

Calvinism vs. LDS Free Will Cheat Sheet

accountability for real choices.

CORE POSITION (ONE SENTENCE)

TULIP theology makes God the author of damnation and strips humans of genuine moral agency — the Bible teaches universal atonement, genuine free will, and

KEY FACTS

- Calvinism as a system was formulated in the 16th century; its core doctrines (unconditional election, irresistible grace, limited atonement) were not taught by the pre-Nicene church
- The pre-Nicene fathers (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement, Origen) unanimously affirmed free will and universal atonement

- Augustine's predestinarian views (late 4th/5th c.) marked a departure from earlier consensus; the Eastern church never accepted them
- The Bible uses universal language for the Atonement: "whole world" (1 John 2:2), "all men" (1 Tim. 2:6), "every man" (Heb. 2:9)
- Romans 9, the chief Calvinist proof-text, addresses national election (Israel/Edom), not individual predestination to heaven or hell

TULIP — POINT-BY-POINT REBUTTAL

TULIP Point	Their Claim	Biblical Response
Total Depravity	No one can seek God without prior regeneration	Cornelius sought God <i>before</i> receiving the Spirit (Acts 10:1-4). God commands "choose" (Josh. 24:15), "repent" (Ezek. 18:30) — presupposing capacity.
Unconditional Election	God chooses who is saved regardless of human response	Eph. 1:4 is corporate election — God chose <i>the church</i> in Christ; entry is by faith. 2 Pet. 3:9 — God "not willing that any should perish."
Limited Atonement	Christ died only for the elect	1 John 2:2 — "not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 Tim. 2:6 — "ransom for all." Heb. 2:9 — "death for every man."
Irresistible Grace	The elect cannot resist God's saving call	Acts 7:51 — "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Matt. 23:37 — "I would have gathered...and ye would not!"
Perseverance of the Saints	True believers cannot fall away	Heb. 6:4-6 — genuinely enlightened believers <i>can</i> fall away. Gal. 5:4 — "ye are fallen from grace." 2 Pet. 2:20-22 — those who escaped and returned.

OUR BEST SCRIPTURES

- **2 Nephi 2:26-27** — "Men are free...to choose liberty and eternal life...or captivity and death"
- **2 Nephi 9:21** — Christ "suffereth the pains of all men" — universal atonement
- **2 Nephi 26:33** — "He denieth none that come unto him...all are alike unto God"
- **Alma 42:27** — "Whosoever will come may come"

- **Moses 4:3** — Satan sought to "destroy the agency of man"
- **1 John 2:2** — Propitiation for "the whole world"
- **1 Timothy 2:4-6** — God wills all saved; Christ ransom for all
- **2 Peter 3:9** — Not willing that any should perish
- **John 12:32** — "...will draw *all* men unto me"
- **Hebrews 6:4-6** — Genuine believers can fall away
- **Acts 7:51** — Resisting the Holy Ghost is possible
- **Romans 10:13** — "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"

EARLY CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE

Source	Position	Significance
Justin Martyr (c. 150)	"Each man goes to...punishment or salvation according to...his actions" (1 <i>Apol.</i> , 43)	Rejected fatalism/determinism
Irenaeus (c. 180)	"God made man a free agent...not by compulsion" (<i>AH</i> , 4.37.1)	Free will central to early theology
Clement of Alexandria (c. 200)	"The Lord does not save unwilling souls" (<i>Stromata</i> , 5.1)	Grace is not irresistible
Origen (c. 230)	Universal atonement; free will for all (<i>De Princ.</i> , 3.1)	No limited atonement in early church

QUICK-FIRE OBJECTION RESPONSES

"Romans 9 proves unconditional election."

Romans 9 is about national Israel's role in redemptive history, not individual predestination. Jacob/Esau = Israel/Edom (Malachi 1:2-3). Paul concludes in Romans 10:13: "whosoever shall call." Whosoever is not compatible with unconditional election.

"Ephesians 2:8-9 — Salvation is 'not of yourselves.'"

Agreed — salvation is God's gift. Receiving a gift is not earning it. A drowning man who grabs a life preserver did not rescue himself, but he did reach out. Faith is the response, not the merit.

"John 6:44 — 'No man can come except the Father draw him.'"

John 12:32 — "...will draw *all* men unto me." The Father draws everyone; not everyone responds. Drawing is necessary but not irresistible.

"If humans contribute anything, it's works-righteousness."

Choosing to accept a gift is not earning the gift. James 2:17 — "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead." Obedient response to grace is not Pelagianism.

"Calvinism exalts God's sovereignty."

A sovereignty that predetermines damnation without consent is tyranny, not love. LDS theology exalts a God powerful enough to achieve His purposes *without* overriding His children's freedom.

STRONGEST ARGUMENT IN ONE PARAGRAPH

The Bible says Christ died for "the whole world" (1 John 2:2), is a "ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6), tasted "death for every man" (Heb. 2:9), and that God is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3:9). Calvinism requires redefining "all" as "the elect,"

"world" as "the elect among all nations," and "any" as "any of the elect" — redefinitions driven by the theological system, not by the text. The pre-Nicene fathers unanimously affirmed genuine free will and universal atonement. The deterministic trajectory in Christianity began with Augustine, not the apostles. LDS

theology restores the biblical and early Christian consensus: the Atonement is universal, agency is real, and every individual genuinely chooses their eternal path.

Resources:

- [FairLatterdaySaints — Grace and Works](#)

- [ChurchofJesusChrist.org — Grace](#)