

# Where We Stand

## Calvary Chapel & Calvinism

*A Critique of Calvinism.* By Pastor Albert Garcia

My intention is not to break down 'The 5 Points of Calvinism' (TULIP) here, but rather to briefly convey some of our—Calvary Chapel—beliefs regarding certain truths, *leading up to God's work of salvation*. We know some of these truths as foreknowledge, election, predestination, and the act of calling, or drawing.

First, the act of God *foreknowing* something simply speaks to the fact that God knows something '*beforehand*' or ahead of time. To be clear, God knows it all, since He is an omniscient God. There is NOTHING God does not know. So when the scriptures use the word foreknowledge, this is the meaning that is most clearly intended.

We do not believe 'foreknowledge' means 'predestination' or 'foreordination', (predetermination) because knowing something does not necessitate the doing of that something. Exhaustive determinism is the belief that God determines everything to be. We do not believe this.

Predestination is simply God choosing to do something before it happens, when it happens. Predestination is dependent on foreknowledge in this way. For example, I know my wife and kids are leaving the house in 15 minutes to go to an appointment, so I choose now to turn on the car so the A/C is running. I foreknew something was going to happen, and I acted in advance in light of that event so that when they got in the car, it would already be cool, avoiding the oven it could've been. Similarly Christ is that vehicle, where the riches of God's blessings are found. However each individual still has to get into that car/Jesus. That God knows who is and who isn't getting in, doesn't necessitate that God put each individual in, but simply that when they do get in they see His hand of blessing. In this way foreknowledge, and foreordination or predestination do not negate or contradict our Godgiven human choice and responsibility.

For instance, God said of Pharaoh: "*But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. 20 So I will reach out with My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go.*" (Exo 3:19-20 NASB) Notice how God determined to act in response (dependently) on how He knew a person would respond. This in no way makes God any less sovereign, but rather it highlights the fact that He can accomplish His purposes, despite man's independent, and willful actions.

# Exegesis of Ephesians 1:3-7 (NKJV)

3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly [places] in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

## A FEW OBSERVATIONS TO CONSIDER..

1. THE FATHER CHOOSES TO BLESS, TO PREDESTINE, AND TO ACCEPT “US IN HIM”; “IN THE BELOVED” SON.
2. THE SON IS “THE BELOVED” INSTRUMENT, TO ADOPTION, TO REDEMPTION, TO FORGIVENESS, AND TO BLESSING.
3. THE BELIEVER IS ADOPTED, REDEEMED, FORGIVEN, AND BLESSED IN CHRIST, NOT OUTSIDE OF CHRIST.
4. PAUL’S EMPHASIS ON “OUR”, “US”, AND “WE” REFERS TO THE EPHESIAN CHURCH WHICH IS ALREADY “IN CHRIST”.
5. GOD IS NOT CHOOSING “BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD” TO BLESS A NON EXISTENT PEOPLE TO BE IN CHRIST, HE IS BLESSING THOSE WHO EVENTUALLY WILL COME TO CHRIST.
6. GOD CHOSE “B/F THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD” TO BLESS THOSE THAT ARE “IN CHRIST”.
7. EX. A FATHER CHOOSES/DETERMINES WITHIN HIMSELF—YEARS IN ADVANCE—BEFORE HIS BELOVED SON COMES OF AGE, TO BLESS AND HONOR HIS SON’S FUTURE BRIDE. THE FATHER IS NOT CHOOSING THE SON’S BRIDE, RATHER HE IS CHOOSING TO BLESS HER IN HER UNION TO HIS SON IE. “IN HIM”.

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**In conclusion, we do not believe that because all sinners are fallen short of the glory of God, that they are *incapable* of believing, or responding positively to the gospel. We believe that the power for believing is in the very gospel proclaimed, and heard. (Rom 1:16, 2 Tim 3:15, Acts 2:37-38) We do not believe that regeneration/new life comes before faith. We hold with most Christians that one is born-again at the moment of faith. Eternal life is dependent on faith, not faith on eternal life. The gift Paul speaks about in Eph 2:8-9 is not the faith but the gift of salvation.**

**We believe that election is God's choice before creation, to adopt, sanctify and conform (Eph 1:4) whosoever freely puts their hope in Christ Jesus. We believe that the elect are those who put their faith in Jesus. (Rev 22:17, Jn 3:16) *"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,"* -Eph 1:13 NIV**

**We believe that God's atonement in Christ is unlimited and available for any and all sinners because God is not partial. (Rom 3:22-23) *"He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* -1 John 2:2 NASB**

**[God] *"who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. -who gave Himself a ransom for all,"* -1 Tim 2:4, 6.**

**We believe that while God draws sinners to repentance, that some will resist God's gracious and loving call. (Jn 5:40, Acts 7:51, 2 Thes 2:10-11) And that men can, and do resist the Lord, says nothing of God's inability, but rather it highlights God's loving grace, and mercy in that God would condescend Himself to hardened sinners. We also believe that no one can come to the Son without being drawn by the Father, yet this does not negate the personal choice the sinner has to make.**

**We believe that those who are truly born-again, having eternal life will never perish. (Jn 10:28, Heb 10:14) And while not all believers will receive the same degree of rewards, all believers will persevere to the end because God works in the believer to will and to do according to His good pleasure. (1 John 3:9, 5:18, Heb 3:6, 14, 13:5)**