
TULIP

— *defined and defended* —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

T

TOTAL
DEPRAVITY
ROMANS 3:10-12

U

UNCONDITIONAL
ELECTION
EPHESIANS 1:4-5

L

LIMITED
ATONEMENT
JOHN 10:11

I

IRRESISTIBLE
GRACE
JOHN 6:37

P

PERSEVERANCE
OF THE SAINTS
PHILIPPIANS 1:6

By Silas Wertz

Overview:

- Lesson 01: What is Calvinism? - Introduction/History
- Lesson 02: Total Depravity
- Lesson 03: Unconditional Election
- Lesson 04: Limited Atonement
- Lesson 05: Limited Atonement (PT 2)
- Lesson 06: Irresistible Grace
- Lesson 07: Perseverance of the Saints
- Lesson 08: Answering Objections to the

Doctrines of Grace

- Lesson 09: Answering Objections to the Doctrines of Grace (PT 2)



Lesson 01: What is Calvinism?



TULIP

— *defined and defended* —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

What is Calvinism?

- “Calvinism” commonly refers to five doctrinal formulations derived from the Synod of Dort and codified in the Canons of Dort (1618–1619).
- John Calvin did not invent the 5 points of Calvinism – nor did he give it the title.
- The 5 points were a rebuttal to the 5 points of Arminianism.



The Reformation

- Roman Catholic soteriology: Man is decisive in salvation (ultimately salvation is up to man.)
- **Sola Scriptura:** Scripture alone is the sole infallible authority, --> Therefore, our doctrine of salvation must come from Scripture.
- **Calvinism is a consequence of applying Sola Scriptura:** Scripture teaches humanity is dead in sin and God is sovereign in salvation—therefore salvation is God's decisive work.
- We are Calvinists because of Scripture – not John Calvin



The Synod of Dordt

- **1610:** The “Five Points of Arminianism” were presented by followers of **Jacobus Arminius** after his death in a 1610 document called the Remonstrance.
- **1618-1619:** The Dutch Reformed Churches met at the Synod of Dort from November 1618 to May 1619 and produced the Canons of Dort, formally rejecting the Remonstrant teachings.



TULIP

— defined and defended —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

The 5 Points of Arminianism

1. Free Will
2. Conditional Election
3. Unlimited Atonement
4. Resistible Grace
5. Falling from Grace



TULIP

— *defined and defended* —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

The 5 Points of Calvinism

1. Total Depravity
2. Unconditional Election
3. Limited Atonement
4. Irresistible Grace
5. Perseverance of the Saints



TULIP

— *defined and defended* —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Calvinism Defined:

God is decisive in the salvation of sinners, for the glory of His name.



TULIP

— *defined and defended* —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Are “Calvinist” and “Reformed” the same thing?

Reformed = 3 C's

1. Calvinist
2. Covenantal
3. Confessional

Calvinist = Affirmation of the 5 Points of

Calvinism

- To be Reformed you must be a Calvinist; but you can be a Calvinist and not be Reformed.



How did Calvinism come to be?

Doctrinal Development

- Calvinism didn't begin at the Reformation or the Synod of Dort.
- The Essence of Calvinism has always been with the Church.

“Our doctrine is not new, but old; the very doctrine which was preached by Christ and the apostles, and retained by the holy martyrs.” —

John Calvin



Calvinism in the Early Church

- Although the five points of Calvinism were not formally articulated until after the Reformation, traces of these doctrines can still be found in some of the earliest writings of the Church Fathers.



TULIP

— defined and defended —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Total Depravity:

- **Ignatius (A.D. 110):** "They that are carnal cannot do the things that are spiritual...Nor can the unbelievers do the things of belief."
- **Eusebius (A.D. 330):** "The liberty of our will in choosing things that are good is destroyed."
- **Jerome (AD: 390):** "See how great is the help of God, and how frail the condition of man that we cannot by any means fulfill this, that we repent, unless the Lord first convert us...When [Jesus] says, 'No man can come to Me,' He breaks the proud liberty of free will; for man can desire nothing, and in vain he endeavors...Where is the proud boasting of free will?"



TULIP
— defined and defended —
A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Unconditional Election

- **Clement Of Alexandria (A.D. 190):** "You are those who are chosen from among men and as those who are predestined from among men, and in His own time called, faithful, and elect, those who before the foundation of the world are known intimately by God unto faith; that is, are appointed by Him to faith, grow beyond babyhood."
- **Irenaeus (A.D. 198):** "God hath completed the number which He before determined with Himself, all those who are written, or ordained unto eternal life...Being predestined indeed according to the love of the Father that we would belong to Him forever."
- **Ambrose Of Milan (A.D. 380):** In predestination the Church of God has always existed.



TULIP

— defined and defended —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Limited Atonement

- **Tertullian (A.D. 200):** "Christ died for the salvation of His people...for the church."
- **Julius (A.D. 350):** "The Son of God, by the pouring out of His precious blood, redeemed His set apart ones; they are delivered by the blood of Christ."
- **Ambrose (A.D. 380):** "Before the foundation of the world, it was God's will that Christ should suffer for our salvation...Can He damn thee, whom He hath redeemed from death, for whom He offered Himself, whose life He knows is the reward of His own death?"
- **Jerome (A.D. 390):** "Christ came to redeem Zion with His blood. But lest we should think that all are Zion or every one is Zion is truly redeemed of the Lord, who are redeemed by the blood of Christ form the Church...He did not give His life for every man, but for many, that is, for those who would believe."



TULIP

— defined and defended —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Irresistible Grace

- **Barnabas (A.D. 70):** "God gives repentance to us, introducing us into the incorruptible temple."
- **Justin Martyr (A.D. 150):** "Having sometime before convinced us of the impossibility of our nature to obtain life, hath now shown us the Savior, who is able to save them which otherwise were impossible to be saved...Free will has destroyed us; we are sold into sin."
- **Lactantius (A.D. 320):** "The victory lies in the will of God, not in thine own. To overcome is not in our power."
- **Augustine (A.D. 370):** "Faith itself is to be attributed to God...Faith is made a gift. These men, however, attribute faith to free will, so grace is rendered to faith not as a gratuitous gift, but as a debt...They must cease from saying this."



TULIP
— defined and defended —
A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Perseverance of the Saints

- **Tertullian:** "God forbid that we should believe that the soul of any saint should be drawn out by the devil...For what is of God is never extinguished."
- **Clement Of Rome (A.D. 69):** "It is the will of God that all whom He loves should partake of repentance, and so not perish with the unbelieving and impenitent. He has established it by His almighty will."
- **Clement Of Alexandria (A.D. 190):** "Such a soul [of a Christian] shall never at any time be separated from God...Faith, I say, is something divine, which cannot be pulled asunder by any other worldly friendship, nor be dissolved by present fear."



TULIP

— defined and defended —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Significant Debates

- Augustine vs Pelagius (A.D. 410-430)
- Martin Luther vs Desiderius Erasmus (1524-1525)



Augustine vs Pelagius

- Augustine of Hippo defended the doctrines of original sin and the necessity of God's sovereign grace in salvation.
- **Pelagius denied original sin and taught that man is born morally neutral with the ability to obey God apart from special grace.**
- Augustine argued that fallen man is spiritually unable to come to God without divine intervention.
- **Pelagianism was condemned as heresy at the Councils of Carthage (418) and Ephesus (431).**



TULIP

— defined and defended —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Augustine vs Pelagius

- To Augustine, experience alone would have been enough to convince him that Pelagius' view of grace and salvation was faulty.
- “Both by nature and by grace, Augustine was formed to be the champion of truth in this controversy.” – B.B. Warfield



Augustine vs Pelagius

- posse peccare — prior to the Fall man has the ability to sin
- posse non peccare— prior to the Fall man has the ability not to sin
- **But after the Fall...**
- non posse non peccare – man is not able not to sin



TULIP

— defined and defended —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Augustine vs Pelagius

- "[Pelagians] endeavor to bring us back to this — that there is no original sin... that grace does not assist without merit, and that thus grace is no more grace." (Against Two Letters of the Pelagians)
- "For the will cannot be forced into such iniquity by anything superior or equal to it, since that would be unjust; or by anything inferior to it, since that is impossible." – On Free Choice of the Will



TULIP
— defined and defended —
A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Luther vs Erasmus

- Martin Luther emphasized the bondage of the will after the Fall, arguing that fallen humans cannot choose God apart from divine grace.
- Desiderius Erasmus defended human free will and argued that humans retain the ability to cooperate with God's grace.



TULIP

— *defined and defended* —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Luther vs Erasmus

- **1524:** Erasmus reluctantly publishes freedom of the will.
- **1525:** Luther responds by publishing the bondage of the will.
- **Semi-Pelagianism**
- This debate shines light on the most common modern form of Pelagianism known as **Semi-Pelagianism**, which is essentially a softened version of Pelagianism. This view says that man must do very little in order to gain salvation, but he still must do something.
- Erasmus thought that this view would help him find some common ground with Luther, but to his surprise, it actually found the opposite response.



Luther vs Erasmus

- “Erasmus had supposed that by stressing the smallness of the power which man can exercise, and of the merit which he can gain in his own strength, he was softening the offense of his Pelagian principles and moving closer to the Augustinian position, which denies all merit and ascribes salvation wholly to God. Not at all, says Luther; all that Erasmus and those whom he follows are really doing here is cheapening and debasing their own Pelagianism, by reducing the price of salvation.” – J.I. Packer



Luther vs Erasmus

- “[To Erasmus] I give you hearty praise and commendation on this further account—that you alone, in contrast with all others, have attacked the real thing, that is, the essential issue. You have not wearied me with those extraneous issues about the Papacy, purgatory, indulgences and such like -trifles, rather than issues... you, and you alone have seen the hinge on which all turns, and aimed for the vital spot.” —
Bondage of the Will



TULIP

— defined and defended —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Luther vs Erasmus

- Luther said that if all his books were to be burned and he could only keep one, he would choose *The Bondage of the Will*.
- Issues like indulgences, justification by works, and the Mass all stem from one core problem:
- **They all operate under the premise that man can by nature earn merit towards salvation.**



TULIP

— *defined and defended* —

A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

Luther vs Erasmus

- “That is what Reason can neither grasp nor endure, and what has offended all these men of outstanding talent who have been so received for so many centuries. **Here they demand that God should act according to human justice, and do what seems right to them or else cease to be God.**” – Bondage of the Will
- **This is the heart of the debate over Calvinism.**



TULIP
— *defined and defended* —
A COURSE ON THE 5 POINTS OF CALVINISM

The Reformed Resurgence

- The response to shallow evangelicalism in the early 2000's led young people to the internet to seek answers to their theological questions.
- They found their answers in Reformed Theology.
- Men like John Piper, R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, Voddie Baucham, and others helped bring Reformed Theology from the ivory tower to layman.

