The background of the slide features a faded image of four large stone statues of men in historical, clerical-style robes. They are standing side-by-side. The man in the second position from the left is holding a book. Below the statues, there is a stone ledge with a carved inscription that includes the letters 'IHS' in a stylized font, flanked by decorative flourishes.

A SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION

ITS HISTORY & DOCTRINE

PREVIOUS LESSONS

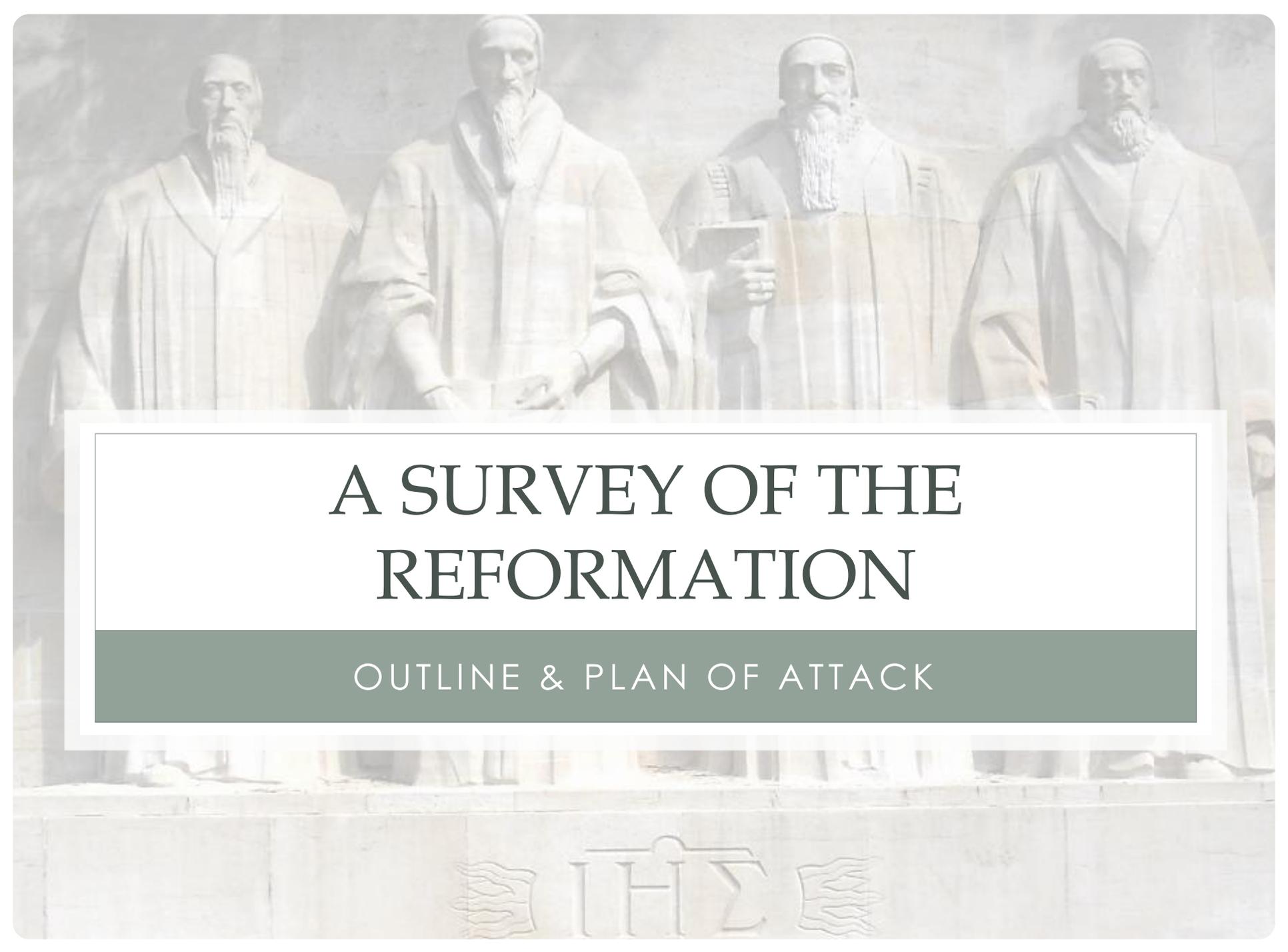
The slides from previous lessons are available at:

www.theheightschurchmn.org – click “Ministries” –
click “Adult Sunday School” / under “Lesson Notes”

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Feel free to save or print the PDF files of the slides.

The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned photograph of four large stone statues of men in historical, clerical-style robes. They are standing in a row, facing forward. The man in the center-right is holding a book. Below the statues, a stone ledge is visible with a carved inscription that includes the letters 'IHS' in a stylized font, flanked by decorative flourishes.

A SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION

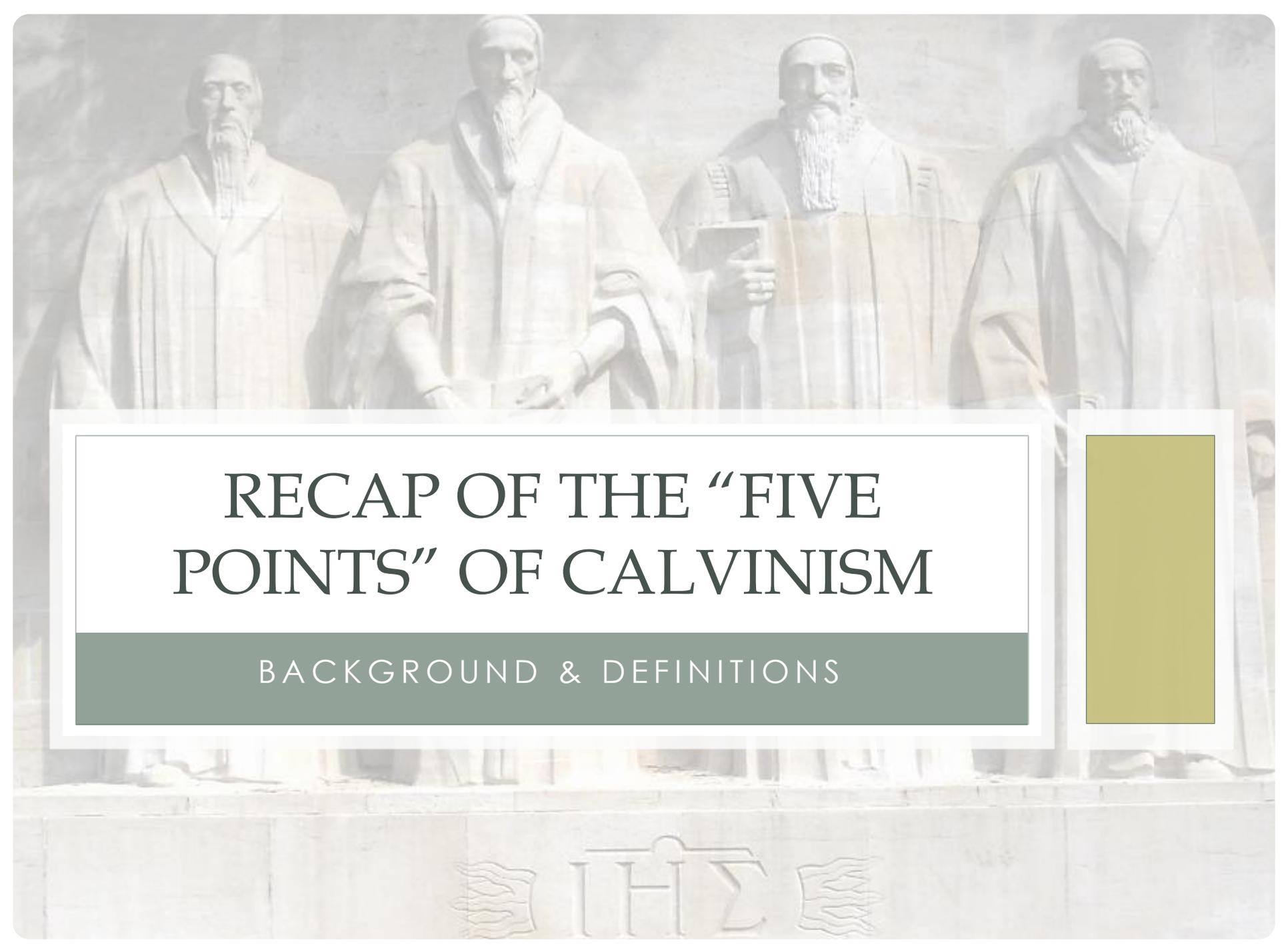
OUTLINE & PLAN OF ATTACK

HISTORY

1. Intro & Overview of Church History
2. Forerunners of the Reformation
3. The Protestant Reformation
4. Puritanism & the Legacy of the Reformers

DOCTRINE

1. Reformation Doctrine: The Big Picture
2. Total Depravity & Irresistible Grace
3. Irresistible Grace (cont.) & Limited Atonement
4. Limited Atonement (cont.) & Unconditional Election
5. Uncond. Election (cont.) & Perseverance of the Saints
6. **Answering Objections & Q+A**
7. Why the Reformation Matters Today



RECAP OF THE “FIVE POINTS” OF CALVINISM

BACKGROUND & DEFINITIONS

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

- God's will is supreme & no one's will can diminish His will.
- God's sovereignty is displayed in Providence & Predestination.

God “works all things according to the counsel of his will.” (Eph. 1:11)

God “does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?” (Dan. 4:35)

THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

- Today, the five counter-points in answer to the Arminians, are remembered as the “five points of Calvinism” [TULIP].

Total Depravity – Fallen Man’s Inability to Come

Unconditional Election – God’s Sovereign Choice

Limited Atonement – Our Particular Redemption

Irresistible Grace – God’s Gracious, Enabling Call

Perseverance of the Saints – The Completion of God’s Work in Us

RECAP: TOTAL DEPRAVITY

Total Depravity (or Radical Corruption) means that every aspect of man is tainted by sin.... evil affects every part of our being – mind, will, heart, etc.

We are:

Children of Disobedience	Ensnared by the Devil
Enemies of God	Of our father the Devil
Blind to the Gospel	Lost in our sins
Apart from God	Cannot seek God
Cannot please God	Cannot understand truth
Cannot do good	Dead in our Sins
Have a dead heart	UNABLE TO BELIEVE

RECAP: IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

Irresistible Grace (or Effectual Grace) is God's grace overcoming man's resistance. It is God's inward call that imparts faith to the elect. Faith flows from a heart that has been regenerated.

We are:

Drawn by the Father	Received gifts:
Given to the Son	Faith
Granted to come/believe	Repentance
Circumcised Hearts	Conversion
Believe because we are sheep	Ordained/Appointed to eternal life

RECAP: PARTICULAR REDEMPTION

Particular Redemption (or Limited Atonement) refers to Jesus' death in the place of a particular group of sinners. Redemption blesses all mankind, and Jesus' blood is sufficient to cover everyone, but God intended Jesus to be Savior "especially of those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:10).

Jesus :

Purchased the **Church** with His blood

Laid down his life for the **sheep**

Gave his life for his **bride**

Ransomed **a people** to God

Saved **his people** from their sins

RECAP: UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

Unconditional Election (or Sovereign Election) emphasizes the free choice of God which stands behind why some people believe and others do not (because people are not able to meet any condition on their own).

God chose you... to be saved

Appointed to eternal life

Chosen... to be rich in faith

Chosen by grace

Chose us... that we should be holy and blameless

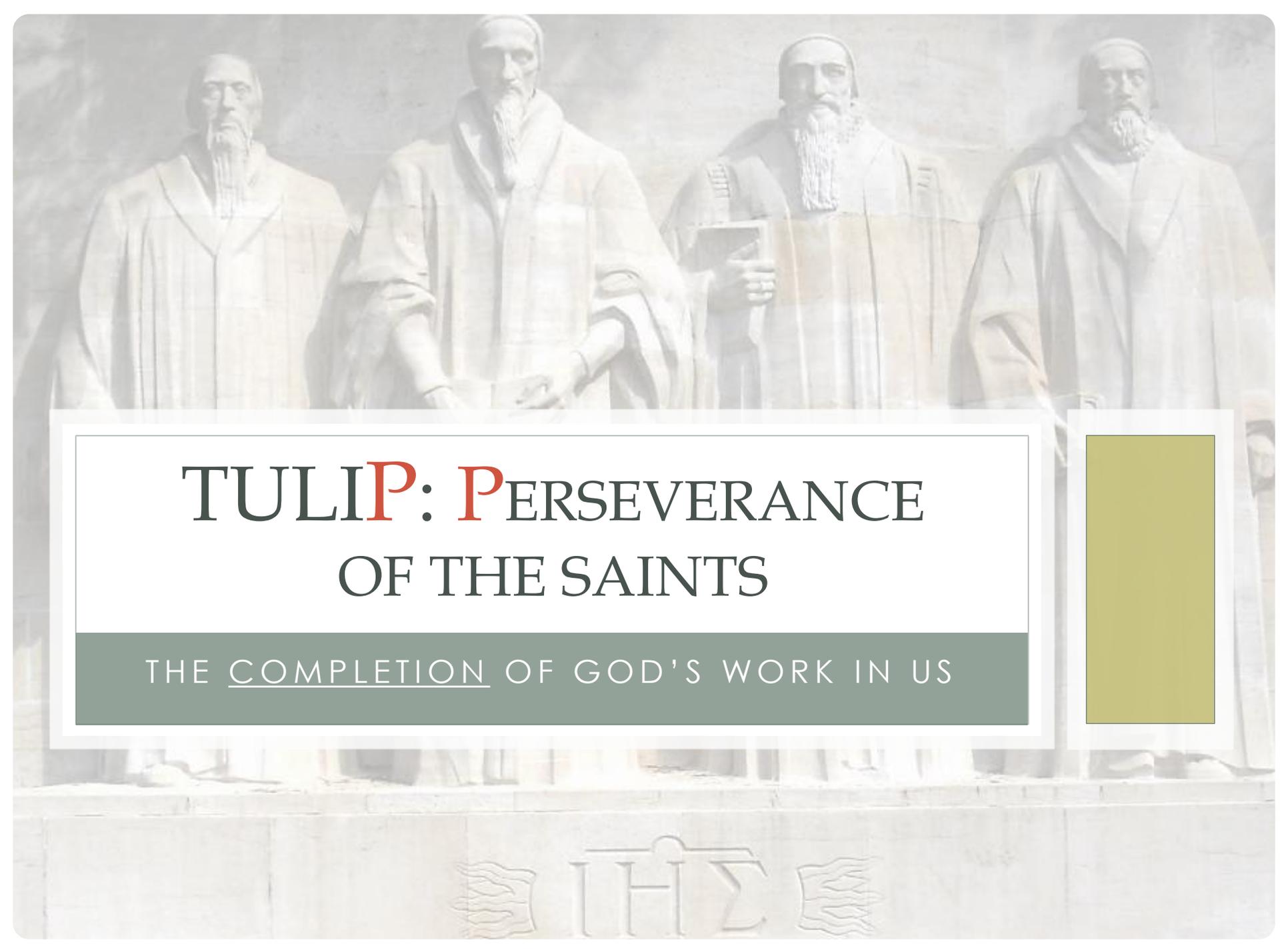
I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy

it depends not on human will... but on God, who has mercy

Predestined to be conformed to... his Son

NEXT POINT

- *Man is so fallen, he cannot seek God & is an enemy of God, resisting God's outward call to believe.* = **Total Depravity**
- *For the elect, God graciously overcomes their resistance, enabling them to believe.* = **Irresistible Grace**
- *This gift of faith, is given to those purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ their Savior.* = **Particular Redemption**
- *Ultimately, God's choice of who would believe stems from his own sovereign will, and is not dependent on any special condition in those chosen.* = **Unconditional Election**
- *God preserves all the elect so that not one of them is finally lost, but He also so works in them that they persevere in their faith.* = **Perseverance of the Saints**



TULIP: P ERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

THE COMPLETION OF GOD'S WORK IN US



PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

God preserves all the elect so that not one of them is finally lost, but He also so works in them that they persevere in their faith. When they fall, they aren't utterly destroyed, they get back up. They bear fruit and have good works which testify to the genuineness of their professed faith. For those who fail to persevere, we are not the ultimate judge, God is. But we should exhort one another daily to "fight the good fight of faith". When understood properly, this point allows believers to take seriously the many warning passages and "if" statements in Scripture. It also gives us confidence to trust that "He who began a good work in [us], will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6)."

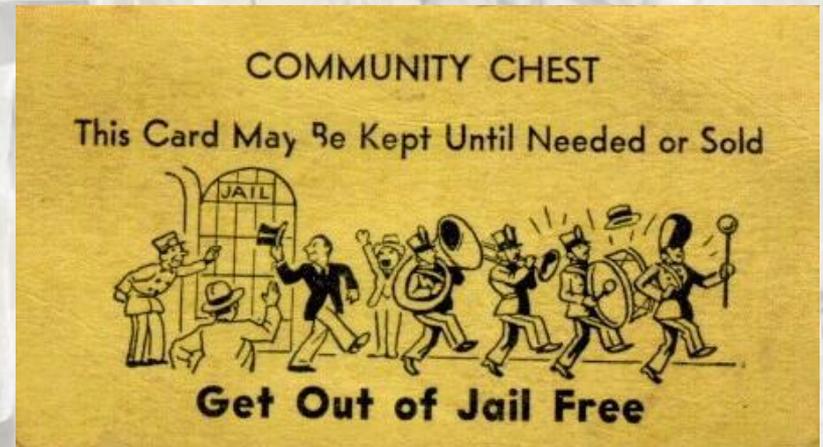
- Some prefer to use the phrase "**Security of the Believer**" or "**Eternal Security.**"
- Emphasizes that God completes His work in the lives of the elect so that none of them finally fall away from grace.

WHY “PERSEVERANCE”?

- Perseverance of the saints is often mis-stated as “preservation of the saints.”
- Preservation or “eternal security” is true. But perseverance speaks of the **obligation on the part of believers to persevere**, to “endure to the end.”
- Common Errors today:
 1. One can lose salvation (Pentecostal, true Arminian)
 2. One needs the Church rites to preserve salvation (R.C.)
 3. Once Saved Always Saved (most Baptists) – problem is a presumption that if you say the prayer, you are secure
 4. Free Grace theology / Easy Believism (some Evangelicals who are opposed to “Lordship salvation”) – error lies in saying repentance is something optional, the merest faith saves

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?!?!

- Emphasis should be: “once saved, always saved”
- Can lead to people treating salvation like a “get out of Hell free” card.

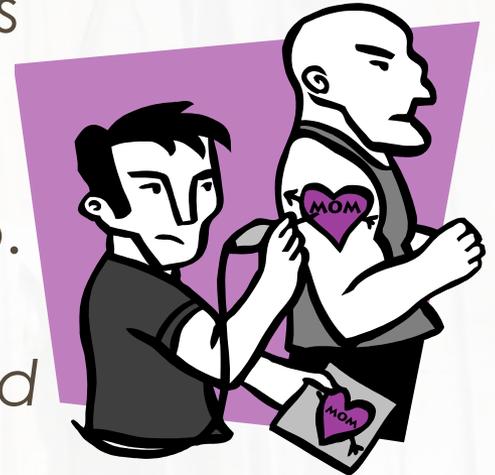


- People look for a “point in time” when they professed faith, rather than whether they currently possess faith.
- Evangelism is reduced to a method for getting people to “pray the prayer”
- And those who pray are told “since you confessed, you are saved.”
- Leads to worldly living and encourages backsliding.

EASY BELIEVISM

- The worst form of this treats the “sinner’s prayer” as a **magical formula**.
- A widely respected Baptist pastor has compared salvation to getting a **tattoo**.

“[Getting a tattoo] would involve a one-time-act on my part. Yet the tattoo would remain with me indefinitely. I don’t have to maintain an attitude of fondness for tattoos to ensure that the tattoo remains on my arm. In fact I may change my mind the minute I receive it. But that does not change the fact that I have a tattoo on my arm.... Forgiveness/salvation is applied at the moment of faith. It is not the same thing as faith. And its permanence is not contingent upon the permanence of one’s faith.”



SECURITY TEXTS (GOD KEEPS)

- **John 10:26-30** “I give them eternal life, and they shall **never perish**, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand”
- **John 5:24** “**has** passed from death unto life”
- **Rom. 8:33-39** “**[nothing] shall separate** us from the love of God in Christ”
- **Heb. 10:14** “**perfected for all time** those who are being sanctified”
- **1 Pet. 1:5** “by God’s power... **being guarded** through faith for... salvation”
- **Phil. 1:6** “he who began a good work in you **will bring it to completion**”
- **1 Thess. 5:23-24** “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, **he will surely do it.**”

IF TEXTS (MAN MUST ENDURE)

- **1 Cor. 15:1-2** “the gospel... by which you are being saved, **IF you hold fast... unless you believed in vain**”
- **Col. 1:21-23** “you... he has now reconciled... **IF indeed you continue in the faith**, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel”
- **Mark 13:13** “the one who **endures to the end** will be saved”
- **Heb. 3:12-14** “we have come to share in Christ, **IF indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end**” (see also 3:6)
- **John 8:31** “**IF you abide in my word**, you are truly my disciples”
- **Rom. 8:13** “**IF by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body**, you will live”
- **Heb. 12:14** “**holiness** without which no one will see the Lord”
- **Luke 8:13** “**believe for a while... [but] fall away**”

GOD WORKS IN HIS ELECT TO ENDURE

- **Phil. 2:12b-13** “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for **it is God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”
- **Hebrews 13:20-21** “**working in us** that which is well pleasing in his sight”
- **Jude 22, 24** “Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life... Now to him who **is able to keep you** from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.”
- **Phil. 1:6** “**he** who began a good work in you **will bring it to completion** at the day of Jesus Christ”
- **1 Cor. 1:8-9a** “[Jesus Christ] **will sustain you** to the end guiltless... God is faithful”
- See also: 1 Cor. 15:9, 2 Cor. 3:5, 2 Cor. 9:8, Gal. 2:20

WHAT ABOUT BACKSLIDERS?

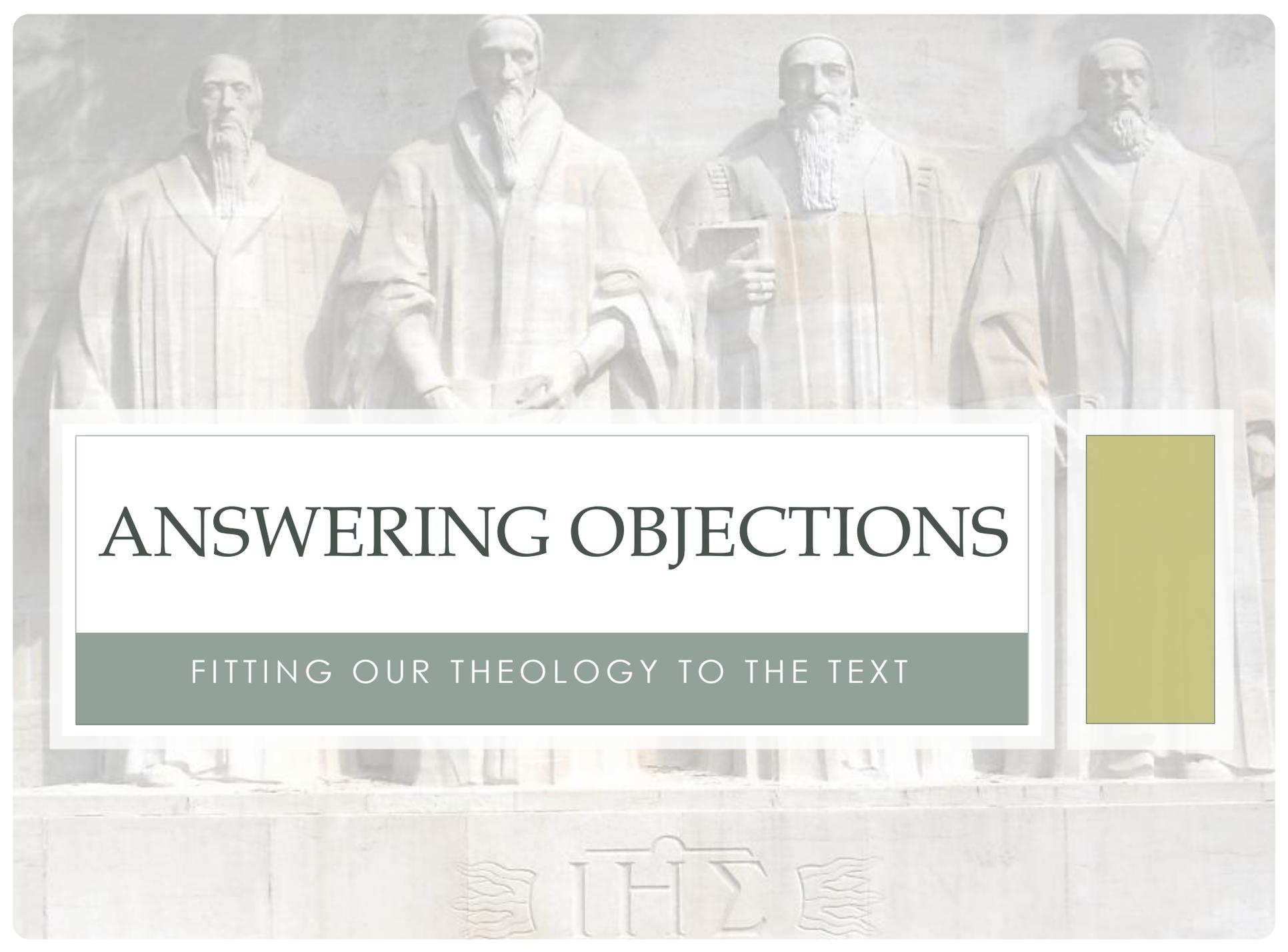
- The truly saved, will return to the Lord – Prov. 24:16
- Difference between Lot and Esau, Peter and Judas.
 - (2 Pet. 2:7 & Heb. 12:16-17; Jn. 13:27 & Luke 22:31-32 cf. Jn. 17:11-12, 24)
- Those who apostasize, **never were truly regenerate.**
 - 1 John 2:19 “went out from us, that it might be manifest they were not all of us”
 - 2 Cor. 13:5 “Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you fail to meet the test”
 - Matt. 7:23 “I never knew you; depart from me”

ASSURANCE

- Assurance is in **God's objective work** for us, but is bolstered by evidences of grace in our lives.
- We don't point necessarily to "a time and place" or an "action we did" we point to Christ's death for us.
 - Heb. 12:1-2ff.
- **Present FAITH:** Are we believing in Christ NOW? – Jn. 3:16
- **Pattern of FRUIT:** A godly life (i.e. endurance) is evidence of the reality of our faith.
 - Gal. 5:22-23 "fruit of the Spirit"
 - Col. 1:6 "bearing fruit and growing"
 - Phil. 1:11 "fruit of righteousness"
 - **1 John 5:3** "we keep his commandments"
 - **John 15:16** "your fruit should abide"
 - 2 Pet. 1:5-10 – long-term growth

CAUTION

- Jesus does teach we will recognize false teachers “**by their fruits,**” but we should not be self-appointed “fruit-inspectors” (Matt. 7:16)
- The “thief on the cross” and Lot are examples of true believers that would have failed the fruit test.
- **God is the judge, not us.** (Matt. 7:1, Rom. 14:3-4)
- We are to welcome all, and be considerate of others weaker than us. **We should encourage faith not chase it away.** (Gal. 6:1-2, 1 Thess. 5:14, Rom. 15:1-7)
- Don't despair, “doubts” are not the problem of unbelievers. *The very struggle against sin is evidence of God's work begun in our hearts.* (Heb. 12:1-11)



ANSWERING OBJECTIONS

FITTING OUR THEOLOGY TO THE TEXT

CONSIDERATIONS

- We must be careful to **subject our theology to the text**, not twist texts to fit our theology
- We must admit that there are **difficult texts** for all sides of this issue.
 - We shouldn't just ignore some texts and cling to others.
 - We have to aim for a position which does justice to all texts.
- We may not be able to explain everything to our satisfaction. Some things are shrouded in **mystery**.
- However, we can't shrink back from believing what the text does clearly say.

WHAT ABOUT THESE TEXTS?

- **John 3:16** “that whoever believes in him”
- **John 5:24** “whoever hears my word and believes”
- **1 Tim. 2:4-6** “who **desires all people to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth... who gave himself as a **ransom for all**”
- **2 Pet. 3:9** “**not wishing that any should perish**, but that all should reach repentance”
- **Ezek. 33:11** “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked”

WHOSOEVER WILL

- **John 3:16** “that whoever believes in him”
- **John 5:24** “whoever hears my word and believes”
- Anyone who believes – will be saved.
- Whoever wants / desires to believe, can (Rev. 22:17)
- This fits with **John 6:37b** “whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” *God doesn't turn people away!*
- But, look at **John 6:37a** “All the Father gives me will come to me”
- Calvinism doesn't take away “whosoever will” – it explains why some believe and others don't.
- It explains what happens “behind the scenes” in the heart

WANTS ALL TO BE SAVED

- **1 Tim. 2:4-6** “who **desires all people to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth... who gave himself as a **ransom for all**”
- **2 Pet. 3:9** “**not wishing that any should perish**, but that all should reach repentance”
- Context determines meaning of “all”
 - Luke 2:1-2 – all world went to be taxed
 - 1 Cor. 15:22 – in Adam all died... in Christ all will be made alive
- 1 Tim. 2 – compare vs. 1, “all kinds of people” are in view
- 2 Pet. 3 – see vs 1, 8 and beginning of v. 9 “is patient toward you” referring to the “you” in v. 1 and 8, and v. 11. Refers to the “elect” – doesn’t want any [of you] to perish.

NO PLEASURE IN DAMNATION

- **2 Pet. 3:9** “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance”
- **Ezek. 33:11** “No pleasure in the death of the wicked”
- Best explanation is that **God has 2 wills**.
 1. God wills that all be saved.
 2. God also ordains [= his will in another sense] that some suffer in Hell for all eternity, to satisfy his righteous wrath against sin.
- These two wills are termed:
 - God’s **prescriptive will** or **revealed will**. [this OUGHT to be / pleases God]
 - God’s **decretive will** or **secret will**. [God PLANNED this to happen]

OTHER QUESTIONS

- What about Free Will?
- How can man be responsible for his sin/unbelief?
- Doesn't this make God the author of evil?
- Are you saying God doesn't love everyone?
- What about evangelism?
- Are we just puppets, is life meaningful?

FREE WILL

- *Don't we have Free Will?*
- What do you mean by Free Will?
 - Not forced from the outside --- YES
 - Active agent, responsible for choices --- YES
 - Able to choose contrary to their nature (who they are) --- NO
- **Libertarian Free Will** (can choose contrary to nature)
- or **Limited Free Will** (limited by man's bondage to sin)
- Can't choose family, nationality, chronology, genetics, gender, etc. – free will is inherently limited
- Scripture teaches God causes the saved to will differently (if He can change their will, why not unsaved people's will too?) – Phil. 2:13, Heb. 13:21
- Everyone prays like a Calvinist “Lord save him/her...”

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

- *If man doesn't have libertarian free will, then how can he be blamed for his choices.*
- *If man doesn't have the ability to believe, how can he be responsible for not believing?*
- It is wrong to conclude a command implies ability to obey command.
 - We are required to love God with all our heart, but we cannot
- Scripture teaches we sin because we are sinners (original sin), yet we are judged because we sin (judgment of our works)
- We cannot reconcile man's responsibility and God's sovereignty, but we accept Scripture teaches both.

PROBLEM OF EVIL / SIN

- *Why does God allow sin? Is He the author of sin?*
- *If God desires all to be saved, why does He damn many to Hell?*
- This is a big objection against Christianity.
 - If God is good & all-powerful, why does He allow evil/suffering?
- All forms of Christianity grapple with this.
 - Saying God permitted free-will doesn't let God off the hook, since God knew all this evil/sin would happen. If he knew, why did he let it happen?
- Ultimately, Calvinism must follow Scripture's teaching on this.
- God is holy and good, but God has permitted evil

GOD ALLOWS EVIL

- God hardens the hearts of people/rulers
 - Deut. 2:30, Joshua 11:20, Ex. 4:21
- God causes nations/kings to persecute/war against other nations/people (causing harm and doing evil).
 - Job 1:21, Isaiah 10:5-6, Jeremiah 12:12, 51:20-23
- God sends evil or lying spirits causing someone to sin
 - Judges 9:22-23, 1 Sam. 16:14, 2 Chron. 18:21
- God works in people who are evil / fallen in sin
 - 1 Sam. 2:25 (because it was the Lord's will to put them to death)
 - 2 Sam. 12:11-12 (I will take your wives and give them to [Absalom]... you did it in secret, I will do this.. before all Israel)
 - Did God (2 Sam. 24:1) or Satan (1 Chron. 21:1) cause the sin?
 - Ps. 105:24-25, Prov. 16:4, 2 Thess. 2:11-12, Rev. 17:17

WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO GOD?

- God wants all to be saved, but He must want something MORE than that, since all do not get saved.
- Two principle options:
 - **To preserve free will:** God desires intimate fellowship from free beings so much that he wouldn't impinge upon their free will to actually force them to become saved. He wants true love not a coerced love.
 - **To display God's glory:** God desires to display the full attributes of His glory – his anger toward sin, his perfect holiness, & his mercy toward the undeserving. He wants to magnify Himself in salvation so no one can boast.
- The first option depends on a libertarian understanding of human “free will.” This is never explicitly taught in Scripture.
- The second option is taught clearly in Rom. 9:22-24, 1 Cor. 1:29 & Prov. 16:4. [Also, God didn't create out of a sense of need.]

WHY DID GOD PERMIT EVIL?

- Behind the problem of why God doesn't save all people, lies the question of why God permitted sin in the first place. **Jonathan Edwards** has a convincing answer:
- *"God's awful majesty, his authority and dreadful greatness, justice, and holiness... would not shine forth as the [other parts of divine glory] do, and also the glory of his goodness, love, and holiness would be faint without them; nay, they could scarcely shine forth at all... There would be no manifestation of God's grace or true goodness, if there was no sin to be pardoned, no misery to be saved from. No matter how much happiness he might bestow, his goodness would not be nearly as highly prized and admired.... and the sense of his goodness heightened. **So evil is necessary if the glory of God is to be perfectly and completely displayed.**"*
- Remember, it is not Calvinists who raise these questions. Calvinists try to answer them, others are often content to not even think about such questions....

~ quoted from *Chosen for Life* by Sam Storms (Crossway, 2007), pg. 186-187

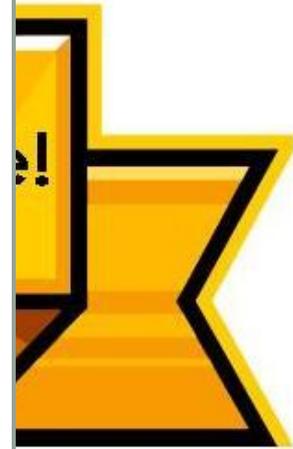
DOESN'T GOD LOVE EVERYONE?

- Scripture shows us God is compassionate, loving and good to all.
 - He causes the rain to fall on the just and unjust
- God's love for the world stands behind the universal offer of the Gospel
 - John 3:16
- But sinners are in rebellion to God and there is a sense in which God hates not only the sin but the sinner.
 - Ps. 26:5 "I hate the assembly of evildoers"
 - Mal. 1:3 "Esau have I hated"
 - Ps. 139:21-22 "Do I not hate those who hate Thee, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against Thee? I hate them with the utmost hatred; they have become my enemies"

WHAT ABOUT EVANGELISM?

- *Why evangelize if the elect will be saved anyway?*
- God ordained the preaching of the gospel to be the means that the elect are converted
 - Rom. 10:14-17
- We are called to go and preach to all
 - Matt. 28:18-20
- We do not know who are the elect, only God does
- So we preach to all and call all to believe
- The ones who come, were “appointed to eternal life”
 - Acts 13:48

EVANGELISM



ARE WE JUST PUPPETS?

- *Are we just puppets? Are our lives truly meaningful?*
- Scripture teaches that our choices matter and have eternal consequences.
- But in a sense we are actors in a big Play where God is the Divine Playwright.
- Like any good story (Cinderella, as an example), bad things happen, complicating the plot – but the hero wins, and tragedy is turned to rejoicing
- The best authors create characters with a life of their own. God is the Ultimate Author, and his characters have existence. But he is still the Author, crafting his perfect plan. God gets glory for all the good that is done. Sin is permitted but not directly caused by God.

UNFAIR TO HAVE FAVORITES

- *But – it is not fair of God to pick favorites. He can't do for some what he doesn't do for all.*
- “Friend, I do thee no wrong....Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own” (Matt. 20:13, 15)
- “The question is not whether a father will treat his children alike (remember some people are the Devil's children), but whether a sovereign must treat all condemned rebels alike. It is obviously not true that a Governor who pardons one convict from the penitentiary is obligated to pardon all. Such logic is nonsense.”

LEADS TO LICENTIOUS LIVING

- *Believing you are elect and secure, would lead to a life of lawlessness.*
- The doctrine of eternal security (which most Baptists hold), would be subject to the same objection.
- Paul doesn't argue like this, he sees election as a calling to live up to:
 - Col 3:12
 - 1Thess. 5:8-9
 - 2 Thess. 2:13-15

FOREKNOWLEDGE IS THE ANSWER

- *You're missing it, election is based on God's foreknowledge of people's free choices. This gets rid of all the challenges and risk of Calvinism.*
- Actually, this doesn't really rescue you.
- "According to [this] position, God foreknows all events. God did not choose who should believe on Christ; but God has known from all eternity what each man's choice would be, for God is omniscient.... There can be no alternative. If God foreknew that Mr. A would believe, then there is no possibility whatsoever of Mr. A's not believing."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Calvinism defends a **God-centered view** and majors on God's bigness.
- Other positions **defend man's role and freedom.**
- Conditional election ultimately rests on an idea of libertarian freedom which is not clearly taught in Scripture – only inferred.
- The impetus behind Calvinism is a desire to believe **what the text actually says** about this difficult matters (Rom. 9, Eph. 1, etc.).
- *My example is typical, I came to believe that Scripture clearly teaches this, so I changed my belief system to line up with this understanding of Scripture.*