



# A SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION

ITS HISTORY & DOCTRINE

# HISTORY

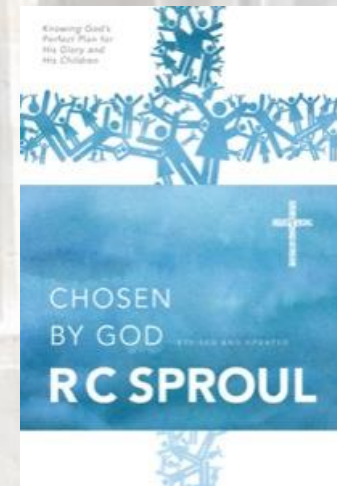
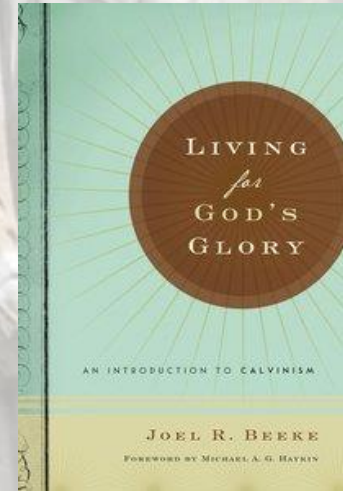
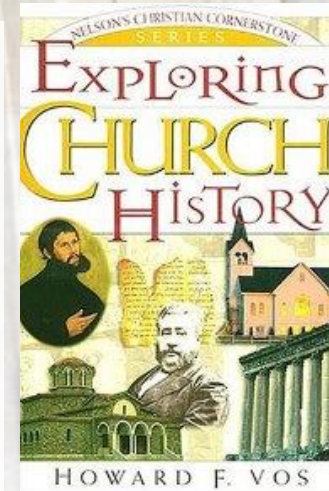
1. Intro & Overview of Church History
2. Forerunners of the Reformation
3. The Protestant Reformation
4. Puritanism & the Legacy of the Reformers

# DOCTRINE

1. Reformation Doctrine: The Big Picture
2. Total Depravity & Irresistible Grace
3. **Irresistible Grace (cont.) & Particular Redemption**
4. Unconditional Election & Perseverance of the Saints
5. Answering Objections
6. Why the Reformation Matters Today

# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- ***Exploring Church History*** by Howard F. Vos (Thomas Nelson, 1996)
- ***Living for God's Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism*** by Joel R. Beeke (Reformation Trust, 2008)
- ***Chosen by God*** by R.C. Sproul (Tyndale, 1986)
- ***What We Believe about the Five Points of Calvinism*** by John Piper (booklet, 1985) – available online at [www.DesiringGod.org](http://www.DesiringGod.org).





# RECAP OF THE “FIVE POINTS” OF CALVINISM

BACKGROUND & DEFINITIONS



# THE “FIVE SOLAS”

| Protestant   | Roman Catholic                         |
|--|--|
| <b>Scripture alone</b> ( <i>sola Scriptura</i> )     | Scripture and tradition                |
| <b>Faith alone</b> ( <i>sola fide</i> )              | Faith and works                        |
| <b>Grace alone</b> ( <i>sola gratia</i> )            | Grace and merit                        |
| <b>Christ alone</b> ( <i>solus Christus</i> )        | Christ, Mary, & intercession of saints |
| <b>Glory to God alone</b> ( <i>solī Deo gloria</i> ) | God, saints, and church hierarchy      |

~ adapted from *Living for God's Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism* by Joel R. Beeke (RHB, 2008), pg. 5

# 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)

# HOW IMPORTANT IS CALVINISM?

- “**Calvinism**” is a family doctrine. It is for the people of God, not important for unbelievers to learn.
- This doctrine explains what happens “behind the scenes” in conversion (from God’s perspective). It is Biblical and **important, but secondary**.
- Calvinism is often **misrepresented**. People reject the caricatures rather than the real doctrine.
- The system of thought is easily explained by using the **term** *Calvinism*, but Calvinists don’t necessarily follow John Calvin on all points.
- Ultimately, Calvinism is a **humble doctrine**. It bows to the Word of God in spite of human tendencies to elevate man’s role in salvation.

# THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

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

**T**otal Depravity – Fallen Man’s Inability to Come

**U**nconditional Election – God’s Sovereign Choice

**L**imited Atonement – Our Particular Redemption

**I**rresistible Grace – God’s Gracious, Enabling Call

**P**erseverance 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        | <b>UNABLE TO BELIEVE</b> |

# INHERITED SIN & “FREE WILL”

- **Original Sin** = doctrine that all humans are guilty due to Adam's sin, & all inherit sin because of Adam's fall.
  - Adam is our “federal head” – Rom. 5:12, 15-19; 1 Cor. 15:22-23
  - We are sinners “by nature” – Eph. 2:3
  - We are sinners from birth – Ps. 51:5, 58:3
  - Captive to our “father the Devil” – Jn. 8:44, 2 Cor. 4:4, 2 Tim. 2:26
- Free Will = the **ability to choose what we want**
  - Man has this natural ability
  - But man's will is bound by his evil desires
- We are free to choose what we want, but we are **unable to want or desire to please God.** (Rom. 8:7-8).
  - Our “want-ers” are broken

# NEXT POINT

- *Because man is fallen, he resists God's outward call to believe. He cannot seek God or please Him. He is an enemy of God.* = Total Depravity
- *So for the elect, God graciously overcomes their resistance and enables them to come and respond to God's call in the gospel.* = Irresistible Grace



# TULIP: IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

GOD'S GRACIOUS, ENABLING CALL



# IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

**Irresistible Grace** does not mean that no one can resist God's grace. People do resist. But for all who have been elected, God will overcome their resistance and graciously save them. This captures the idea of regeneration preceding faith. Calvinists believe faith flows from a heart that has been regenerated. A dead heart cannot believe. Faith is the sign of what happened behind the scenes in the internal workings of the heart. So while it may look like faith causes the new birth from our perspective, it actually is the new birth which evidences itself in faith.

- Some prefer to use the phrase “**Effectual Grace.**”
- Emphasizes God's inward call which successfully imparts faith to the elect.

# BUT CAN'T WE RESIST?

- People do resist God's outward call – Acts 7:51, Eph. 4:30, 1 Thess. 5:19
- But man is not neutral and able to evaluate God's call without a bias. He is:
  - Totally depraved in all facets of his being.
  - “By nature” a sinner, and is bound & blinded by Satan.
  - Without freedom to resist or accept God's drawing or enabling call.
- God's grace is effective, and effects His purpose in sending it.
  - “Who can resist God's will?” – Rom. 9:19

# WHAT KIND OF GRACE

- Arminianism: **Prevenient Grace**
  - This is given to all men equally and allows their fallen natures to freely choose or reject salvation.
  - John 1:9 and Tit. 2:11 are their proof texts.
  - This seems to make nonsense of all the teaching about the condition of fallen man.
- Calvinism: **Sovereign Grace**
  - This is given to the elect and enables them to believe the gospel
  - This is why believers are considered “the called” 1 Cor. 1:23-24 (from those who hear the **outward call** of preaching, some evidence themselves to be “the called” – those who have received the **inward call**)

# DRAWING: JOHN 6:37, 44, 65)

- No one can come to Christ without being “drawn” – John 6:44
  - “Draw” = “compel” (cf. James 2:6, Acts 16:19)
  - In Jn. 12:32, draw “all men” refers to all types of men, Gentiles and Jews.
- All who are “given/drawn” will come – John 6:37
- No one who comes will be cast out – John 6:37
- Those who are “drawn” were “granted” belief – John 6:65
- The reason not all believe, is because not all were “granted” – John 6:64-65



# GIFTS OF GOD

The following are “gifts of God” – given freely. If man has natural ability, why must God provide these gifts?

- **Faith** (Phil. 1:29, 1 Pet. 1:21, 2 Pet. 1:1, Rom. 12:3)
- **Repentance** (2 Tim. 2:25, Acts 5:31, Acts 11:18)
- **Conversion** (Eph. 2:8-10, John. 6:65, Acts 16:14, James 1:18, Phil. 1:6, Matt. 11:27, John 1:13)

# REGENERATION PRECEDES FAITH

- Belief flows from a changed / renewed heart – [1 John 5:1](#).
- Love & Life evidence the new birth – [1 John 4:7](#), John 3:6-8
- Faith and Repentance are gifts of God.
- The New Birth comes from “God’s will” not mans – [John 1:13](#), James 1:18.
- God opens our hearts to listen to the gospel – [Acts 16:14](#)
- To believe we need circumcised hearts – Deut. 30:6, Ezek. 36:25-27.
- Belief flows from our nature – John 10:14-16 (other sheep will listen to Jesus’ voice) & [John 10:24-30](#) (you don’t believe because you are not sheep)
- Belief comes from our being “appointed” – [Acts 13:48](#)

# NEW HAMPSHIRE BAPTIST CONFESSIOIN (1833)

## Section 7: Of Grace in Regeneration:

*We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again (Jn. 3:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:14, Rev. 8:7-9; 21:27); that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind (2 Cor. 5:17; Ez. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28-29; 5:5; 1 Jn. 4:7); that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth (Jn. 3:8; 1:13; Jam. 1:16-18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 2:13), so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel (1 Pet. 1:22-25; 1 Jn. 5:1; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-11); and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life (Eph. 5:9; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 3:14-21; Matt. 3:8-10; 7:20; 1 Jn. 5:4, 18).*

# NEXT POINT

- *Man is so fallen, that he cannot seek God and 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 the gospel.*  
= Irresistible Grace
- *This gift of belief, is given to those who were purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ their Savior.*  
= Particular Redemption





# TULIP: LIMITED ATONEMENT

OUR PARTICULAR REDEMPTION

# LIMITED ATONEMENT

*Jesus' death is of infinite value and is sufficient for all but efficient for the elect only. Jesus didn't just make salvation possible (if "activated" by one's own contribution of faith). He actually redeemed and saved a people through His death. These are the sheep for whom He died and the church whom He purchased with His blood and the bride whom He died for. He died in some different sense for these than He did for those He knew would reject His atoning sacrifice. He actually bore their real punishment and substituted on their behalf in a real way — He made true propitiation for these.*

- Some prefer to use the phrase “**Particular Redemption**” or “**Definite Atonement.**”
- Emphasizes the nature of the atonement as not only providing an offer of salvation, but actually procuring salvation for the elect.

# EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT

**Extent:** *For whom did Christ die? Is the atonement limited to just some?*

- Objectors focus on:

- John 3:16 – “God so loved the world”
- 1 John 2:2 – “for the sins of the whole world”
- 1 Tim. 2:6 – “gave himself as a ransom for all”

**Value:** *Calvinists agree that Christ's death was sufficient to cover the sins of the whole world.*

- Sufficient for all, efficient for the elect
- Christ's death is offered to all men, and secures common grace blessings for all.
  - 1 Tim. 4:10 – “Savior of all people, especially of those who believe”

# NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

**Nature:** *What did Christ actually achieve on the cross for those for whom he died? Does the atonement save, or merely make men savable?*

- 1 Tim. 1:15 – “Christ Jesus came into the world **to save sinners**”
- Mark 10:45 – “to give his life as a **ransom for many**”
- Matt. 1:21 – “he will **save his people** from their sins”
- Heb. 9:28 – “offered once **to bear the sins of many**”

Titus 2:14 “Who **gave himself for us** to **redeem us** from all lawlessness and to **purify for himself a people for his own possession** who are zealous of good works.”



# DESIGN OF THE ATONEMENT

**Design:** *What did God intend with Christ's atonement? What was the atonement intended to accomplish?*

- Beyond merely making all men “savable”, God had special designs for the atonement:
  - To purchase the Church – [Acts 20:28](#)
  - To sanctify his Bride – [Eph. 5:25-27](#)
  - To protect his Sheep – [John 10:15](#) (cf. 10:26-27)
  - To gather the Children of God – John 11:51-52
  - To ransom a People – [Rev. 5:9](#)
  - To consecrate those Given to him – [John 17:6,9,19](#) (cf. John 6:39)

# UNION WITH CHRIST'S DEATH

- Believers were united with Christ's death (Rom. 6:3-8; Gal. 2:19-20)
- Substitutionary Atonement means Jesus is more than a generic sports "substitute."

*"...Christ died as a **representative** substitute, one who was joined in his person to those for whom he died... Christ died as a public man, not a private man. That is, **Christ** died as **King** for his people, as **Husband** for his bride, as **Head** for his body, as **Shepherd** for his sheep, as **Master** for his friends, as **Firstborn** for his brothers and sisters, as the **Second** and **Last Adam** for a new humanity... united with his people, Christ died as **Someone**, as their representative."*

# WHO LIMITS THE ATONEMENT?

Non-Calvinists “limit” the atonement too:

- Most would say: the atonement doesn’t save everyone.
- The atonement means anyone who believes can be saved.

Calvinists say:

- The atonement only saves the elect (not everyone).
- The atonement means anyone who believes can be saved.
- The atonement also means, that all of the elect will actually be saved, none will be lost.

Either a **weak, potential atonement** for all, or an **actual, full atonement** for some.

# DOUBLE JEOPARDY

**John Owen** (Puritan minister in the 1600s) framed it this way in his famous book, *Death of Death in the Death of Christ*:

- Either:
  1. Christ died for **some** of the sins of **all** men
  2. Christ died for **all** of the sins of **some** men
  3. Christ died for **all** the sins of **all** men.
- Option 1 is nonsense, option 3 is what Arminians claim. But if this is true, why are not all men saved? How can God demand punishment for sins that have been paid for?
- Option 2 prevents a double-payment for sins, and is in line with the intention or design of the atonement.



## ROM. 8:32

*He who did not spare his own Son but **gave him up for us all**, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)*

- The basis of this great promise, is that God has given us his son. (*A fortiori* / from greater to lesser argument)
- In effect, Paul is saying “God will most certainly give you all things because he did not spare his own Son but gave him up for you.” (Piper)
- How does this argument work for those who will be lost for eternity? Shouldn't they get the “all things” promised on the basis of God's giving up his Son for them?

# WHAT ABOUT JOHN 3:16?

*For God so loved the **world**, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

- “World” refers to the evil world system.
  - God’s love is great, not that he loves the **entire** world, but that he would actually love such an **evil** world.
- God’s love is “in this way” (so = “thus”)
  - God’s love enables a **universal preaching** of the gospel. Anyone who (“**whosoever**”) wills to believe will be saved.
- The text doesn’t teach that God died for each individual in the world. Jesus was sent into the world to save the world (but not all will be saved).

# WHAT ABOUT 1 JOHN 2:2?

*He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the **whole world**. (1 John 2:2)*

- Propitiation = “real removal of wrath from sinners” (Piper)
  - **Ex**-piation: Removing sins **ex** (away from) us
  - **Pro**-pitation: A satisfaction of sins **pro** (before or in the presence of) God (Sproul)
- 1 Jn. 4:10 says propitiation is of “our sins”
- 1 Jn. 2:2 is similar to John 11: 51-52, and this may point to “whole world” meaning “the children of God scattered throughout the whole world”

# A CAUTION

- This point, is where many Calvinists differ, and a variety of positions have been held over the years.
- Because of 1 Jn. 2:2 and other similar texts, many have a hard time saying Jesus didn't die for all.
- I could agree with a "multiple intentions" view, that God had multiple intentions in mind with the death of Christ – to make a salvation offer to all, but also to purchase the elect. 1 Tim. 4:10 – Savior of all, but in a special way the elect.
- Ultimately, Scripture is less clear on this point than on the other four points of Calvinism. And we can be charitable in how we interact with those who don't hold to this point.



# FINAL THOUGHT

- This understanding of a “full” atonement is heart-warming and should encourage hope.
- The song sheet “From Whence this Fear and Unbelief” by Augustus Toplady (who also wrote “Rock of Ages”), illustrates how this understanding of Christ’s particular redemption for us, bolsters our faith.
- We do not need to fear when we recognize that Christ has fully substituted in our place and procured a perfect salvation for us.
- Our sins are atoned for in full, we can rejoice that we are Christ’s church, body, and even his bride!