

## Others Notes on Calvinism

### Purpose

Some of this document merely cite what well known adherents to Calvinism affirm, and scriptures utilized. We only cover several topic areas here. The specific points of Calvinism are addressed in the other accompanying documents. There are more-so topic areas.

The point of this document is to also enumerate the several 'problem' areas that non-Calvinists may raise as reasons why they do not affirm Calvinism.

### Calvinism

The 5 points of Calvinism spell TULIP

- T – Total Depravity
- U – Unconditional election
- L – Limited Atonement
- I – Irresistible Grace
- P – Perseverance of the Saints

### Election Verses

#### ***Romans 11:5 (a remnant according to the election of grace)***

**Romans 11:5**

5. Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

#### ***Ephesians 1:4***

**Ephesians 1:4**

4. just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5. having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

#### **1. John MacArthur commentary:**

"Verse 4, "He chose us in him." He chose us. So it is God who chose us to be saved. He made the choice. He did the choosing. And, by the way, God does it independently of any person. He does it independently - are you ready for this? - of any circumstances. Now, you need to grasp that. There is no person who moves on the will of God to help him make the choice. There is no circumstance which, in any way, precipitates God's choice."

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### Foreknowledge

#### *Does not necessitate predestination*

1. Recall David who hid in the city of Keilah.  
King Saul was after him.  
David asked God if he stayed in the walled city of Keilah if the people would give him over to Saul.  
God said they would.  
So God knew of a possible future which did not even happen, because David ended up leaving the city.

### Sovereignty of God

#### *A Unique Definition*

1. Note how the word "sovereignty" is defined by the Calvinist in a way that no one else does.
  - A) The United States is a sovereign nation, but doesn't mean that the US gov controls every action of people.
  - B) God being sovereign, with divine privileges, does not mean He has to micro manage everything if He does not want to. That doesn't make Him less sovereign.
  - C) The non-Calvinist does not argue that God does not have the right to make what the clay as He wishes, as a potter does.  
Instead, the non-Calvinist asks if God does that in every single thing that happens with humans. Or did God give humans free will, while still being able to accomplish His will?
2. Quote from Jerry Walls  
"In trying to read the Bible cautiously and on its own terms, we see a sovereign God who is freely chosen to create a world fully dependent on him, yet different from him. A world open to divine causation, but not comprehensively determined by its divine sustainer. A world inhabited by God, but not utterly overwhelmed by divine presence.  
We are not seeking to establish human freedom at the expense of divine sovereignty. Rather, we are seeking to affirm God's freedom to create whatever kind of world he desired. Even a world whose every movement is not to be traced back ultimately to a specific divine determination."
3. Steve Gregg commenting on Jerry Wall's quote:  
"If God has in fact chosen to create this kind of a world, we neither glorify him nor magnify his sovereignty by insisting that he has created a world of a different sort. So, what he's saying is, the Calvinists think we don't glorify God if we don't make him the one who makes everything happen. It's just, you know, he's too small a God if he didn't ordain everything.  
It's not more glorifying to God to say he's that kind of a ruler if he's not. If he is, then of course

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we glorify him by recognizing what he is. But if he's not, we don't glorify him more by pretending that he is.

We glorify him best by recognizing what he has revealed about his intentions and about his activities."

### ***Author of all but sin***

1. Calvinism holds that God has **meticulous providence**, ordaining all that happens, even sin, yet not being the author of sin.  
They hold that if anything happens which God does not control, He is therefore no sovereign.  
Note that only Calvinists define 'sovereign' in this way.  
If you detect some double-speak, you're not alone.  
It is called a 'mystery'.  
There are lots of mysteries in Calvinism.
2. God expresses His desire that people not do evil.
  - A) Why then does it grieve God when they do evil?
  - B) God makes it clear that He takes no delight in the death of the wicked, but would rather that they repent and live
  - C) God desires all turn from their unbelief.
  - D) If we were Calvinists, we could not say God loves someone and send Jesus to die for them.
  - E)

### **Author of evil plots?**

***Psalm 21:11***

**Psalm 21:11**

**11. For they intended evil against You;**

**They devised a plot which they are not able to perform.**

1. If God ordains evil plots as Calvinism affirms, why do we see men making evil plots if only God makes them?  
If anything, we see God chooses to at least sometimes interfere and stop evil plots, not make them.

### ***God stops plot against Apostle Paul***

1. There were evil men who vowed not to eat until they killed the apostle Paul.
2. They couldn't pull it off because God wouldn't let them.
  1. God saw it is that Paul's nephew would alert the Roman authorities of the plot.

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3. Nothing in the passages say God put the plot in the mind of the plotting Jews who wanted to kill Paul.
4. Evil only progresses only so far as God lets it.  
God does not orchestrate/ordain evil.

### **Genesis 50:20 (you meant it for evil)**

#### **Genesis 50:20**

20. "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

1. If anything, God is seen to turn evil plans into something that ends up in something good.
2. God is not seen to be causing the evil.  
There is no mention of putting thoughts into Joseph's brothers' minds.  
There was that one incident where God allowed a lying spirit to put thoughts into king Ahab's prophets' minds though.  
Why go through all the trouble to tell us when God is intervening if He always does?
  1. Isn't the point of the Bible to tell us when God \*did\* interact with humanity, not when He didn't?

### **Psalm 76:10**

#### **Psalm 76:10**

10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise You;  
With the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.

1. **James 1:20**  
20. for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.
  1. James says the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God
  2. God does not approve of the wrath of man.
  3. It is not God's will that we operate like that.
  4. James says you should be slow to wrath because the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.
2. God does not approve of the wrath of man, but can work out things so that He can turn evil from man into something that can still further His goals/will.
3. But Calvinism holds that evil is ordained by God.  
So God ordains things that do not produce righteousness?  
Of course not.
4. Instead, God works through His people to do His good pleasure

#### **Philippians 2:13:**

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13. for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.  
and in **Jeremiah 31:33**.

5.

### ***Hardening Pharaoh's heart***

1. God confirmed Pharaoh's decision to oppose God that Pharaoh had already made for himself. God can still do such hardening, but for the Bible to say anyone's heart is hardened at all nips away at the Calvinist doctrine of Total Depravity, where it is held that all people are born 'depraved' so that their hearts are hardened against God by default.
  - a) Isn't that redundant?
  - b) Or is it an unusual case when we see it?
  - c) We see a case where Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation. Jesus' execution was something that Caiaphas was already inclined toward.
  - d) Was God unjust with pharaoh?

No, he was a wicked man long before Moses showed up.  
Pharaoh had a career of holding the Hebrew nation in slavery.  
He had his whole life to freely live for God, but instead would live out the rest of his life hardened beyond the freedom to live for God – there is nothing unjust with God affirming what pharaoh wanted.  
But that does not mean God does that with everyone.
  - e) To say God's treatment of pharaoh is universal is not something that comes from the text.

### ***Compatibilism***

Means man makes choices, which he thinks are his own, but it's really God who is pulling the strings behind the scenes.

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20. “But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

1. Does Joseph or the Bible affirm that God put the evil deed in the hearts of Joseph's brothers irresistibly? No.
2. Joseph didn't say that God put it in their hearts to sell him into slavery.
3. Joseph said that even though they did something evil, God was still about to get His will done.

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4. All things work to the good of those who love God.  
God does not ordain or orchestrate the evil, but instead exploits the decisions of evil people to bring about His will anyway.

### Acts 4:27 (evil people did God's will unknowingly)

#### Acts 4:27

27. “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together

28. “to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

1. The apostles prayed this together after Peter got out of jail.
2. It does not say God made anyone oppose Jesus.  
But they did say that God utilized the evil they did to bring about good.
3. Also recall Jesus avoiding getting stoned because it was not His time to die.
4. Jesus did not have to put sinful thoughts in the hearts of his enemies.
5. When Jesus was crucified, all God had to do was not send the legion of angels.
6. God did determine that Jesus would die. It didn't have to be Pilate or Herod who sent Him to the cross – if it wasn't them, it could have been someone else.

### Acts 2:22-23 (Jesus delivered by the foreknowledge of God)

#### Acts 2:22-23

22. “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—

23. “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken[fn] by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

1. Jesus didn't have to tell people what to do or put it in their hearts to murder Him
2. They wanted to do it on their own
3. All God had to do was not protect Jesus from the harm.  
Jesus was protected all the other times the Jews tried to kill Him before it was His hour.
4. Nothing here indicates God preordained/determined that each individual would do just as he did regarding Jesus' crucifixion. They did what they already wanted to do.
5. Of course God utilizes the sin of man to bring about His will, even though they aren't purposely trying to bring God glory.
6. Someone as R. C. Sproul would say God 'allowed' sin, but Calvin said God 'ordained' sin.  
Not all Calvinists today talk the same way Calvin did during his day.

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7. We don't see any Biblical indication that God puts sinful thoughts in people's minds.
8. MacArthur argues that foreknowledge in a biblical context means God knew it and decided it would happen. He takes part in making it happen. Does that extend to school shootings? God decided those would happen and actively takes part in them? Did God make Caiaphas rip his robes and condemn Jesus to death? Or did Caiaphas want to?

### Jeremiah 1:5 (before you were born)

#### Jeremiah 1:5

5. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;

Before you were born I sanctified you;

I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

1. John MacArthur's Commentary:  
"Foreknowledge is linked to the predetermined plan. Foreknowledge is deliberate choice. Deliberate choice. It is a predetermined relationship, a predetermined relationship in the knowledge of God. It doesn't mean he observed before, it means that he planned before. It is knowing, not in the sense of observation, but is knowing in the sense of bringing into reality. For example - let me give you some illustrations so you'll not be confused. Jeremiah 1:5. God says of Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I - " what? " - I knew you." That's the kind of knowing. What do you mean? I predetermined a relationship with you. That's what it means. I predetermined a relationship with you."
2. God having foreknowledge does not mean that man has no free will to choose good or evil.

### Determinism

1. Belief in Calvinism requires belief in philosophical determinism, meaning that you could not make your choices any other way than the way you do.
2. Calvinism holds that Compatibilism is what they really affirm, but determinism is what actually follows.  
Consider this scenario:
  1. A woman tells a man she won't marry him.
  2. The man gives her a date-rape drug.
  3. She, not being in her right state of mind proceeds to say "yes" when he asks her again.
  4. Did she freely choose to say "yes"?  
Of course not.  
Yet that is what the Calvinist thinks of humans, which is actually determinism – not compatibilism or free will.

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5. The Calvinist couldn't say that God instead finds people who are willing because the Calvinist doctrine of Total Depravity holds that all humans are unwilling.
6. The non-Calvinist does believe God changes people's hearts, but not against their will.
7. In the Calvinist view, God forces Himself on people who do not want Him.

## ***Free Will***

### **The animals obey**

1. They do what God tell them to
  - i. God Told Israel the ox and donkey know their owner – but His people Israel did not know Him, their owner.
  - ii. Animals with puny brains that we would think not smart at all, are apparently unflinchingly obedient to God.
  - iii. They are not free creatures as humans are.

### **Humans rebel**

1. Often do not do what God tells them to

### **The kingdom of God**

1. Who did God entrust His kingdom to?
2. Who did God decide to leave in charge of managing the Garden of Eden?
3. Man. Was it because man has the capability to be as loyal as the animals who never disobey God? No.
4. Just as you would never (in your right mind) leave your family business to your pet dog who has unfailing love for you because he is determined to do so, instead leaving it to your children, so God entrusted things to man that He did not entrust to His other more-loyal creation.
5. Your child has the ability to be the greatest dissapointment or greatest joy in your life.
6. God took a risk when giving man free will and entrusting man with so many things that man has repeatedly failed at.
  1. God often spoke of dissapointment with men. He said "I called and you did not answer", and "How often I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her checks", but they were not willing.



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2. God told Israel He had plans for them, but they didn't do it – instead offering their children to Molech, something He never would have commanded them to do. The thought never entered God's head, yet there they were doing it.
3. God spoke of Israel being like His vineyard, yet not producing the fruit He wanted.
4. What's the problem?  
Actual vineyards have no choice but to make fruit if given the right conditions.  
God gave more than the right conditions, but Israel did not produce fruit.  
People don't always do what God wants them to do.  
But it does not follow that because God decreed/made them unable to, that they were not able to.  
Otherwise, how nonsensical would it be for God to complain about something that He made them unable to do?  
To complain that someone won't do otherwise when you caused them to not be able to behave otherwise is quite a moral dilemma for Calvinism to affirm.
7. Animals is what Calvinism affirms that people are as, in God's eyes, with regards to free will to choose between good and evil.

## ***God's will refused (God's will – abstain from immorality)***

### **1 Thessalonians 4:3**

#### **1 Thessalonians 4:3**

#### **3. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;**

1. Did all of the Christians Paul wrote to, or Christians today do God's will?  
Probably not in Paul's day, and definitely not in today's time.
2. A Calvinist divides God's permissive/ prescriptive and His actual/creedal/decreed will, where His actual will is always done, but His permissive/prescriptive will is not always done.  
Only God has access to what His actual/decreed will is, though, in that view.  
His decreed will is said to be what always actually happens.
3. The non-Calvinist affirms that if God wants something to happen a certain way, no one can stop Him, but that God will not do something against His nature or something that He does not want/wish to do.
4. If Christians sin, Calvinism affirms that God ordained them to sin. He decreed it to be so.

## ***God does not love all***

3. The Calvinist does not allow that God could love everyone if He wants to.  
Or that God could allow humans free will if He wants to.  
Instead, they hold that God must micro manage everything.

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### ***Meticulous Providence***

Calvinists have a certain belief of what 'sovereignty' means.

4. Calvinism affirms that God is most glorified by saying He meticulously controls every thing that happens, including salvation for Christians, who are the elect.  
  
A) Non-Calvinists believe that God is more glorified by exercising His character and goodness instead of only utilizing His privileges.  
His character controls what He wants to do.
5. Non-Calvinists affirm that God could do lots of things, but do not see the God of the Bible as motivated to behave that way. He created some beings who obey Him with great consistency, and another group of beings, known as humans, who have a great capacity for rebellion against Him.
6. Pre-ordination  
  
A) Calvinists hold that God is not the author of sin.  
How? They simply avoid the word 'author'.  
They will say God willed sin, created sin, ordained sin, yet not the author of sin.  
How is God not the author of sin if He actively makes it happen, according to the Calvinist view?  
This is another mystery in Calvinism.

### **God's right to rule**

1. These passages show that God has the right to rule.  
He has the right to do what He wants, while we also keep in mind that God will not do anything against His own nature, or against His will/desires.
2. The Calvinist holds that God wishes to micro manage every human's life and every action they make.
3. The non-Calvinist does not reject that God ever influences or gives man over to their evil desires when they reject the truth, but do not believe God desires to systematically remove free will from every human interaction. He already had the animals and the obedient angelic hosts for that before man was created.

### ***Daniel 4:35 (Non one can restrain His hand)***

**Daniel 4:25**

35. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing

He does according to His will in the army of heaven

And among the inhabitants of the earth

No one can restrain His hand

Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

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1. Maybe it is God's will that He allows people to reject His will in their lives.  
Just because no one can restrain God's hand doesn't mean He does not allow people to rebel against Him without instantly ending their lives.

***Not your own, you were bought with a price***

***Romans 9:21 (Does not the potter have power)***

**Romans 9:21**

21. Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

1. Sure, God has the power and right to rule.
2. But does He want to be as meticulously micro-managing of every human action?
3. Does He allow humans to freely choose?

***Psalms 115:3 (God does as He pleases)***

***Matthew 20:15 (God paid the vinegrowers the same)***

**Matthew 20:15**

15. 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

1. It's God's right to do with His possessions as He wishes.  
What God wishes to do is what Calvinists and non-Calvinists disagree over.

## **How God does rule**

***He interferes, but not in everything***

1. We read of cases where God says He did interfere, sometimes where He does not, and places where He says He did not.
2. Why then would we accept the Calvinistic teaching that God micro manages every single thing that happens?

***Daniel 2:21 (God raises and removes kings)***

**Daniel 2:21**

21. And He changes the times and the seasons;  
He removes kings and raises up kings;  
He gives wisdom to the wise  
And knowledge to those who have understanding.

1. Nothing here says God finds the desire to micro manage every detail.

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### Daniel 4:17 (God shares His decisions with others)

#### Daniel 4:17

17. 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers,  
And the sentence by the word of the holy ones,  
In order that the living may know  
That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men,  
Gives it to whomever He will,  
And sets over it the lowest of men.'

1. This is what happened behind the scenes with Nebuchadnezzar's dream that Daniel interpreted.
2. God assigns rulers, but it does not say God finds the need to micro manage everything they do or that He actively is interfering to put one or another rule into power.  
It could be that God allows the natural order as He made it to flow on, and only interact outside of those forces He set in place when He desires to.

### Proverbs 21:1 (king's heart is in God's hand)

#### Proverbs 21:1

1. The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD,  
Like the rivers of water;  
He turns it wherever He wishes.

1. A king can do as he wishes, but God reserves the right to interfere if He wishes.  
It does not say every thought of the king is puppeted by God.
2. God can certainly turn a king's heart as He can turn the rivers.  
The passage doesn't say how often God wishes to do such a thing.
3. If God truly does affect every thought and action of every ruler as the Calvinists affirm, we have no wonder why God was so upset with so many evil kings in Israel who did things He did not want them to do.
4. In **1 Kings 22**, God wanted Ahab dead. He could have done it instantly.  
Instead, God had a plan of getting him to go against the Syrians in Ramoth Gilead and die in battle.  
God has purposes, but they are not always achieved in the way we would think would be the most efficient.  
Maybe the Calvinist figures the most efficient way for God to rule is to micro manage everything because that is how we would run the universe – but does God really want to do that? The Calvinist thinks so.  
But is that what the Bible tells us about God?  
The non-Calvinist would say "no".

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1. Also keep in mind that God allowed a lying spirit to deceive king Ahab's prophets as part of the plan which ended in Ahab's death.
2. God has a lot of tools available to get what He wants done.  
To think only macro-managing every thought of every human is beyond what the scriptures indicate God does or desires to do.

### Hosea 8:4 (A king that God did not set up)

#### Hosea 8:4

4. They set up kings, but not by Me;  
They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them.  
From their silver and gold  
They made idols for themselves—  
That they might be cut off.

1. Israel set up kings that were not from God.  
He did not authorize them to be establish to rule.
2. Sure, God raises up and brings down king as we are told elsewhere, but as we can see here, it is not always the case.
3. Apparently God can let politics run their course without finding the need to intervene.

### Isaiah 54:14 (Armies assembled that were not of God's doing)

#### Isaiah 54:14

14. Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me.  
Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.

1. God has intervened in kingdoms to have armies assemble before, but here informs us that the army assembling in this passage was not of His doing.

### Isaiah 10 (Assyrians are brought by God)

#### Isaiah 10

1. **Isaiah 10** speaks of God claiming that He assembled the Assyrian armies to come against Israel.  
**Isaiah 54** spoke of armies God did not intervene to arise,  
but the Assyrians were His personal intervention to make happen.
2. Why would God tell us both cases of Him doing and not doing something, if every 'something' is always ordained/caused/interfered by Him?

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### Isaiah 37:36 (angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians)

#### Isaiah 37:36

36. Then the angel<sup>[fn]</sup> of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.

1. Here is a case where God does intervene.
2. Why didn't God intervene before?  
Was it because of something a human did?  
We do know Hezekiah prayed a prayer of repentance for the nation.  
God reacted to man's prayer.
3. So it seems God at least sometimes chooses not to intervene unless asked.
4. Recall the James passage which says 'you have not because you ask not'.

### Mark 4 + Psalm 107 (God controls the weather)

1. In both of these passages, God interferes with the usual behavior of the natural order/creation.
2. That does not mean He constantly is directing and manipulating every rainstorm or hurricane.
3. God chooses when to interfere.  
The Calvinist thinks it is all the time.  
The non-Calvinist says it is whenever God wants to interfere.

## God limits Himself

### Matthew 13:58 (Jesus couldn't do many mighty works)

#### Matthew 13:58

58. Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

1. It didn't say He did not because it was ordained that He would not.  
It was based off of the behavior of the people in Nazareth.

### James 4:2 (When we don't ask, we limit what God does)

#### James 4:2

2. You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet<sup>[fn]</sup> you do not have because you do not ask.

1. Not 'because' God did not ordain it.

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***Titus 1-2(God cannot lie)***

***2 Timothy 2-13 (God cannot deny Himself)***

***James 1-13 (Cannot be tempted by evil)***

***Genesis 19-22 (could not destroy Sodom while Lot was there)***

## **God's Justness**

### ***Accountable for what you couldn't do?***

1. Can God be just to hold someone accountable for something they could not do?
  1. The Calvinist would say that person still did what he wanted to do.  
But isn't that defining free-will in a way that only a Calvinist would agree with?  
If the person can't decide to follow God, then that isn't free will.  
It doesn't matter that the person wanted what they didn't choose.
  2. Is God nonsensical when He complains that people are not behaving correctly if He caused them to behave incorrectly?  
If people can not behave otherwise because they cannot, how can God blame them?