

B A P T I S T I N T E R N A T I O N A L

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Election, Salvation, Freewill, Faith, and the New Birth:

The role of God's election in Salvation

Dear Reader, I hope that you seek diligently for the truth in this matter. I have. I am convinced of what I am about to write. I am glad that you seek the truth. That you truly understand the Biblical truth related to salvation, election, freewill, etc., is very important. If you are wrong on this, you could be teaching a damnable heresy (Galatians 1:8, 9). The error of Calvinism has led astray many a good man. John Calvin (1509 - 1564) was not a theologian; he was a French Protestant reformer who taught the salvation of individuals is predestined of God. The tenets of Five-point Calvinism are often described using the **T-U-L-I-P** formula, listed below as follows:

- T Total Depravity of man.** Such so that he cannot freely believe on Jesus Christ.
- U Unconditional Election.** That God chooses whom He will save based upon His own decision, and not that of the sinner.
- L Limited Atonement.** That Christ died only for the Elect.
- I Irresistible Grace.** That no man can resist God's favour or election in salvation.
- P Perseverance of the Saints.** That only those who are Saved will endure to the end. Eternal security of the saints. Or, sometimes, Predestination of some to Salvation.

This thinking is totally contrary to God's plan for mankind, and makes a mockery of the Gospel. I believe that many of those who adopt such error do so out of **PRIDE** and arrogance. There are some who think they are smarter than most, and that they have figured out what God has designed more than what He has written. They seem to believe they are saved by God because they have been favoured in some way.

Because I believe men are willing to learn the truth, I will proceed to briefly explain God's purpose for man as shown in the word of God, and give a description of salvation, election, etc. I will then argue against the T-U-L-I-P heresy.

First, understand that God is Omniscient. He knows all things (John 21:17). He knew before the Creation of the Heaven and the Earth (Genesis 1:1) and the angels that Lucifer would rebel, that Adam would sin, that He would flood the earth; and that, most importantly, He would have to be made flesh and die for man (I Peter 1:20). Knowing this beforehand, He proceeded with His Creation. God also is Omnipotent and Self-sufficient. He does not need you or me. He does not need the angels, the earth, or even Heaven. God is complete and content in Himself -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost -- without any of His creations.

One of God's attributes is Love (I John 4:8). He has chosen in His omniscience to exercise His attribute of Love. He chose to create mankind (Colossians 1:16, John 1:1-3) to be a receiver and returner and imitator of His Love (John 3:16; James 2:5; I John 3:1; 4:9). He also desires glory, honour, worship and praise from His creation (Revelation 4:11). God understands that unless mankind offers this love, glory, and honour *freely*, that is has no value. God allowed through the creation of Lucifer an adversary to give man a freewill choice: God or Satan. God did not cause Lucifer to rebel, but He did create him with a freewill (Isaiah 14:13, 14). God did *know*, however, that Lucifer would rebel and be the Tempter of man. God knew Adam would sin, and that He would have to come to redeem man Himself. Through His great work of Love -- Calvary -- God shows His Love and goodness to us, and freely offers salvation to all men who will freely choose Him.

When a man freely chooses Jesus Christ in spite of himself, the world, the devil, and all his sins, God indeed gets the glory and honour over all these things in that man's heart, and in view of all who see this sinner's transformation. Where sin abounds, God's grace does much more abound (Romans 5:20).

God has determined that anyone who believes should receive the *Gift* of salvation (Romans 6:23). This *Gift* is not based upon works, but upon *true* Faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10) for the forgiveness of one's sins. When a man freely chooses Jesus Christ over sin, the Devil, the world, or whatever; God saves that man and seals him with the Holy Ghost, which is the earnest of his redemption (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

The method of reaching man with the Gospel -- the *GOOD NEWS* -- of salvation is done by preachers preaching the word of God -- or Sowers sowing the Seed, as illustrated in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13; Luke 8). The word of God is critical in the salvation process as declared in I Peter 1:23 and Romans 10. Please note the *Progression* of How Salvation is achieved by looking in reverse order to Romans 10:8-19:

1. The word of God is sowed in the world by *sent men* -- preachers of the Gospel (v. 15-18). This is the purpose behind the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19, 20) and Romans 16:25, 26. These men are sent by the church and the Holy Ghost (Acts 13:1-3).
2. These sent men *PREACH* the Gospel to *EVERY* creature (Mark 16:15). See verse 14 and 15 of Romans 10.
3. These creatures *HEAR* the word of God (v. 14).
4. Those who receive the word *BELIEVE* (v. 14)
5. Those who believe *CALL* upon the name of the Lord (v. 14)
6. Those who call upon the Lord are *SAVED* (v. 13). Understand that “to call” means to declare that Jesus Christ is the reason for one’s salvation, and does not mean that one should to pray to God to be saved (as do the Catholics). When the Ethiopian Eunuch said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37), he was declaring his faith in Jesus Christ. As a comparison, Paul *CALLED* upon Caesar in his appeal before Festus (Acts 25:11).
7. Those who are saved are then *SEALED* with the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 1:13).

This shows the importance of men and the scripture work in World Evangelism. It is the *Seed* which is sown *by men* in the hearts of men.

I will now proceed with an explanation of *Election*.

The main error in Calvinism is the equation of Election to Salvation. They are different things. (To assume that Election is equal to salvation, is to declare that one must work for salvation according to II Peter 1:10.) Note:

Israel is God’s Elect (Isaiah 45:4).

Angels are Elect (I Timothy 5:21), and they need no salvation.

Jesus Christ is God’s Elect (I Peter 2:6), and He needs no salvation.

Election is *not* salvation. Election is, in fact, being a chosen vessel to accomplish a particular purpose for God or to fulfill a particular office. Paul was speaking of his election when he said, “I have finished my course” (II Timothy 4:7). We have “elections” in this country to choose who will fill a particular office of responsibility or duty. God needs no popular vote. He chooses according to His *foreknowledge*. Remember this, Election is based upon foreknowledge (I Peter 1:2). God knows who is able to do what,

and He sets a course for each of His chosen vessels. This course is their election. One can fail in his fulfillment of his election, but he cannot lose his salvation. One can run well in the beginning, but be hindered later (Galatians 5:7). One must give diligence to make his calling and election sure (II Peter 1:10). If one fails to fulfill his election, although he is still saved, he will, however, lose the potential rewards God had prepared for those who finish their course (II Peter 1:11; II Timothy 4:8). God determines one's election *by grace*. A believer's election has been determined by God since before the foundation of the world. It is based upon the foreknowledge of God that a certain person will, by his freewill, receive Christ, and be able to do such and such for God. God, knowing this, *predestines* that believer to a certain election -- which described generally is being conformed to the image of Christ -- and God then calls him according to this election He has set (Romans 8:29, 30).

You, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, have an election. God has and will continue to call you according to this course which He has set for you. If you are faithful to that *calling*, you will receive a full reward from Jesus Christ at His Judgment Seat. If you are not faithful to your election -- that is, fail in a calling -- you will not receive a full reward.

In like manner, God *knew* before the foundation of the world that I would *by my freewill* believe on His Son Jesus Christ. He did not make me believe, but He knew I would believe by my freewill. God, knowing I would receive the gift of salvation, then predestined me to be conformed to the image of Christ by setting a *course* for me to follow. I know how to follow this *course* because God *calls me* step by step according to my election. As I am faithful to each calling, God calls me to the next step. If I fail, I may become a castaway (I Corinthians 9:27). This "course" is referred to as my "election." According to Romans 8:29, 30, God's order is defined as foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and then glorification. Salvation, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification are all by God's grace.

Salvation is indeed of the Lord (Jonah 2:9). Only the Lord can save a man's soul and give him eternal life. God has set *this* as the way of salvation: faith in Jesus Christ (John 14:6) and in His work on Calvary (I Corinthians 15:1-3). We, also, are born again by the Spirit of God and the word of God (John 3:3, 5; I Peter 1:23). We are sealed by the Spirit of God *when we believe* (Ephesians 1:13, 14). Therefore, we believe first, are then sealed with the Holy Spirit, and are made new creatures in Christ by the new birth. The Holy Ghost puts us in Christ when we believe, wherein we are made new creatures (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). The Holy Ghost is never "sealed" into an unclean soul. We are washed by the blood of Christ, then sealed. This event when we are put "in Christ" is referred to as a spiritual baptism (Romans 6:1-6). This all happens instantaneously when we, by our freewill, believe on Christ.

I will now proceed to show the error of the T-U-L-I-P doctrine.

- T** Man is depraved. All have sinned (Romans 3:23). However, man is not so depraved that he cannot call upon the Lord (Romans 10:13). Paul was an example of God's longsuffering in that He saved him -- the chief of sinners. (I Timothy 1:15, 16). Acts 17:30 shows us that God commands *all men* to repent. Paul preached the word while some believed and some did not (Acts 28:23, 24). In that chapter, v. 28, it says also, quoting Isaiah, that some had closed their eyes lest they should be converted. The point is not that men *cannot* believe without the Lord, but that some *WILL NOT* believe. Jesus said this in John 5:37-40. Men can and do resist the truth and the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51; II Timothy 3:8). See also John 1:9; Matthew 11:21; John 5:40).
- U** Election *is* conditional upon one's receiving of their own freewill the gift of salvation. Election is based upon the foreknowledge of God (I Peter 1:2). Whom God foreknew, He predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29; II Peter 3:9; I Timothy 2:4; Rev. 2:21).
- L** Christ's atonement was sufficient for all sinners -- past, present, and future. The Blood is not limited to anyone. Christ's blood is applied to the soul of whoever believes in Him. He died sufficiently for all men, but propitiously for those who do believe. Luke 19:10, Jesus came to "seek and to save that which was lost."
- I** God's grace can also be resisted. See acts 7:51; John 5:40; II Timothy 3:8; and Hebrews 10:39. Acts 13:43 admonishes to continue in God's grace.
- P** Philippians 1:6 shows God will get us through this life and take us to heaven. Romans 8:38, 39 -- nothing can separate us from the love of God. In II Timothy 1:12, Paul knew that it is Christ who is responsible for keeping the saints to the end (John 10:28, 29). The security of salvation is wholly God's doing, and we know He keeps His promises (John 3:16). We persevere, not by our own power, but by the power of God. See also Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20; II timothy 4:18.

This, then, is the truth as presented from the scriptures. I pray all who are deceived into thinking they are chosen because they are special in some way will repent of this proud thinking. *God saves sinners*. We are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature on account that anyone can be saved if he chooses to be. May God help us to see this truth more and more.

The End.