

# Calvinism: The Unbiblical Foundation

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*"Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, Perseverance of the Saints" — TULIP collapses under biblical scrutiny, historical examination, and moral reasoning.*

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## Introduction: Why This Matters

Calvinism is not merely a theological disagreement. It is a systematic distortion of God's character that:

- **Makes God the author of evil** — decreeing every sin, every rape, every murder, every child abuse
- **Makes God a cosmic tyrant** — creating billions of people with the sole purpose of damning them
- **Destroys human agency** — reducing mankind to puppets with no genuine choice
- **Eliminates genuine love** — because forced love is not love at all
- **Undermines the gospel call** — why preach "repent and believe" if people cannot repent or believe?

Before accepting any theological system, we must ask two questions:

1. **What does the Bible actually teach?**
2. **What kind of man founded this system, and what were the fruits of his life?**

As Jesus said: *"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"* (Matthew 7:16)

Let us examine both the man and the doctrine.

## **Part I: The Man Behind the System — Who Was John Calvin?**

### **Early Life and Background**

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John Calvin (originally **Jehan Cauvin**) was born on July 10, 1509, in Noyon, a town in Picardy, France. He was the second of three sons who survived infancy.

#### **Key biographical facts:**

- His father, Gérard Cauvin, was a cathedral notary and registrar to the ecclesiastical court
- His mother, Jeanne le Franc, died when Calvin was young
- By age 12, Calvin was employed by the bishop as a clerk
- His father intended him for the priesthood but later changed his mind
- Calvin was sent to study **law** at the University of Orléans (1525-1526)
- He studied under the humanist lawyer Andreas Alciati at Bourges (1529)
- By 1532, he received his **licentiate in law**

### **A Lawyer, Not a Prophet**

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**This is a critical point: John Calvin was trained as a lawyer, not as a theologian, not as a prophet, and certainly not as an apostle. He had no divine calling, no angelic visitation, no prophetic commission. He was a legally-trained mind who applied legal reasoning to theology — and the results were catastrophic.**

### **Conversion to Protestantism**

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Calvin's conversion to Protestantism was gradual and poorly documented. Around 1533, he experienced what he later called a "sudden conversion," though the details remain unclear. He wrote:

"God subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame."

Notice the passive language — even in describing his own conversion, Calvin emphasizes his helplessness. This psychological framework would become the foundation of his entire theological system.

## Flight to Geneva

After the **Affair of the Placards** in October 1534 (when Protestant posters attacking the Catholic Mass appeared throughout France), Calvin fled to Basel, Switzerland. In 1536, he intended merely to pass through Geneva but was convinced by Guillaume Farel to stay and help reform the church there.

What followed was a 23-year experiment in theocratic rule that would see executions, banishments, torture, and religious oppression.

## Part II: Calvin's Geneva — A Reign of Religious Terror

### The Statistics of Persecution

During Calvin's time in Geneva (1541-1564), the city became a laboratory for his theological vision. The results were horrifying:

**From 1542 to 1546 alone:**

Category	Number
<b>Total Executions</b>	58
<b>Banishments</b>	76
<b>Prosecutions for moral offenses (1558-1559)</b>	414

Source: *Christian History Magazine*, Bernard Cottret's "Calvin: A Biography"

**Breakdown of the 58 Executions:**

Category	Number	Details
	20	All men

<b>Ordinary crimes</b> (murder, robbery, forgery, political offenses)		
<b>Witchcraft/plague-spreading</b>	38	Mostly women, tortured and executed

### Execution Methods:

- **Burned alive:** 35 people
- **Hanged:** 13 people
- **Beheaded:** 10 people

Of those executed, 30 were men and 28 were women. The 38 non-ordinary-crime executions were primarily women accused of spreading the plague through witchcraft — accusations made after torture extracted "confessions."

## The Methods

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The methods of execution included:

- **Burning at the stake** (used for heretics and alleged witches)
- **Beheading** (used for sedition and blasphemy)
- **Hanging**

Torture was routinely used to extract confessions. Jacques Gruet, for example, was tortured for 30 days before confessing.

## The "Crimes"

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People were prosecuted, banished, or executed for:

- Denying the Trinity (Servetus — burned alive)
- Questioning predestination (Bolsec — imprisoned, banished)
- Blasphemy and sedition (Gruet — tortured 30 days, beheaded)
- Adultery (multiple executions in 1560-1561)
- "Witchcraft" and "plague-spreading" (38 people, mostly women)
- Wearing the wrong color clothing
- Having banned hairstyles
- Not naming children after Old Testament characters
- Dancing (prosecutable offense)

- Striking one's parents (a girl was executed for this)

## The Case of Michael Servetus (1553)

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The most infamous execution was that of **Michael Servetus**, a Spanish physician and theologian who made significant contributions to medicine (he correctly described pulmonary circulation before any other European).

**The "Crime":** Servetus denied the Trinity and infant baptism.

### The Sequence of Events:

1. Servetus had corresponded with Calvin for years, disagreeing on theology
2. Calvin had previously written that he wished Servetus dead
3. When Servetus arrived in Geneva (attempting to travel to Italy), he attended a sermon by Calvin
4. He was arrested **after the service** on August 13, 1553
5. All his property was confiscated
6. He was tried for heresy from August 14 to October 25, 1553
7. **Calvin pressed for execution** — requesting beheading rather than burning
8. The Council sentenced him to death by burning
9. On October 27, 1553, **Servetus was burned alive atop a pyre of his own books**

## Calvin's Defense

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Calvin not only supported the execution but defended it afterward. He wrote a treatise justifying the killing of heretics: *Defensio orthodoxae fidei* (Defense of Orthodox Faith).

He argued that it was the **duty of civil government** to punish heresy with death.

## Other Notable Victims

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### Jérôme-Hermès Bolsec (1551)

- **Crime:** Publicly challenged Calvin's doctrine of predestination
- **Accusation:** Said predestination makes God the author of sin
- **Punishment:** Arrested during a lecture, imprisoned, then banished
- Calvin's private comment: He wished Bolsec were "rotting in a ditch"

### Sebastian Castellio

- **Crime:** Considered the Song of Songs to be apocryphal

- **Punishment:** Denied ordination, forced to leave Geneva
- Castellio later wrote *Treatise on Heretics* (1554), arguing for religious tolerance
- His famous statement about Calvin's Geneva: "*If Christ himself came to Geneva, he would be crucified.*"

## Jacques Gruet (1547) – Beheaded for Blasphemy and Dissent

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Jacques Gruet was a Genevan poet and freethinker who opposed Calvin's authoritarian control over Geneva. His story reveals the brutal enforcement of Calvin's religious regime.

### Background:

- Son of Humbert Gruet, a notary public of Geneva
- Known for frequenting taverns and defying conservative religious laws
- Once prosecuted simply for *dancing*
- Wore fashionable trousers (*chausses chapplée*) that "scandalized the city with their shortness"
- Associated with Ami Perrin and others who opposed Calvin's influence

**The "Crime":** On June 27, 1547, an unsigned threatening letter in Genevan dialect was found at the pulpit of St. Pierre Cathedral where Calvin preached. The Council suspected a plot and investigated. Gruet was arrested.

**What They Found:** When authorities searched Gruet's home, they discovered notes in which he:

- Criticized Calvin as a hypocrite
- Argued that only laws protecting the state should be upheld
- Mocked the Scriptures
- "Ridiculed Christ"
- Called the immortality of the soul "a simple fairy tale"
- Declared that fornication was not criminal when both parties consented

### The Charges:

- Blasphemy against God
- Offense against civil magistracy
- Threats against ministers
- "*Crime de lèse-majesté*" (treason)

**The Torture:** Gruet was imprisoned for a month and **tortured for 30 days**. Under torture, he confessed to writing the threatening letter but refused to name any accomplices.

**The Execution:** On July 26, 1547, Gruet was marched from prison past his own home to the Hôtel de Ville, where he was **beheaded**.

**Calvin's Response:** Calvin did not oppose the execution. In fact, two years later (1549), when more of Gruet's "anti-Christian writings" were discovered in his former home, the authorities burned the writings — even though Gruet was already dead.

**The Significance:** Gruet was executed for *thought crimes* — for privately written notes that expressed skepticism and criticism. He harmed no one. He simply disagreed with Calvin and wrote his opinions in his own home. For this, he was tortured for a month and beheaded.

## The Plague Executions (1542-1546)

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During a devastating plague outbreak in Geneva, 38 of the 58 total executions during this period were for "witchcraft" and "plague-spreading":

- These 38 victims were primarily women
- They were accused of spreading the plague through sorcery
- Confessions were extracted through torture
- In one year alone, 14 women were executed for allegedly "persuading Satan to send the disease"
- Calvin himself wrote about 23 of these cases, justifying them as punishment for spreading plague by witchcraft

**Note on Calvin's Family:** Calvin's own stepdaughter and son-in-law were later condemned for adultery and executed — showing that his system spared no one, not even his own family.

## Part III: The Hypocrisy of Calvin

### The Fundamental Contradiction

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Calvin and the other Protestant Reformers claimed **freedom of conscience** from Rome. They argued that:

- The Pope had no right to dictate belief
- Scripture alone (Sola Scriptura) should be the authority
- Individual conscience was sacred

Yet Calvin **burned people alive** who disagreed with HIM. This is not merely inconsistency — it is rank hypocrisy of the most dangerous kind.

## The Reformers' Own Words Against Them

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Martin Luther wrote: *"It is against the will of the Spirit that heretics should be burned."*

Yet when Calvin burned Servetus, Luther's followers were largely silent.

Sebastian Castellio's rebuke to Calvin was devastating:

*"To kill a man is not to defend a doctrine, but to kill a man. When Servetus fought with reasons and writings, he should have been repulsed by reasons and writings."*

## After Calvin: The Legacy of Death

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The persecution didn't end with Calvin. His theological system, when given political power, produced similar fruit:

### Scotland (under Calvinism):

*"After Calvinism was introduced into Scotland, those who professed the Catholic religion were subject to the death penalty."  
— 3 Eternal Destinies*

**The Synod of Dort (1618-1619):** The Arminians (followers of Jacob Arminius who rejected Calvinist predestination) were:

- Condemned as heretics
- Their leaders were arrested
- Some were imprisoned
- One leader (Johan van Oldenbarnevelt) was executed

## The Logical Fruit of Calvinism

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Here is the theological logic:

1. **If** God has unconditionally elected some to salvation and predestined others to damnation...
2. **And if** nothing any person does can change their eternal destiny...
3. **Then** forcing compliance, silencing heresy, and killing dissenters makes perfect sense

4. **Because** allowing "false doctrine" to spread serves no purpose — the elect will be saved anyway, and the reprobate are already damned

**Calvin's executions are the logical fruit of his theology.**

**No agency → No choice → Force compliance or kill dissenters**

**As Jesus said: "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" (Matthew 7:20)**

## **Part IV: TULIP Refuted — Point by Point**

TULIP is the acronym summarizing the five points of Calvinism, formalized at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619):

- Total Depravity (Total Inability)
- Unconditional Election
- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace
- Perseverance of the Saints

Let us examine each point against Scripture.

### **T — Total Depravity (Total Inability)**

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#### **The Calvinist Claim**

Humans are so completely depraved by original sin that they are **utterly incapable** of:

- Choosing God
- Responding to the gospel
- Exercising faith
- Doing anything spiritually good

God must first **regenerate** the person (make them born again) before they can believe. Faith doesn't produce regeneration — regeneration produces faith.

#### **The Biblical Response**

**The Bible commands people to choose — over 100 times:**

**Joshua 24:15** — *"Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

If humans cannot choose, why does God command them to choose?

**Deuteronomy 30:19** — *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."*

God sets before them **two options** and commands them to **choose life**. This is meaningless if they cannot choose.

**John 7:17** — *"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."*

"If any man **will**" — human volition is acknowledged and expected.

**Revelation 3:20** — *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."*

Christ **knocks**. Man must **open**. This is not forced entry.

**Acts 17:30** — *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."*

God commands **all men everywhere** to repent. A command implies ability to comply.

**Isaiah 1:18-20** — *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD... If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword."*

God invites reasoning. He offers a choice: be willing or refuse. Both options are real.

### **The Preventive Grace Solution**

Arminian and LDS theology acknowledge human sinfulness but affirm **preventive grace** — God's enabling grace that goes before salvation and enables a genuine choice.

**John 1:9** — *"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."*

Christ gives light to **every person**. This enabling grace makes genuine response possible.

**Titus 2:11** — *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."*

Grace has appeared to **all men** — not just the elect.

**The Key Question: If humans are totally unable to respond to God, why does the Bible command them to choose (100+ times)? Invite them to reason? Plead with them to repent? Hold them accountable for refusing?**

**Commands without ability are mockery. Calvinism makes God a mocker.**

## **U — Unconditional Election**

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### **The Calvinist Claim**

Before the foundation of the world, God **unconditionally** chose:

- Certain individuals for salvation (the elect)
- Certain individuals for damnation (the reprobate)

This choice was not based on foreseen faith, foreseen works, or any human action whatsoever. It was purely arbitrary — based solely on God's "good pleasure."

### **The Biblical Response**

**God desires ALL to be saved:**

**1 Timothy 2:3-4** — *"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."*

God **wills** all men to be saved. Not some. Not the elect. ALL.

**2 Peter 3:9** — *"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."*

God is **not willing that ANY should perish**. He wants **ALL** to come to repentance.

**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."*

"**Whosoever**" — not "the elect only." Anyone who believes.

**Ezekiel 18:23** — *"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?"*

God takes **no pleasure** in the death of the wicked. He wants them to **turn and live**.

**Ezekiel 33:11** — *"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"*

God **pleads** with the wicked to turn. Why plead if He has already unconditionally damned them?

**Election is Conditional — Based on Foreseen Faith**

**Romans 8:29** — *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."*

Notice the order: **Foreknowledge PRECEDES predestination**. God predestines based on what He foreknows.

**1 Peter 1:2** — *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father."*

Election is **according to foreknowledge** — not arbitrary decree.

**The Logical Problem: Unconditional election makes God:**

- 1. Create billions of people predestined for hell — with no chance of salvation**
- 2. Command them to repent — when He has already determined they cannot**
- 3. Punish them eternally — for not doing what He made impossible**

**This is not justice. This is cosmic cruelty.**

## L — Limited Atonement

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### The Calvinist Claim

Jesus Christ died **only for the elect**. His blood was not shed for all humanity, only for those God had unconditionally chosen. The atonement is "limited" in its scope — it was never intended for the reprobate.

### The Biblical Response

**The Bible explicitly says Jesus died for ALL:**

**1 John 2:2** — *"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."*

"**The whole world**" — not just believers, not just the elect. THE WHOLE WORLD.

**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."*

"**Every man**" — without exception.

**2 Corinthians 5:15** — *"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."*

"**He died for all**" — the word "all" means all.

**1 Timothy 4:10** — *"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."*

God is "**Saviour of all men**" — with special application to believers. But He is Savior of ALL.

**1 Timothy 2:6** — *"Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."*

A "**ransom for all**" — not for some.

**John 1:29** — *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

"**The sin of the world**" — not the sin of the elect only.

**2 Peter 2:1** — *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."*

These false teachers are **heading for destruction**, yet Christ "**bought them.**" If limited atonement were true, Christ could not have bought those who are lost.

**The Calvinist Word Games: Calvinists must redefine "all" to mean "all kinds of people" or "all the elect." But this is eisegesis — reading meaning INTO the text rather than drawing it OUT.**

**When the Bible says "all" and "whole world" repeatedly, the plain meaning is universal.**

## **I — Irresistible Grace**

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### **The Calvinist Claim**

When God chooses to save someone, His grace **cannot be resisted**. The elect will be saved whether they want to be or not. God's effectual call always accomplishes its purpose — the person has no choice but to believe.

### **The Biblical Response**

**The Bible repeatedly shows people resisting God's grace:**

**Acts 7:51** — *"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."*

Stephen explicitly accuses them of **resisting the Holy Spirit**. If grace were irresistible, this accusation would be nonsense.

**Matthew 23:37** — *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"*

Jesus says:

- "**I would**" — He wanted to gather them

- **"Ye would not"** — They refused

Christ's will was **resisted** by human will.

**Luke 7:30** — *"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."*

They **"rejected the counsel of God."** God's purpose for them was frustrated by their choice.

**Hebrews 3:7-8** — *"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness."*

The command **"harden not your hearts"** implies the ability to harden OR soften. It's a choice.

**Isaiah 63:10** — *"But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them."*

They **"vexed his holy Spirit"** through rebellion. The Spirit can be vexed, grieved, and resisted.

**Ephesians 4:30** — *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."*

Why does God command us not to **"grieve the Spirit"** if His grace is irresistible and everything is predetermined?

**The Key Question: If grace is irresistible, why does the Bible warn against resisting the Spirit? Show Jesus being refused? Command us not to harden our hearts? Tell us not to grieve the Spirit?**

**Warnings against resistance are meaningless if resistance is impossible.**

## **P — Perseverance of the Saints (Once Saved, Always Saved)**

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### **The Calvinist Claim**

Those who are truly elect **cannot lose their salvation**. They will persevere to the end. If someone appears to fall away, they were never truly saved in the first place.

This is often called **"Once Saved, Always Saved"** (OSAS).

## The Biblical Response

### The Bible warns genuine believers they CAN fall away:

**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."*

Note what these people HAD:

- They were **enlightened**
- They **tasted the heavenly gift**
- They were **partakers of the Holy Ghost**
- They **tasted the good word of God**

These are not fake believers. Yet they can "**fall away.**"

**2 Peter 2:20-21** — *"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."*

They:

- **Escaped the pollutions of the world**
- **Knew the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**
- **Knew the way of righteousness**

Yet they became "**entangled again**" and their end is **worse than the beginning.**

**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 himself** feared becoming a "**castaway**" (Greek: *adokimos* — rejected, disqualified). If OSAS were true, Paul's fear was irrational.

**Galatians 5:4** — *"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."*

"**Fallen from grace**" — you cannot fall from what you never had. These were believers who fell.

**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."*

"**Depart from the faith**" — you cannot depart from what you were never in.

**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... 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?"*

The person described:

- **Received knowledge of the truth**
- **Was sanctified by the blood of the covenant**

Yet they can face "**fiery indignation**" for willful sin.

**The Key Question: If you cannot lose salvation, why does Hebrews warn about falling away? Peter describe believers becoming worse than before? Paul fear becoming a castaway? Galatians speak of falling from grace? Timothy speak of departing from the faith?**

**The warnings are not hypothetical. They describe real dangers.**

## **The Compatibilist Escape Attempt — "We Believe in Free Will Too!"**

Some Calvinists, recognizing the problems with denying free will entirely, claim they DO believe in human freedom. They call this position "**compatibilism**" or "**soft determinism**."

### **What Compatibilism Claims**

Compatibilism argues that God's absolute predetermination is "compatible" with human freedom. Here's how they define it:

*"People are free because they do what they want to do. Their choices are voluntary, not coerced. Even though God has determined everything, humans are still 'free' because they act according to their desires."*

Sounds reasonable, right? Here's the problem:

### **The Fatal Flaw: God Determines the Desires Too**

Calvinists also affirm (as the Westminster Confession states): **"God has decreed whatsoever comes to pass."**

This includes human **desires and thoughts**.

So the argument becomes circular:

1. You are "free" because you act according to your desires
2. But God predetermined your desires
3. So your "freedom" is just doing what God made you want to do
4. Which means you have no actual freedom at all

**This is not freedom — it's the illusion of freedom.**

### **The Manipulation Analogy**

Imagine a scientist implants a chip in your brain that makes you *want* to do certain things. You then do those things because you *want* to. Are you free?

According to compatibilism: Yes! You did what you wanted!

According to common sense: Absolutely not. Your wants were programmed.

Calvinist compatibilism is identical to this scenario — except God is the programmer instead of a scientist. The result is the same: **programmed behavior masquerading as freedom**.

### **Even Calvinist Sources Admit This**

The Calvinist website Monergism.com acknowledges:

*"It should be noted that this position [compatibilism] is **no less deterministic** than hard determinism — be clear that **neither soft nor hard determinism believes man has a free will**. Our choices are only our choices because they are voluntary, not coerced."*

Read that again: **"Neither soft nor hard determinism believes man has a free will."**

Compatibilism doesn't give you free will. It just redefines "freedom" to mean something it doesn't actually mean.

### The Hartshorne Critique

Philosopher Charles Hartshorne identified the core problem: Compatibilists "attempt to preserve human freedom only by a maneuver of **arbitrarily redefining a crucial term.**"

They keep the word "freedom" but empty it of its actual meaning.

### The Self-Determination Problem

Compatibilists say our actions are determined by our "character" or "nature." But:

- Where did your character come from? God decreed it.
- Where did your nature come from? God determined it.
- So how is this "self-determination"? It's not. It's **God-determination disguised as self-determination.**

### The Biblical Problem

The Bible doesn't present a compatibilist view of freedom. When Scripture says:

*"Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15)*

It means an actual choice between genuine alternatives — not "act according to desires God programmed into you."

When Jesus says:

*"How often **would I** have gathered thy children... and **ye would not!**" (Matthew 23:37)*

He presents a genuine conflict between His will and theirs — not two aspects of the same predetermined outcome.

### The Bottom Line on Compatibilism:

**Compatibilism is a philosophical sleight of hand. It uses the word "freedom" while denying its actual meaning, claims humans choose while denying they could choose otherwise, and makes God the author of all desires, thoughts, and actions while claiming humans are responsible.**

**If God programs your desires, and you act on those desires, you are not free — you are a**

**puppet who enjoys the strings.**

**True freedom requires the genuine ability to choose between alternatives.  
Compatibilism denies this while pretending it doesn't.**

## **Part V: The Early Church Fathers Rejected Calvinism**

### **The Historical Evidence**

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A common Calvinist claim is that they are simply teaching what the church has always believed. This is demonstrably false.

#### **Even Calvinist historians admit this:**

Lorraine Boettner, a leading Reformed historian, acknowledged:

*"It may occasion some surprise to discover that the doctrine of Predestination was not made a matter of special study until near the end of the fourth century... This cardinal truth of Christianity was first clearly seen by Augustine."*

Tim Warner, church historian:

*"Prior to the writings of Augustine, the Church universally held that mankind had a totally free will. Each man was responsible before God to accept the Gospel. His ultimate destiny, while fully dependent on God's grace and power, was also dependent on his free choice to submit to or reject God's grace and power. **In the three centuries from the Apostles to Augustine the early Church held to NONE of the five points of Calvinism, not one.**"*

### **Calvin's Own Admission**

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Calvin himself acknowledged that the early church fathers disagreed with him:

*"The Greek fathers above others... taught the power of the human will... they have not been ashamed to make use of a much more arrogant expression calling man 'free agent or self-manager.'"*

Calvin called belief in free will "arrogant" — even though the fathers closest to the apostles taught it!

## Specific Church Fathers on Free Will

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**Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130-202 AD)** — Student of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John:

*"Man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will... But if, on the other hand, it were not in our power to do these things or not to do them, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things and to abstain from others?"*

**Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 AD):**

*"We have learned from the prophets, and we hold it to be true, that punishments, and chastisements, and good rewards, are rendered according to the merit of each man's actions. Since if it be not so, but all things happen by fate, neither is anything at all in our own power. For if it be fated that this man, e.g., be good, and this other evil, neither is the former meritorious nor the latter to be blamed."*

**Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215 AD):**

*"Neither praise nor censure, neither rewards nor punishments, are right if the soul has not the power of choice and avoidance, if evil is involuntary."*

**Origen (c. 184-253 AD):**

*"This also is clearly defined in the teaching of the Church, that every rational soul is possessed of free-will and volition."*

**John Chrysostom (c. 347-407 AD):**

*"All is in God's power, but so that our free-will is not lost... It depends therefore on us and on Him. We must first choose the good, and then He adds what belongs to Him. He does not precede our willing, that our free-will may not suffer. But when we have chosen, then He affords us much help."*

## Augustine: The Late Exception

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Augustine (354-430 AD) developed predestinarian ideas **late in his life**, during his controversy with Pelagius. Even then, his views were not universally accepted.

**Julian of Eclanum**, a contemporary of Augustine, accused him of borrowing from his former Manichaeian beliefs:

*"[Augustine made] God the author of our sins by asserting that He predestines some to salvation and others to damnation."*

## The Second Council of Orange (529 AD)

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This council, while affirming some of Augustine's anti-Pelagian views, explicitly rejected the more extreme forms of predestination:

*"We confess that all men are properly capable of believing by the aid of divine grace, and that this grace is offered to all, so that those who are saved are saved by their own will cooperating with grace, not by necessity."*

**The Verdict of History: For three centuries after Christ, the church universally taught free will. Calvinism is a late innovation, first systematized by Augustine and then pushed to extremes by Calvin. It is NOT the historic faith of Christianity.**

## Part VI: Protestant Theologians Who Reject Calvinism

### Jacob Arminius (1560-1609)

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The most famous opponent of Calvinism was **Jacob Arminius**, a Dutch theologian trained in Geneva under Calvin's successor, Theodore Beza.

#### His Journey:

- Initially affirmed Calvinist predestination
- While studying Romans 9 to defend Calvinism, he became convinced it was wrong
- Concluded that Calvinism "made God the author of evil"
- Taught conditional election based on foreseen faith

#### Arminius argued:

*"God decrees to save and damn certain particular persons. This decree has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who would, through his preventing [prevenient] grace, believe."*

## The Remonstrants (1610)

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After Arminius's death in 1609, his followers issued the **Remonstrance of 1610**, articulating five points against Calvinism:

1. **Christ died for all** (against Limited Atonement)
2. **God's saving grace can be resisted** (against Irresistible Grace)
3. **Christians can fall from grace** (against Perseverance of the Saints)
4. **The Holy Spirit is necessary for salvation** (affirming grace while denying Total Inability)
5. **Salvation is for those who believe and persevere** (against Unconditional Election)

The Remonstrants were condemned at the **Synod of Dort (1618-1619)**, and their leaders were persecuted. But their ideas lived on.

## John Wesley (1703-1791)

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The founder of Methodism was a firm Arminian who vigorously opposed Calvinism:

*"The doctrine of predestination, as maintained by rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought utterly to be abhorred, because it charges the most holy God with being the author of sin... and represents the most glorious and holy God as worse than the devil."*

## Other Notable Anti-Calvinist Protestants

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- **C.S. Lewis** — Anglican lay theologian
- **Billy Graham** — America's most famous evangelist
- **Norman Geisler** — Evangelical theologian and apologist
- **Roger Olson** — Baylor University theologian, author of *Against Calvinism*
- **Clark Pinnock** — Canadian evangelical theologian
- **General Baptists** — The first Baptists (John Smyth and Thomas Helwys) were Arminian

**The Reality: Calvinism is not the unanimous view of Protestantism. Millions of Protestants throughout history have recognized it as a dangerous distortion of the gospel.**

## Part VII: Answering Calvinist "Proof Texts"

Calvinists rely heavily on a few passages they believe support their system. Let's examine the main ones.

### Romans 9 – The Calvinist "Trump Card"

#### The Calvinist Reading

Calvinists claim Romans 9 teaches unconditional individual election to salvation or damnation. Jacob and Esau represent individuals chosen or rejected before birth with no regard to their character.

#### The Problems with This Reading

##### 1. The context is about NATIONS, not individuals

**Genesis 25:23** (which Paul quotes) — *"Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."*

God told Rebekah about **two nations** — Israel and Edom. The prophecy is about national destiny and service, not individual salvation.

##### 2. "Service," not salvation

The passage says "the elder shall serve the younger" — this is about **service and national role**, not eternal salvation or damnation.

##### 3. Esau never served Jacob personally

In their actual lives, Esau (the individual) never served Jacob. The prophecy was fulfilled in their **descendants** — the Edomites eventually became subject to Israel. This proves the passage is about nations.

##### 4. "Jacob I loved, Esau I hated" — Hebrew idiom

The quote from **Malachi 1:2-3** uses the Hebraic idiom where "hate" means "loved less" or "gave less preference to." This idiom appears elsewhere:

**Luke 14:26** — *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children... he cannot be my disciple."*

Jesus doesn't mean literal hatred — He means loving Him more by comparison.

## 5. The context of Romans 9-11

Paul's question in Romans 9 is: "Has God's word failed regarding Israel?" (v. 6). He's explaining why ethnic Israel has largely rejected the Messiah while Gentiles are accepting Him.

The passage is about God's sovereign right to define who constitutes "true Israel" (those who believe, whether Jew or Gentile) — not about individual predestination to heaven or hell.

## John 6:44 — "No one can come unless the Father draws him"

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### The Calvinist Reading

This verse proves that humans cannot come to Christ unless God irresistibly draws them, and God only draws the elect.

### The Problems

#### 1. The drawing is UNIVERSAL

**John 12:32** — *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*

Jesus says He will draw **ALL MEN** — not just the elect. The drawing is universal.

#### 2. Drawing can be resisted

The Greek word for "draw" (*helkō*) doesn't mean "irresistibly drag." It means "attract" or "draw toward." The same word is used in John 21:6 for drawing fish in a net — the fish can still escape!

#### 3. The context explains the drawing

**John 6:45** — *"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."*

The drawing happens through **teaching** — hearing and learning. Those who respond to the teaching come. Those who resist don't.

## Ephesians 1:4-5 — "Chosen before the foundation of the world"

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### The Calvinist Reading

God unconditionally chose specific individuals for salvation before creating the world.

### The Problems

#### 1. Corporate election

Paul is writing to the **church** — a corporate body. God predestined that the church (those "in Christ") would be holy and blameless. Individuals join this predestined group by faith.

#### 2. The order matters

**Ephesians 1:13** — *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."*

The order in Ephesians 1:

1. You **heard** the word
2. You **believed**
3. You **were sealed** with the Spirit

Hearing and believing **precede** sealing. This contradicts Calvinist regeneration-before-faith.

#### 3. "In Christ"

The blessings of Ephesians 1 are for those "**in Christ**" (repeated 11 times in the first 14 verses). The question is: How do you get "in Christ"? By faith (v. 13).

God predestined what would happen to those in Christ. He didn't predestine who would be in Christ.

## Acts 13:48 — "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed"

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### The Calvinist Reading

God ordained (predestined) specific individuals to eternal life, and those individuals believed.

### The Problems

#### 1. The Greek word

The Greek word *tassō* means "arranged," "disposed," or "appointed." It doesn't necessarily mean "predestined from eternity."

## 2. An alternative reading

The verse can be translated: "As many as were **disposed** to eternal life believed." Those whose hearts were ready and receptive believed.

## 3. Context

The Jews in the previous verses had "judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life" (v. 46). The contrast is between those who rejected the message and those who received it — a matter of disposition, not irresistible decree.

# Part VIII: The Moral Problem — Calvinism Makes God a Monster

## The Logical Implications

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If Calvinism is true, then God:

### 1. Created billions of people for the sole purpose of damning them

- They never had a chance
- They were born predetermined for hell
- God created them knowing they would suffer eternally

### 2. Commands people to repent when He has made it impossible

- "Repent and believe" is a cruel mockery if they cannot repent or believe
- God commands what He has made impossible

### 3. Punishes people for what they cannot avoid

- The reprobate sin necessarily — they have no choice
- Yet God punishes them eternally for sins He decreed

### 4. Is the author of all evil

- Calvin taught: "All events whatsoever are governed by the secret counsel of God"
- Every rape, every murder, every act of child abuse was decreed by God
- God planned and ordained every sin

## Scripture Refutes This

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**James 1:13** — *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."*

God doesn't tempt anyone to sin. But in Calvinism, He decrees all sin.

**1 John 1:5** — *"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."*

If God decrees every evil act, there is much darkness in Him.

**Proverbs 15:26** — *"The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD."*

How can God detest thoughts that He Himself decreed?

**Jeremiah 32:35** — *"And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination."*

God says child sacrifice "**never came into His mind.**" Yet Calvinism says God decrees all events. Which is true?

## John Wesley's Verdict

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*"The doctrine of predestination, as maintained by rigid Calvinists, is very shocking... because it charges the most holy God with being the author of sin... Such a doctrine is not of God, because it makes Him worse than the devil. More false, more cruel, and more unjust... This is the blasphemy clearly contained in the horrible decree of predestination!"*

## The Simple Test

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Ask yourself: Would a loving father:

- Create children predetermined for torture?
- Command them to do what he made impossible?
- Punish them for his own decisions?
- Claim to love them while planning their damnation?

No earthly father who did this would be called good. Why do we accept it in God?

## Part IX: The LDS Alternative — Biblical Truth Restored

### The Foundational Difference

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Latter-day Saint theology affirms what the Bible actually teaches:

- God loves ALL His children
- Christ died for ALL humanity
- Humans have genuine agency
- Grace enables but doesn't force
- Salvation requires enduring faithfulness

### The Plan of Salvation

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In LDS theology, the plan of salvation was presented in a premortal council. Two plans were proposed:

1. **Lucifer's plan:** Force everyone to be saved, eliminating agency
2. **Christ's plan:** Provide a Savior who would enable choice while satisfying justice

**Moses 4:1-3** — *"Satan... came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor. But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man... I caused that he should be cast down."*

Notice: **Satan's plan was to eliminate agency.** Christ's plan preserved it. Calvinism, which denies human agency, aligns more closely with Satan's proposal than with Christ's.

### LDS Scriptures on Agency

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**2 Nephi 2:27** — *"Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil."*

We are "**free to choose**" — not predetermined puppets.

**D&C 93:31** — *"Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light."*

Agency is the basis of condemnation. We are held accountable because we genuinely choose.

**Moses 7:32** — *"The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency."*

God **gave** us agency. It is a gift, not an illusion.

## **LDS Scriptures on Universal Atonement**

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**2 Nephi 9:21** — *"And he cometh into the world that he may save all men if they will hearken unto his voice."*

Christ came to save **ALL** — conditional on their response.

**Alma 34:9-10** — *"For it is expedient that an atonement should be made; for according to the great plan of the Eternal God there must be an atonement made, or else all mankind must unavoidably perish... it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice."*

The atonement is "**infinite**" — unlimited in scope.

**Alma 11:40** — *"And he shall come into the world to redeem his people; and he shall take upon him the transgressions of those who believe on his name."*

Redemption is for "**those who believe**" — faith is the condition, not arbitrary election.

## **LDS Scriptures on Enduring to the End**

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**2 Nephi 31:20** — *"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life."*

We must "**press forward**" and "**endure to the end**" — salvation is not guaranteed by a one-time decision.

**D&C 20:32** — *"But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God."*

There is a "**possibility**" of falling — not impossible, as Calvinism claims.

## Comparison Chart

Issue	Calvinism	LDS (Biblical)
<b>Human Agency</b>	No real choice (Total Depravity)	Free to choose (2 Ne 2:27, Josh 24:15)
<b>God's Will</b>	Saves only elect, damns the rest	Wants ALL saved (1 Tim 2:4, 2 Pet 3:9)
<b>Christ's Atonement</b>	Limited (elect only)	Infinite (1 John 2:2, Heb 2:9, Alma 34:10)
<b>Grace</b>	Irresistible (forced)	Enabling but resistible (Acts 7:51, Matt 23:37)
<b>Salvation</b>	Cannot be lost (OSAS)	Can fall away (Heb 6:4-6, Gal 5:4, D&C 20:32)
<b>God's Character</b>	Decrees all evil	"God is love" (1 Jn 4:8), no darkness (1 Jn 1:5)
<b>Founder</b>	John Calvin (lawyer, executed heretics)	Jesus Christ (restored through Joseph Smith)

## The Restoration vs. The Reformation

The Protestant Reformation was a necessary protest against Catholic corruptions, but it was incomplete. The Reformers retained many errors, including:

- Creeds developed centuries after Christ
- Rejection of continuing revelation
- Distorted views of God's nature (like Calvinism)

The Restoration through Joseph Smith brought back:

- Apostles and prophets
- Continuing revelation
- Correct understanding of God's character
- The truth about agency and salvation

## Conclusion: Questions Every Calvinist Must Answer

If you hold to Calvinism, please honestly answer these questions:

### On Irresistible Grace

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1. If grace is irresistible, why does **Acts 7:51** say people "resist the Holy Ghost"?
2. If grace is irresistible, why does **Matthew 23:37** show Jesus being refused?
3. If grace is irresistible, why does **Hebrews 3:15** warn against hardening our hearts?

### On Limited Atonement

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1. If Christ only died for the elect, why does **1 John 2:2** say He is the propitiation for "the whole world"?
2. If Christ only died for the elect, why does **Hebrews 2:9** say He tasted death for "every man"?
3. If Christ only died for the elect, why does **2 Peter 2:1** say He "bought" people heading for destruction?

### On Unconditional Election

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1. If election is unconditional, why does God plead with people to choose? (**Joshua 24:15, Deuteronomy 30:19**)
2. If election is unconditional, why does **1 Timothy 2:4** say God wills ALL to be saved?
3. If election is unconditional, why does **2 Peter 3:9** say God wants NONE to perish?

### On Perseverance of the Saints

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1. If salvation cannot be lost, why does **Hebrews 6:4-6** warn genuine believers about falling away?
2. If salvation cannot be lost, why did **Paul** fear becoming a castaway? (**1 Corinthians 9:27**)
3. If salvation cannot be lost, why does **Galatians 5:4** speak of falling from grace?

## On Total Depravity

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1. If humans cannot choose God, why does **Revelation 3:20** say Christ knocks and WE must open?
2. If humans cannot choose, why does God command them to choose **100+ times** in Scripture?

## On John Calvin

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1. If Calvin had authority from God, why did he burn people alive for disagreeing with him?
2. If Calvin's fruits were good, why did his Geneva execute 58 people and banish 76 for religious offenses?
3. If Calvin respected conscience, why did he do to others what he fled from when Rome did it to him?

## On God's Character

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1. If Calvinism makes God loving, why does it make Him create billions predestined for hell?
2. If Calvinism makes God just, why does it have Him punish people for sins they couldn't avoid?
3. If Calvinism makes God good, why does it make Him the author of every rape, murder, and act of evil?

## Final Word

*"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."  
— Matthew 7:16-17*

### Calvin's Fruit:

- 58 executions in Geneva
- Burning Michael Servetus alive
- Banishing dissenters
- Creating a theology that makes God a tyrant
- Destroying human agency

### Christ's Fruit:

- "Come unto me, all ye that labour" (Matt 11:28)
- "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev 22:17)
- "God so loved the world" (John 3:16)

- "Not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet 3:9)

The choice is clear. Calvinism is not biblical Christianity. It is a philosophical system built on legal reasoning that distorts God's character and nullifies the genuine offer of salvation to all humanity.

### **The Bible teaches:**

**God loves ALL** (1 Timothy 2:4)

**Christ died for ALL** (1 John 2:2)

**Humans CAN choose** (Joshua 24:15)

**Grace CAN be resisted** (Acts 7:51)

**Salvation requires ENDURING** (Hebrews 6:4-6)

Choose this day whom you will serve.

And know that the choice is genuinely yours to make.

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## **Sources and Further Reading**

### **Historical Sources**

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- Christian History Magazine
- "3 Eternal Destinies"
- Britannica: John Calvin, Michael Servetus, Jacobus Arminius
- Wikipedia: John Calvin, History of the Calvinist-Arminian Debate

### **Calvinist Resources**

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- Bible vs Calvinism (biblevs Calvinism.org)
- Soteriology 101 (soteriology101.com)
- Society of Evangelical Arminians (evangelicalarminians.org)
- Roger Olson, *Against Calvinism*
- Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist*

## **LDS Resources**

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- FAIR: Agency vs. Predestination
- BYU Religious Studies Center

## **Early Church Fathers**

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- Soteriology 101: Did Early Church Fathers Teach Calvinism?
  - Lucas Hitch: Early Church Fathers on Free Will
- 

*"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."*

*— Revelation 22:17*

**WHOSOEVER WILL.**