

Another Gospel

Introduction

1. What is the main subject of our study? Salvation
 - 1.1. Galatians 1:6-9, *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."*

2. Why are you here?
 - 2.1. To learn more about Calvinism and how to defend against it?
 - 2.2. To learn more about eternal security and how to defend against it?
 - 2.3. Maybe you don't know where you stand on any salvation issue.
 - 2.4. Maybe you are here to debate.
 - 2.4.1. "Answer all the objections, as occasion offers, both in public and private. But take care to do this with all possible sweetness both of look and of accent... Make it a matter of constant and earnest prayer, that God would stop the plague." - John Wesley

3. There are many "flavors" of Calvinism.
 - 3.1. All "interpretive groups"--Wesleyan, Calvinist, etc.--have what we might call "controlling verses" that fit most easily into their interpretive paradigm. On the other hand, they also always have what I call "difficult verses."
 - 3.2. We will focus on The Canons of Dort, which was convened to after the death of both Calvin and Arminius to settle the debate.
 - 3.3. Disclaimer - "Most every study that opposes another's interpretation is accused of misrepresentation. It is the nature of such disagreements. However, one must understand a very important point regarding the opposition of a system such as Calvinism. Calvinists are not a monolithic group with one single spokesperson or statement of doctrine. Disagreements abound within the ranks, as some are Supralapsarians and others Infralapsarians, some disagree about the extent of God's love for all, and the extent of the atonement. There are moderate Calvinists and strict high Calvinists. There are Piper, Packer, and Pink Calvinists. In fact, a strong argument could be made that John Calvin himself would not even fit into the camp that now bears his name, not that it matters. The point is when someone attempts to confront this theology, there will always be someone to bring accusation of misrepresentation. It may not be that Calvinism has been misrepresented, as Calvin himself may have been

quoted, but you have misrepresented THEIR Calvinism. Or, you may not have stated their view in a way that makes it sound palatable, even if it is technically true. This is why we encourage students to study all the perspectives for themselves. Get educated and understand why you believe what you believe.“ (Dr. Leighton Flowers, Tiptoeing through Calvinism, 2019).

4. Typical responses when someone is speaking to a Calvinist.
 - 4.1. Say Calvinism is the Gospel.
 - 4.2. Name calling - Pelagian is the usual one.
 - 4.3. Lots of metaphors - children
 - 4.4. Appeals to history - Augustine, WyCliffe, Luther, Calvin...
 - 4.5. Scripture Proofs - Will claim that just reading the scriptures will lead you to calvinism.

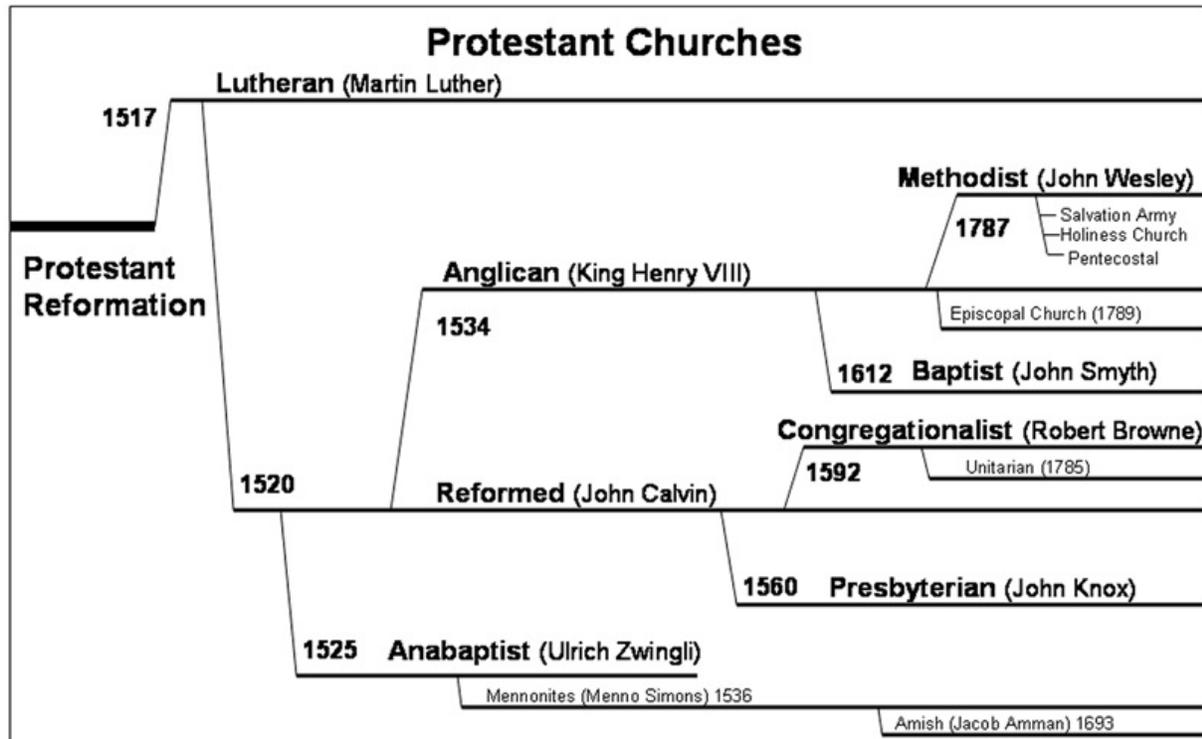
Introducing the TULIP of Calvinism

Calvinism	Arminianism
<p>Total Depravity - Calvinism takes the concept of human depravity too far by suggesting everyone is born totally unable to respond willingly to God's revealed truth. Some refer to this teaching as, "Total inability." God's revelation is very clear, but according to Calvinists, man's heart is so corrupt from birth that he is unable to really understand and accept the truth. God only chooses to give some people this ability to believe and the rest are left totally unable to willingly respond.</p>	<p>Total Depravity - While it is certainly true that all people are born sinners and in need of God's saving grace, they are not born without God given ability to respond. Everyone is totally responsible for their moral choices, including their choice to accept or reject God's gracious Gospel appeal. God reveals Himself to mankind in very clear ways. There is no excuse for anyone not to respond willingly to God's gracious self-revelation.</p>
<p>Unconditional Election - Calvinists teach that God has elected, or chosen, to save a particular number of people before the world began. God chose these individuals for no other reason than God's own self-glorification. In other words, there is no condition that the person must meet in order to be chosen. The elect are not chosen because God foresees good in them, but the choice of each individual</p>	<p>Conditional Election - God conditionally chose the nation of Israel for the noble task of bringing God's light to the world (Gen. 12:3; Deut. 7:7-9; Rom. 3:2). And it has been God's place from before the world began to provide salvation for all nations of the world, not just the elect nation of Israel. But this mystery is just being revealed for the first time in the apostles' writings (Eph. 3:1-10; Rom. 16:25-26). God has conditionally chosen</p>

<p>for salvation is completely unconditional, according to this view.</p>	<p>for people of all nations to have access to him through faith (Romans 5:2).</p>
<p>Limited Atonement - Most Calvinists teach that God limits the atonement to the elect alone. This means that Christ's work on the cross was intended to heal those who God elected, not the rest of the world. Some teach that his blood would be wasted if it were shed for those who do not ever come to Him for healing. However, this is hotly contested even among Calvinists.</p>	<p>Unlimited Atonement - Jesus compared His atoning work on the cross to the serpent that was lifted up in the desert for snake-bitten Israelites to look upon in faith for healing (John 3:14) This is a perfect example of limitless atonement. God provided all people the means for healing. It was without limits! Anyone who needed healing could look to the serpent on the pole in faith to be healed. So too, anyone can look to Christ on the cross in faith to be healed, thus that provision is limitless.</p>
<p>Irresistible Grace - Calvinists, teach that God graciously regenerates (brings to life) those He elected; making them irresistibly desiring to come to Christ. Faith and repentance are viewed as gifts or fruits of this regenerating work of God, which is irresistibly applied to His elect alone. The rest of the world is left without hope. According to Calvinists, individuals are given new life so that they will certainly believe, not the other way around.</p>	<p>Prevenient Grace - We cannot believe in a God who is not revealed to us. God must be revealed to people in order for them to believe in Him. How is one able to believe in whom they have not heard (Rom. 10:14. God reveals Himself through His Word and faith comes by hearing his Word (Rom. 10:17). The word enables faith! We are enabled to come to Christ by the gracious Gospel appeal, for it is the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16). God has provided saving grace to all, and enables each one to respond to the Gospel appeal for reconciliation.</p>
<p>Perseverance of the Saints - Calvinists teach that God unconditionally elects, atones for, and irresistibly calls each of these individuals, thus not one of them will be lost. God will preserve His elect saints. They will certainly be saved and thus there is no chance that even one elect person will lose their salvation or fail to be saved in the end.</p>	<p>Conditional Perseverance - God predestines what will become of those who remain in Him. They will become sanctified and adopted (Eph. 1:4-5 and Rom. 8:23). An airplane is destined to fly from New York to Dallas. The destination is predetermined, but absolutely anyone can choose to board that plane. Likewise, God has predetermined the destination of all who are in Him, but whosoever may enter in.</p>

History of Calvinism - Where did it come from?

1. Background and Precursors
 - 1.1. Pelagius (in Rome ca. 383-410)
 - 1.2. Augustine (354-430)
 - 1.3. Council of Carthage (418)
2. Luther, Calvin, Arminius and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)
 - 2.1. Martin Luther (1483-1546)
 - 2.2. John Calvin (1509-1564)
 - 2.3. Jacob Arminius (1560-1609)
 - 2.4. Remonstrance and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)
3. What denominations are Calvinists?
 - 3.1. Presbyterian, Reformed, and some baptist and independent.
 - 3.2. Some denomination churches hold only to a few of the points, such as preservation of the saints. Groups like the Southern Baptist are divided between churches as to which points are held.
 - 3.3. However, the majority of churches are heavily influenced by the Protestant Reformation and the teachings of Calvinism. Most publishers, books, and Christian colleges are based in this tradition.



Order of Salvation - Calvinism (as displayed on gotquestions.org)

1. Foreknowledge: God's knowing prior to salvation those who he choose to would be saved.
2. Predestination/Election: God's choosing before time all who would trust in His son.
3. Atonement: Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
4. Regeneration: God's renewing of one's life (not physically, but as opposed to the spiritual death caused by sin).
5. Evangelism: The communication of the gospel by which one can be saved.
6. Faith: Belief and trust in the message of the gospel.
7. Conversion: One's turning to God based on the gospel.
8. Perseverance: One's continued true belief—remaining in the state of salvation.
9. Repentance: Changing one's mind from rejection of Christ to faith in Christ.
10. Justification: God's freeing of one from the penalty of sin—the pronouncement of "not guilty" on a sinner.
11. Sanctification: God's separation of one from the lure of sin.

Order of Salvation - Wesleyan - Armininism

1. Foreknowledge: God's knowing prior to salvation those who he choose to would be saved (there is an option for an "Open" Theology, where God withholds this knowledge in favor of humanity having full free will - a multi-linear path).
2. Predestination/Election: God's choosing before time to save those who trust in His Son.
3. Prevenient Grace: The light Christ gives to every person to enable them to seek and receive God, but can be diminished and rejected.
4. Atonement: Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
5. Evangelism: The communication of the gospel by which one can be saved. This produces faith which ignites the light given to every man in prevenient grace, to either trust in Christ or further rebel.
6. Faith: Faith: Belief and trust in the message of the gospel.
7. Repentance: Changing one's mind from rejection of Christ to faith in Christ.
8. Conversion: One's turning to God based on the gospel.
9. Regeneration: God's renewing of one's life (not physically, but as opposed to the spiritual death caused by sin).
10. Justification: God's freeing of one from the penalty of sin—the pronouncement of "not guilty" on a sinner.
11. Sanctification: God's subsequent work of Grace, empowering the believer to live above sin, ever drawing the person closer to Christ in holiness.
12. Holiness: Man's pursuit of God as God works out salvation in their lives, so that they may apprehend that which has apprehended them.
13. Glorification: God's final removal of all sin from the life and presence of one (in the eternal state).

Responses to Total Depravity.

1. Total Depravity - in its most basic form, is one area where we are only a "hair's-breadth" different from reformed doctrine. The point of divergence is greatest in the work of God in applying grace.
 - 1.1.1. To which later we will see in the response to irresistible grace.
 - 1.2. John Calvin, Institutes 2.1.9
 - 1.2.1. "For this reason, I have said that all parts of the soul were possessed by sin after Adam deserted the fountain of righteousness. For not only did a lower appetite seduce him, but unspeakable impiety occupied the very citadel of his mind, and pride penetrated to the depths of his heart...Paul removes all doubt when he teaches that corruption subsists not in one part only, but that none of the soul remains pure or untouched by that mortal disease. For in his discussion of a corrupt nature Paul not only condemns the inordinate impulses of the appetites that are seen, but especially contends the mind is given over to blindness and the heart to depravity."
 - 1.3. *Canon of Dort, Doctrine 3 & 4, Article 3*
 - 1.3.1. *"Therefore, all people are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin. Without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform."*
2. That every part of humanity is corrupted by sin is something that Calvin, Arminius, and Wesley, and ourselves can agree on. However, we need to make a clear note that it is not how far the sin corrupts, but where does the good fit in.
 - 2.1. Calvinism, as taught in the Canon of Dort, Doctrine 3 & 4, Article 4,
 - 2.1.1. *"There is, to be sure, a certain light of nature remaining in all people after the fall, by virtue of which they retain some notions about God, natural things, and the difference between what is moral and immoral, and demonstrate a certain eagerness for virtue and for good outward behavior. But this light of nature is far from enabling humans to come to a saving knowledge of God and conversion to him—so far, in fact, that they do not use it rightly even in matters of nature and society. Instead, in various ways they completely distort this light, whatever its precise character, and suppress it in unrighteousness. In doing so all people render themselves without excuse before God."*
 - 2.2. Philadelphia Confession of Faith (Baptist Churches)

- 2.2.1. *"Our first parents by the sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them, whereby death came upon all; all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all faculties, and parts of soul, and body." (p. 24)*
- 2.2.2. *"They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room, and stead of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus sets them free." (p. 24)*
- 2.2.3. *"From this original corruption whereby all are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." (p. 24)*
3. Wesley taught, apart from God, we are powerless to overcome the corruption of our nature. Yet God has given preventing (sometimes called "prevenient") grace to all humankind, and therefore we might see people who do not know Christ doing things like feeding the poor or caring for the sick. While we cannot know God in our natural, unregenerate state, we can have some sense of right and wrong and the reality of God through God's universal preventing grace.
- 3.1.1. *"all the 'drawings' of 'the Father', the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; all that 'light' wherewith the Son of God 'enlighteneth everyone that cometh into the world', showing every man 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God; all the convictions which his Spirit from time to time works in every child of man. Although it is true, the generality of men stifle them as soon as possible, and after a while forget, or at least deny, that they ever had them at all ("The Scripture Way of Salvation," I.2)."*
4. Apart from prevenient grace, Wesley insisted, we are unable *"to think one good thought, or to form one good desire; and much more to speak one word aright, or perform one good action"* (*"The Scripture Way of Salvation," III.8*).
- 4.1. Prevenient grace can't save you—not even close. It simply restores your will sufficiently so that you may choose to accept or reject God. It is the Arminian answer to the Calvinistic combination of unconditional election, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints.
5. So the major point of difference is not whether we are corrupted by sin, or how far that corruption goes, it is how does God save us. Why do sinners seem to do "apparently good" things.

- 5.1. For Calvin, the good we do is just the remnant of the broken light in us. Grace begins with an unconditional election to salvation and an irresistible grace moving upon the sinner. Meaning, they were “saved” before repentance and faith. The irresistible grace enables that faith and repentance. You’re saved before you know it or show it.
- 5.2. For Wesley, the good we do and the evil we don’t do is evidence that God is working in all to bring to repentance, giving a taste of what is in Him. Prevenient Grace awakens man and enables Him to then act in faith and repentance, knowing what is offered. Man then has the freewill and responsibility to receive or reject saving and sanctifying grace of his own volition.

Scriptural Support of Total Depravity

Rom. 3:9-13, “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

- One must quickly note that “proof texts” are easily taken out of context. And, this is a major issue within Calvinism. For example, Romans 3:10-18 is one of the most quote text by proponents of Total Depravity. However, it should be understood Paul is using Old Testament passages. Romans 3:10-12 comes from Psalm 14:1-3, and Psalm 53:1-4, which when studied show God was referring only to the workers of iniquity. Romans 3:13 is from Psalm 5:9 and 140:3. Romans 3:14 is from Psalm 10:7. Romans 3:15 is from Proverbs 6:18. Romans 3:18 is Psalm 36:1. Again in each of these quotes Old Testament passages, the focus is on those who do evil. In Romans, while Paul is placing humanity under sin, to an even greater extent he is placing those who openly do evil under the same boat, regardless of nationality.

Rom. 5:12, 19, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

- Some groups that are against total depravity will try to argue against original sin and that we are only held accountable for personal sin. However, scripture such as this shows we all sinned in Adam, as our representative.
- We are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners. Sinful is our nature.

Isaiah 53:6, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

- **כֹּל** *kôl*, kole; all, the whole; all, the whole; any, each, every, anything; totality, everything

Mark 7:21-23, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

- Our very nature is depraved. The seat of all we are is turned against God and does all sorts of vile things toward him.

Scripture Calvinist further use to support their workings of grace in response to total depravity, are numerous, John 3:27 John 6:44, 65; Rom. 9:16.

Scriptural support of the goodness of God prominently working in people's lives can be seen in individuals like Abel (1 John 3:10-11), Enoch (Gen. 5:24), Noah (Gen. 6:9, 7:1, & Ezekiel 14:14, 20, Hebrews 11:7, and Hebrews 11:7), Abraham (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3, 9, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23). Many other Old Testament figures, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. We may even look at evil kings, who under the prevenient grace of God displayed his goodness through them, to give relief to Israel (Ezra 1:1-2).

John 1:8-9, "He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

- **πᾶς** *pâs*, pas; including all the forms of declension; apparently a primary word; all, any, every, the whole:—all (manner of, means), alway(-s), any (one), **×** daily, **+** ever, every (one, way), as many as, **+** no(-thing), **X** thoroughly, whatsoever, whole, whosoever.
- Here we see that even though man is born into sin, every person born is graced with the light of Jesus. This prevenient grace is not universalism and not saving. But, it is enabling.

God's grace given to those respond freely to God demonstrate prevenient grace: Eph. 1:13-14, 2:1-10; James 4:6-10;

Finally, God's will for all to be saved is important. Scripture that points to this demonstrating God has provided the grace to all preventively. See, Mark 6:12, John 3:16, Acts 2:4-5, 17:30-31, and 2 Pet. 3:8-10.

Responses to Unconditional Election and Limited Atonement

1. Sometimes also described as predestination is more correctly labeled as double-predestination in some Calvinist circles such as John MacArthur and John Piper.
 - 1.1. Unconditional election states that God chose some to obey and some to disobey.
 - 1.2. Calvinists rationalize that God would not waste the sacrifice of Christ on those whom He had determined not to save. They believe that since God chose only some to be saved, it would be foolish to think that He sent His Son to shed His atoning blood for the sins of all people. Their conclusion: Christ only died for the elect.
 - 1.3. Calvin, Institutes, 3.21.5
 - 1.3.1. *“By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.”*
 - 1.4. Dort, Doctrine 1, Article 7, 9, 10, 15
 - 1.4.1. *Election is God’s unchangeable purpose by which he did the following: Before the foundation of the world, by sheer grace, according to the free good pleasure of his will, God chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race, which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin. Those chosen were neither better nor more deserving than the others, but lay with them in the common misery. God did this in Christ, whom he also appointed from eternity to be the mediator, the head of all those chosen, and the foundation of their salvation. And so God decreed to give to Christ those chosen for salvation, and to call and draw them effectively into Christ’s fellowship through the Word and Spirit. In other words, God decreed to grant them true faith in Christ, to justify them, to sanctify them, and finally, after powerfully preserving them in the fellowship of the Son, to glorify them.*
 - 1.4.2. *This same election took place, not on the basis of foreseen faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, or of any other good quality and disposition, as though it were based on a prerequisite cause or condition in the person to be chosen, but rather for the purpose of faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, and so on. Accordingly, election is the source of every saving good. Faith, holiness, and the*

other saving gifts, and at last eternal life itself, flow forth from election as its fruits and effects. As the apostle says, “He chose us” (not because we were, but) “so that we should be holy and blameless before him in love” (Eph. 1:4).

1.4.3. *But the cause of this undeserved election is exclusively the good pleasure of God. This does not involve God’s choosing certain human qualities or actions from among all those possible as a condition of salvation, but rather involves adopting certain particular persons from among the common mass of sinners as God’s own possession. As Scripture says, “When the children were not yet born, and had done nothing either good or bad . . . , she (Rebecca) was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ As it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated’” (Rom. 9:11-13). Also, “All who were appointed for eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).*

1.4.4. *Moreover, Holy Scripture most especially highlights this eternal and undeserved grace of our election and brings it out more clearly for us, in that it further bears witness that not all people have been chosen but that some have not been chosen or have been passed by in God’s eternal election—those, that is, concerning whom God, on the basis of his entirely free, most just, irreproachable, and unchangeable good pleasure, made the following decree: to leave them in the common misery into which, by their own fault, they have plunged themselves; not to grant them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but finally to condemn and eternally punish those who have been left in their own ways and under God’s just judgment, not only for their unbelief but also for all their other sins, in order to display his justice. And this is the decree of reprobation, which does not at all make God the author of sin (a blasphemous thought!) but rather its fearful, irreproachable, just judge and avenger.*

1.5. Dort, Doctrine 3 and 4, Article 14

1.5.1. *“In this way, therefore, faith is a gift of God, not in the sense that it is offered by God for people to choose, but that it is in actual fact bestowed on them, breathed and infused into them. Nor is it a gift in the sense that God bestows only the potential to believe, but then awaits assent—the act of believing—by human choice; rather, it is a gift in the sense that God who works both willing and acting and, indeed, works all things in all people and produces in them both the will to believe and the belief itself.”*

- 1.6. Consider this position on the salvation of Children - Dort, Doctrine 1, Article 17
 - 1.6.1. *Since we must make judgments about God's will from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, godly parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy.*
- 1.7. The Westminster Confession of Faith
 - 1.7.1. *"God has predestined and foreordained some men and angels to everlasting life out of His free grace and love without any foresight of faith or works in man or perseverance in either of them, and others are foreordained to everlasting death and the number of either is so certain and definite that it cannot be increased or diminished." (Chap. III, art. 3,4 &5; Chap. X, art. 2)*
- 1.8. The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
 - 1.8.1. *"God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass ... By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite it cannot be either increased or diminished." (Chap. III)*
- 1.9. The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689
 - 1.9.1. *"Those of mankind who are predestinated unto Life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable Purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ to everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto."*
- 1.10. The Westminster Confession of Faith
 - 1.10.1. *God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some ne and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death, are particularly and unchangeably design; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished" (Chapter III).*

2. Predestination is not of who goes to heaven or hell. Instead, it is God's choice on the "way of salvation." God chooses those who are "in Christ."
 - 2.1. Wesley, Predestination Calmly Considered, 19
 - 2.1.1. *"But unconditional election I cannot believe; not only because I cannot find it in Scripture, but also (to wave all other considerations) because it necessarily implies unconditional reprobation. Find out any election which does not imply reprobation, and I will gladly agree to it. But reprobation I can never agree to while I believe the Scripture to be of God; as being utterly irreconcilable to the whole scope and tenor both of the Old and New Testament."*
 - 2.2. A school teacher, on the first day of class, told his students that some would pass and some would fail the course they were about to take. He then described the things necessary for one to be of those who would pass. At the end of the school year, just as the teacher had said, some passed and some failed. Since the teacher predestinated the outcome before he began, did it mean that he caused each individual to either pass or fail and that there was nothing they could do about it? No. Likewise, God predestinated before He made the world that He would choose those "in Christ " and revealed those things necessary for one to be in Him. It is therefore up to each individual to do those things necessary to be found in Christ and have salvation.
 - 2.3. The predestination or foreordination of God determined that He would save sinful man through the sacrifice of His Son. Those who would respond to the gospel, His power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), and its call (2 Thes. 2:14) would become part of His elect. Those who reject the gospel and its message would be damned eternally. God will render judgment on all in the final day based on what they have done. The righteous will have life. The wicked will face the second death. Each person, not the predestination of God, determines what his/her destiny will be. (Rom. 2:3-11).
3. Predestination is a doctrine rooted in the sovereignty of God. Calvinistic see this as the self-glorification God does to Himself. Scripture sees it in a different way, where God has self-limited that we may be truly free moral agents.
 - 3.1. Sometimes God decrees (determines) (Luke 22:22)
 - 3.2. Sometimes God conceals (Deuteronomy 29:29)
 - 3.3. Sometimes God recommends (1 Thessalonians 4:1-3)
 - 3.4. Sometimes God desires (Deuteronomy 5:29)
 - 3.5. Sometimes God permits (Numbers 22:12, 20)
 - 3.6. Sometimes God considers (Jeremiah 18:8)

Scripture used to support unconditional election and Limited Atonement

Acts 13:48, "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."

- The Greek word for "ordained" is tassō. It means "to ordain," "to appoint," "to allot," or "to assign." The form of the word that appears in verse 48 is tetagmenoi. It is a perfect passive participle form of tassō. It is preceded by ēsan which is the imperfect form of the Greek word eimi (to be). The expression ēsan tetagmenoi is what is called in the Greek a periphrastic pluperfect construction. The literal meaning would be "as many as were having been appointed to eternal life believed." Or in a less literal way, it would be "as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." The "had been appointed to eternal life" or the "appointment to eternal life" had occurred before they heard and believed the gospel that was presented by Paul and Barnabas. However, the wording does not require that this appointment to eternal life must be a reference to eternity past. I think what the verse is telling us is that all of those who had been saved prior to their hearing the New Testament gospel subsequently believed when they heard the gospel being presented by Paul and Barnabas. At the moment of their salvation in the past, they were appointed to eternal life. When they heard about the redemptive work of Jesus the Messiah, they believed and became New Testament believers."

Ephesians 1:4-5, "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: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"

- Notice again, this is not simply hath he chosen us, but fully, chosen us in him. Christ was chosen and if we are in Christ we are "in him". Not predestination of the individual.
- Verse 4a. The apostle Paul and the others were part of that class which God chose before the foundation of the world. Those "in Him" (this class or group) are the predestinated ones.
- Verse 4b. The kind of life these should live is predestinated.
- Verse 5. The adoption was predestinated.
- Verse 11. One is an heir of eternal life because he is a part of that predestinated group.

Romans 8:29, "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."

- Who did he not foreknow? There is nothing in the context he is referring only to those he chose or knew would chose. Instead, we made the choice that those who are in Christ will be conformed to Christ.
- God foreordained that anyone who accepted His call would be conformed to the image of His Son. It is the confirmation that is predestined, not the

<p>acceptance. Those who accepted the gospel call were then justified and glorified.</p>
<p><i>John 6:44, 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.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This scripture again can be acknowledged as dealing with God's prevenient grace and the understanding this is how God initiates salvation.
<p style="text-align: center;">Scripture used to support unlimited atonement and Conditional Election</p>
<p><i>John 3:16, "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."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This scripture is widely used by both sides of the debate. Calvinists will try to focus on reinterpreting words in the verse such as "all" and "whosoever believeth" to limit the scope. However, they lose when compared with the context that God has given His son because he loved the world." • Also, it sets up the condition of salvation to belief, not the pathway to belief that we see in other passages. • Whosoever, "pas"
<p><i>Acts 17:30-31, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gospel calls "all" (pas) to repent. Not just the elect. True repentance leads to assurance to all who call out. He is faithful to forgive.
<p><i>John 1:8-9, "He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every man (pas) • All have receive prevenient grace, the light, that draws us to Him. We can reject the light and snuff it out. Meaning, we are truly personally culpable for our rejection of Christ. God has not determined our rejection.
<p><i>Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All "pas"
<p><i>Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined earlier, we are reminded we all personal go away from Christ but God has placed on Christ the inquiry of all people, not just he elect. Meaning his atonement is enough for the whole world. There is room for all who will believe.

Hebrews 2:9, "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."

- Christ tasted death for every person, not just the elect.
- Everyman "pas"

1 John 2:1-2, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

- Any man "τις τις, tis; an enclitic indefinite pronoun; some or any person or object:—a (kind of), any (man, thing, thing at all), certain (thing), divers, he (every) man, one (X thing), ought, + partly, some (man, -body, - thing, -what), (+ that no-)thing, what(-soever), × wherewith, whom(-soever), whose(-soever)"
- Christ's atonement is the peacemaker for all sins, not ours only (the redeemed) but also for the sins of the whole world. The atonement is not limited to a select few. But, all who would freely receive Christ's gracious invitation.

1 Timothy 2:3-6, "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. 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."

- Calvinism is built on God's will being irresistible and unchangeable. However, this verse states that God willed for all men to be saved, but we know this is not reality. Men and women can resist God's will and choose not to receive Christ invitation. It is not because God has rejected them. It is because they have rejected Christ.

2 Peter 3:8-10, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 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. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

- Again, the Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all would repent. We may choose to believe. It is not forced on anyone. God is patient to allow more time for people to seek Him, but eventually his patience will end and judgement will come.

Revelation 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

- Whosoever "ὁ ho, ho; the definite article; the (sometimes to be supplied, at others omitted, in English idiom):—the, this, that, one, he, she, it, etc."

Philippians 2:12, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my

presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

- Called the “paradox of grace.”
- It is not a contradiction once we see and acknowledge that our “work” is not the same as God’s “work” in salvation (including sanctification). Two different Greek words are translated “work” in these two verses. There’s our first clue that no contradiction is involved. However, knowing their meanings doesn’t automatically resolve the apparent tension. Theology steps in, however, to say that God’s work surrounds and underlies, enables, our “work” which is simply to allow God to do his work in us.
 - κατεργάζομαι katergázomai, kat-er-gad'-zom-ahee; from G2596 and G2038; to work fully, i.e. accomplish; by implication, to finish, fashion:—cause, to (deed), perform, work (out).
 - ἐνεργέω energéō, en-erg-eh'-o; from G1756; to be active, efficient:—do, (be) effectual (fervent), be mighty in, shew forth self, work (effectually in).
- We must allow God’s work to be brought to completion. He will do a work in us prominently, we then must allow it to be worked out in our life.

Responses to Irresistible Grace

1. Irresistible Grace is the idea that the elect, those who Calvinists believe have been unconditionally elected to eternal life, cannot resist the grace of God and heaven's determination to save them. As those elected to damnation can do nothing about it, those who are elected to salvation can do nothing to resist. The grace of God overwhelms them in such a way that even if they wanted to they could not repel it.
 - 1.1. Calvin's commentary on John 6:44
 - 1.1.1. *The statement amounts to this, that we ought not to wonder if many refuse to embrace the Gospel; because no man will ever of himself be able to come to Christ, but God must first approach him by his Spirit; and hence it follows that all are not drawn, but that God bestows this grace on those whom he has elected. True, indeed, as to the kind of drawing, it is not violent, so as to compel men by external force; but still it is a powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, which makes men willing who formerly were unwilling and reluctant.*
 - 1.2. Dort, Doctrine 3 & 4, Article 14
 - 1.2.1. *In this way, therefore, faith is a gift of God, not in the sense that it is offered by God for people to choose, but that it is in actual fact bestowed on them, breathed and infused into them. Nor is it a gift in the sense that God bestows only the potential to believe, but then awaits assent—the act of believing—by human choice; rather, it is a gift in the sense that God who works both willing and acting and, indeed, works all things in all people and produces in them both the will to believe and the belief itself.*
 - 1.3. The Westminster Confession of Faith
 - 1.3.1. *All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace." (Chap. X, Sect. 1)*
2. God does not force anyone to accept or reject His will. Calvinism simply views people as machines with no will of their own. While Calvinists teach that since a person is born totally depraved, he cannot even desire to do good, they say that if he is one of those who have been given unconditional election by God, that

when God calls him, he cannot do anything to resist.

2.1. The Scriptures reveal we are saved by the grace of God. (Eph. 2:8)

However, using our freedom to choose, we accept this grace by our faith not because God forces us to accept it. (Rev. 22:17)

Scripture Use to Support Irresistible Grace

John 6:44, "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."

- So, according to Reformed doctrine, no one can "come" unless they are first regenerated [i.e. given life]. Only those who have first been given spiritual life can "come" to Christ. While this interpretation may line up with the teachings of Calvinism, it renders nonsensical two related passages in the gospel like John 5:40.
- God's prevenient or assisting grace is morally drawing all people to Himself (John 12:32). This gracious working of God does not compel or force anyone to believe but enables all to respond to God's commands to turn away from sin in repentance, and towards the Savior Jesus Christ in faith.

John 11:41-44, "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

- Calvinists use this as a metaphor for salvation, in that Lazarus was irresistibly called out of the grave that symbolizes death.
- However, that would take away the contextual meaning and implications of the resurrection. Scripture leads us to understand Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were followers of Jesus. Their life did not represent those who did not follow Christ. Instead, the passage shows us that for the believer, Christ has power over the grave for His resurrection and ours.

Acts 16:14, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

- This scripture is used as another example of the effectual calling or irresistible grace. However, it does not prove anything but the order of salvation truly understood.
- Lydia worshiped God according to the knowledge she had. When Paul and Silas came, the Lord opened her heart to hear the Gospel. She was then baptized. Which we understand to be subsequent to belief.

Scripture Used to Support Resistible Grace
<p><i>Titus 2:11, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If "grace" has appeared to all men, then why is salvation not globally experienced?
<p><i>Jeremiah 12:1-2, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● God does not possess the "reins" of the wicked to irresistibly control their actions of receiving or rejecting.
<p><i>John 12:47-48, "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rejection of the words of Christ as placed solely on the person and not the God's rejection of them in the eternal past.
<p><i>John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salvation comes when we hear the word, believe, and are given life. Salvation is not that we are given life, then hear the word and believe.
<p><i>Rom. 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paul is putting down the foundation that salvation is available to all with the stipulation of believing. Nothing focused on an elect effectual calling.
<p>Faith always proceeds salvation. It is not salvation than faith. John 3:16, Acts 16:31, Mark 16:16, Hebrews 11:6</p>

Responses to Perseverance of the Saints

1. This doctrine is called by some, “eternal security” or “once saved always saved.” Many hold to this doctrine while claiming they do not follow Calvinism.
2. The logical conclusion of Calvinism states that since man is totally depraved and can do nothing on his own but evil, unconditional election is required to save him, God must then call him in an irresistible way to salvation. Therefore, since he needs to do nothing to be saved, he needs to do nothing to remain saved and that anything he would do in any way that would affect his salvation would negate the miraculous work of God in saving him.

2.1. Dort, Doctrine 1, Articles 11 & 12

2.1.1. *Just as God is most wise, unchangeable, all-knowing, and almighty, so the election made by him can neither be suspended nor altered, revoked, or annulled; neither can God’s chosen ones be cast off, nor their number reduced.*

2.1.2. *Assurance of their eternal and unchangeable election to salvation is given to the chosen in due time, though by various stages and in differing measure. Such assurance comes not by inquisitive searching into the hidden and deep things of God, but by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God’s Word—such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on.*

2.2. Dort, Doctrine 5, Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8

2.2.1. *Hence daily sins of weakness arise, and blemishes cling to even the best works of saints, giving them continual cause to humble themselves before God, to flee for refuge to Christ crucified, to put the flesh to death more and more by the Spirit of supplication and by holy exercises of godliness, and to strain toward the goal of perfection, until they are freed from this body of death and reign with the Lamb of God in heaven.*

2.2.2. *Because of these remnants of sin dwelling in them and also because of the temptations of the world and Satan, those who have been converted could not remain standing in this grace if left to their own resources. But God is faithful, mercifully strengthening them in the grace once conferred on them and powerfully preserving them in it to the end.*

2.2.3. *The power of God strengthening and preserving true believers in grace is more than a match for the flesh. Yet those converted are not always so activated and motivated by God that in certain specific actions they cannot by their own fault depart from the*

leading of grace, be led astray by the desires of the flesh, and give in to them. For this reason they must constantly watch and pray that they may not be led into temptations. When they fail to do this, not only can they be carried away by the flesh, the world, and Satan into sins, even serious and outrageous ones, but also by God's just permission they sometimes are so carried away—witness the sad cases, described in Scripture, of David, Peter, and other saints falling into sins.

2.2.4. *By such monstrous sins, however, they greatly offend God, deserve the sentence of death, grieve the Holy Spirit, suspend the exercise of faith, severely wound the conscience, and sometimes lose the awareness of grace for a time—until, after they have returned to the right way by genuine repentance, God's fatherly face again shines upon them.*

2.2.5. *For God, who is rich in mercy, according to the unchangeable purpose of election does not take the Holy Spirit from his own completely, even when they fall grievously. Neither does God let them fall down so far that they forfeit the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or commit the sin which leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit), and plunge themselves, entirely forsaken by God, into eternal ruin.*

2.2.6. *So it is not by their own merits or strength but by God's undeserved mercy that they neither forfeit faith and grace totally nor remain in their downfalls to the end and are lost. With respect to themselves this not only easily could happen, but also undoubtedly would happen; but with respect to God it cannot possibly happen. God's plan cannot be changed; God's promise cannot fail; the calling according to God's purpose cannot be revoked; the merit of Christ as well as his interceding and preserving cannot be nullified; and the sealing of the Holy Spirit can neither be invalidated nor wiped out.*

2.3. The Westminster Confession of Faith

2.3.1. "They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. "This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within

them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth, also, the certainty and infallibility thereof." (Chap. XIX, Sect. 1)

3. The Bible teaches that the believer is secure in his salvation in the hand of God as long as he remains faithful to the will of God and loyal to Christ. (2 Tim. 4:7-8)
 - 3.1. The word of God also teaches that a child of God can voluntarily, by his sins, separate himself from God and Christ and be lost. If the child of God becomes unfaithful and does not repent, the "wages of sin," death (Rom. 6:23), await him even though he had once been in fellowship with God.
 - 3.2. John Wesley (attributed to, but not confirmed)
 - 3.2.1. "Calvinists, who deny that salvation can ever be lost, reason on the subject in a marvelous way. They tell us, that no virgin's lamp can go out; no promising harvest be choked with thorns; no branch in Christ can ever be cut off from unfruitfulness; no pardon can ever be forfeited, and no name blotted out of God's book! They insist that no salt can ever lose its savor; nobody can ever "receive the grace of God in vain"; "bury his talents"; "neglect such great salvation"; trifle away "a day of grace"; "look back" after putting his hand to the gospel plow. Nobody can "grieve the Spirit" till He is "quenched," and strives no more, nor "deny the Lord that bought them"; nor "bring upon themselves swift destruction." Nobody, or body of believers, can ever get so lukewarm that Jesus will spew them out of His mouth. They use reams of paper to argue that if one ever got lost he was never found. John 17:12; that if one falls, he never stood. Rom. 11:16-22 and Heb. 6:4-6; if one was ever "cast forth," he was never in, and "if one ever withered," he was never green. John 15:1-6; and that "if any man draws back," it proves that he never had anything to draw back from. Heb. 10:38,39; that if one ever "falls away into spiritual darkness," he was never enlightened. Heb 6:4-6; that if you "again get entangled in the pollutions of the world," it shows that you never escaped. 2 Pet 2:20; that if you "put salvation away" you never had it to put away, and if you make shipwreck of faith, there was no ship of faith there!! In short they say: If you get it, you can't lose it; and if you lose it you never had it. May God save us from accepting a doctrine, that must be defended by such fallacious reasoning!"

Scripture Used to Support Perseverance of the Saints

John 10:28-29, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

- The argument on this passage is that noone can snatch any of Christ's sheep from out of the Father's hand. Therefore, noone who has been saved can ever be lost. To answer this argument, it is true that no one is able to pluck the saved out of the hand of God unless the person is willing to go. Becoming a "sheep" and being placed in the hand of God is conditional. It takes hearing Christ (v. 27), believing Christ (v. 26) and following Christ. (v. 27) Remaining a "sheep" is likewise conditional. As long as a person remains a faithful follower of Christ he "shall never perish" (v. 28) but remember, a sheep can go astray. When a person places himself in God's care and humbly submits to His will, no other person or being can tear him from this position. But this passage does not teach that he is not able to remove himself from the hand of God by sinning. (cf. Isa. 59:1-2)

Romans 8:35-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- The argument from this text is that nothing can separate the elect from the love of God. Therefore, if they cannot be separated from the love of God, they can never be lost. In answer to this argument, while it is true that all the things named in this passage cannot separate one from the love of Christ, but both the Father and the Son love all persons. (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:14). Are all people going to be saved? Even Calvinists do not believe that.

1 John 3:6-9, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

- The argument here is that one who is born of God cannot sin, i.e., it is impossible for the child of God to sin. If he cannot sin, he cannot be lost. Once he is saved he is always saved. The answer is that "cannot," from the Greek ou-dunamal, means morally unable not that which is physically impossible. "Cannot," as used in Scripture, does not always mean impossible. John, in this passage, could not have meant that it was impossible for a child of God to sin.

- In 1:8-10 and 2:1-2 of this same epistle he plainly stated that he could. In commenting on verses six and nine of 1 John 3, Marvin Vincent said, "John does not teach that believers do not sin, but is speaking of a character, a habit. Throughout the Epistle he deals with the ideal reality of life in God, in which the love of God and sin exclude each other as light and darkness." (Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. II, p. 348)

1 John 5:16, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

- Calvinist teach that while a believer may sin, they cannot fall away. So, for a sinning believer, they teach, may come to a point where God is so grieved with their continual sinning, that he removes them from life. This is the sin unto death.
- However, it is better understood as the sin of blasphemy that won't be forgiven. A total rejection of Christ. Either by a lifetime unbeliever who dies in their sin. Or a believer turned apostate dying in their sin.

Scripture Used to Support Conditional Perseverance

Matthew 13:41-42, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

- Christ shares that those who "offend" and "do iniquity" in "his kingdom" will be cast out. Who are these? Those who are wolves in sheeps clothing and are tares sown among the wheat. Those who have an appearance of godliness. Those who were once enlightened and tasted the truth.

John 15:1-6, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 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. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

- Branches "in me" many not be abiding.
- Abiding, μένω ménō, men'-o; a primary verb; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy):—abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for), thine own.
- We maybe "in christ" for a time but no longer abide in him and will be cut off.

Acts 8:9-24, "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that

of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me."

- Here is a testimony of one who believed, and was baptized. However, greed entered as a sin and he was once again in danger of judgement.

Romans 8:12-13, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

- We are to put to death the sinful flesh and live in holiness. We are not called to a sinning religion.

Romans 11:22, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

- We must continue in God's goodness or be cut off.

Romans 14:15, "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."

- By our walk, we have influence on others. Our brothers in the faith may be destroyed because of our hypocrisy and lack of love.

1 Corinthians 8:11, "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?"

- Perishing is noted of fallin under the judgment of sin. How could this happen to a brother if eternal security is true?

1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

- Paul, more than any of us, was not placing any chance on a doctrine of eternal security. He say a possibility of even himself being a castaway.

Galatians 5:2-4, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

- If we, after receiving grace, return to the law, we are "fallen from grace."

Philippians 3:12, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus"

- Paul understood the importance of pressing forward to apprehend, as it had not been guaranteed without his own effort.

1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"

- How can you depart from the faith if you never were in the faith?

2 Timothy 4:7-8, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

- We must continue to fight, push through, "keep" the faith. We can still fall short.

Hebrews 4:1, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

- Paul, speaking to believers, reminds them that we are going towards the promise of God, but could come short of it.

Hebrews 6:4-6, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

- Again, it is still possible to fall away. This is one of the hardest verses for people on all sides. What is to be made of the repentant backslider?

Hebrews 10:26-29, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

- This verse continues the previous thoughts. We can willfully sin after salvation. However, without repentance, we will find judgment and fiery indignation.

Hebrew 12:16-17, "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for

one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

- Again, from the previous two sections, we can be like Esau and sell our birthright.
- This is an important concept for those who teach "once a child, always a child."

James 5:19-20, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

- As brothers in the faith we can err from the truth and move our soul toward death. But there is hope to be converted back to Christ.

2 Peter 3:17, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."

- The "beloved" can be led away and fall from steadfastness.

Revelation 3:5, 22:19, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." - And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

- Twice, John warns that you can be "blotted out" from the book of life. This would seem to be a "nail in the coffin" understanding that those who was had been given eternal life, can have it taken away by sin.