

5 Points of Calvinism

Total Depravity - Calvinists believe that we are literally/physically/spiritually dead in our sins and trespasses and that we cannot nor do we even want to respond to the Gospel.

Yes Paul says that we are dead in sin; yes we are an enemy of God, yes there are none who seek God, and, no, we cannot save ourselves! But Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me..." which speaks of the ability to choose, meaning that Paul was speaking figuratively when he said we are dead ie John 3:18 conveys the same idea but uses the term condemned already in place of dead.

So who can believe? Calvinists believe that only those who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit first can believe. But what about in Acts 8:9-24 Simon believed before he had received the Holy Spirit?

Unconditional Election - Calvinists believe that before creation, God chose some people to be a part of the elect, they would be the only ones to receive salvation and forgiveness of sins. If taken to the extreme this implies that God has created or allowed many to be born that he will send to hell when they die simply because he didn't choose them.

Yes Jesus said, "you have not chosen me but I chose you," yes the Bible does say that all who are appointed to eternal life believed. Yes it is God who "calls/elects" men to be saved. But the Bible also states that God desires that none would perish and that God draws all men to himself. So how is it both ways? The Psalmist says "God's ways are higher than our own..." God in his sovereignty knows/chooses those to be saved based upon his foreknowledge of who will repent and believe. God doesn't save anyone who doesn't want to be saved, but he will seek out the lost, he has done everything short of forcing people against their will to save us. God doesn't view time the same way we do. We can only understand time as we know it, past, present and future, for God all of time is present because he lives outside our time constraints. So for God to elect based upon our decision is not difficult apart from time constraints.

Calvinists will use verses like Romans 9:22-23 ESV to prove that God created certain people simply to fuel the fires of hell. [22](#)What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, [23](#)in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory. They like the word prepared in these verses but they don't take into account the meaning or the sense of the word prepared, the first use of the word prepared is passive the second is active. I think the key is John 3:18 Whoever believes in

him is not condemned (prepared - active vs.23), but whoever does not believe is condemned (prepared - passive vs. 22) already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Limited Atonement - Calvinists believe that Jesus death on the cross was only sufficient to atone for the sins of the elect.

The Bible tells us that yes, Christ death paid the price for the sins of those who would be saved by faith in him. But it also tells us that Jesus died for all men, that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. God is sovereign in the fact that Jesus punishment was enough to fulfill Gods righteous anger and wrath toward sin no matter the number.

Some may feel that this just comes down to semantics, but at the heart of it, like most of these, is a theology that says that because I'm elect, because Jesus death atoned for my sins but could not atone for someone else's, I'm better than you, which is totally unbiblical.

Irresistible Grace - Calvinists believe that if you are one of the elect that you cannot resist the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration, and that no matter how hard you may try you will eventually be saved.

Yes the grace of God is irresistible to those who are being saved, but more so in the way that God has made us the offer of a lifetime, or an offer that we cannot refuse, we would be stupid to refuse. God offers us forgiveness in place of wrath and punishment why would we turn him down. God never forces anyone to be saved, but the Bible says that the gospel is foolishness to those who do not believe. The mere fact that satan could rebel and that Adam and Eve could sin, the reality that God would even put a forbidden tree in the garden in the first place speaks to both his sovereignty and to man's responsibility as well as the ability to reject God.

Preservation of the Saints - The Calvinists believe basically that "once saved always saved," to put it in the simplest terms.

Yes Jesus said neither shall they be plucked out of my hand. But what about the multiple references/warnings to not fall away, Jesus says multiple times in the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation says, to the one who conquers and endures to the end will be saved. What about the parable of the sower where Jesus says, the cares of this life draw them away. What about apostates or in John 15 where Jesus says to those who don't abide they will be gathered together and thrown into the fire?

Conclusion - What most of this comes down to is pitting man's responsibility against God's sovereignty, but I believe that the Bible teaches that these two things are not mutually exclusive rather you cannot have one without the other because the Bible teaches both. The Calvinist argues that it takes away from the sovereignty of God for man to have a free will. But we believe that the bible teaches that God in his sovereignty allows man to have a free will and thereby mankind will be held responsible for the choices he has made. In other words God gets more glory from a person choosing to turn from their sins and turning to God and repenting and believing then he does from forcing someone to do something.