And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.**

**Acts 10:34 (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup> **Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand**

*now* that God is not one to show partiality,

**2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> **The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**

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<sup>9</sup> **But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.**

If this is true there would be no reason for preaching, teaching, and mission work. But Jesus' command is to **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15)**. The erroneous notions of Irresistible Grace contradicts what God's word says. **“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons’” (Acts 10:34)**. The man-made doctrine of Irresistible Grace makes God a respecter of persons. But God **“desires all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4)**, and **“is not willing that any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9)**, since Christ has tasted **“death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:9)**.

**Perseverance Of The Saints** is wrong because it says that a child of God cannot fall from the grace of God and be eternally lost. You will also here this concept referred to as “once saved, always saved” or “the impossibility of apostasy.”

**Galatians 5:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> **You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**

**1 Corinthians 10:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> **Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.**

**1 Corinthians 9:27 (NASB)**

**27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.**

**Hebrews 3:12 (NASB)**

**12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.**

**1 Timothy 4:1 (NASB)**

**1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,**

**Philippians 2:12 (NASB)**

**12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;**

These verses are easy enough to understand and speak for themselves.

Remember:

**2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 (NASB)**

**11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, <sup>12</sup> in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.**

Calvin's Tulip is wrong, it is a deluding influence, and we must be people who love the truth so as to be saved.



**References:**

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**Dr. Jack Cottrell:** <http://jackcottrell.com/tag/calvinism/>

**Dr. Alger Fitch:** Pick the Brighter TULIP: There is an Alternative to Calvinism

<http://thecra.org/bookstore>

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