

Calvin Answered

The religious thought of many have been influenced by John Calvin. He came up with the TULIP theory, which is accepted by most denominations. Let us examine this doctrine of man (Matt. 15:8-9).

Total hereditary depravity: This first point says that man is born inherently depraved, that is, each person inherits Adam's sin. Thus, it is supposed, we are born wholly inclined to evil and separate from God. However, the Bible says, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (Eze. 18:20). Too, "...God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes" (Ecc. 7:29).

Unconditional election: This point teaches that God predetermined which individuals would be lost and which would be saved. It says that the number of the lost and saved are set and unchangeable--they cannot even be altered by one (1). Yet, the Word of God says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Limited atonement: This says that Jesus died, shed His blood, only for the elect. But, the New Testament says, "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 Jn. 2:2).

Irresistible grace: This fourth point teaches that at the time God determines to save a man, because he has been foreordained to be elect, He will send the Holy Spirit into the man's heart and irresistibly cause him to have saving faith. In contrast, the Scripture says, "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you" (Acts 7:51).

Perseverance of the saints: The final point of the TULIP theory teaches that once a person has been saved, they cannot ever be lost--no matter what they do! Contrary to this, the gospel of Jesus teaches, "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

Steven F. Deaton