

Reformed Theology

A high-level explanation of
“reformed theology” exploring
its historical origins and
doctrinal distinctives



Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643–1653)

Reformed Theology

- Reformed theology is the biblical, God-centered framework established during the Protestant Reformation that emphasizes divine sovereignty in salvation, the authority of Scripture alone, and the glory of God in all things.
- It is called “***Reformed***” theology because it represents a continual call to ***reform*** the church according to the pure Word of God, purging man-made corruptions like works-righteousness and papal authority, and ensuring that the church conforms to Christ's headship rather than human traditions.
- I believe Reformed theology is best described and summarized in ***two*** sets of truths known historically as:
 - **The Five Solas** (gospel essentials)
 - **The Five Points of Calvinism** (doctrines of grace outlining how God elects, atones for, and preserves His depraved elect people)

What is the Protestant Reformation?

- The Protestant Reformation was a movement in the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe which tried to “reform” the Roman Catholic Church because of doctrinal and moral corruption that had crept into the church over the years and undermined the Christian gospel.
- The three key figures of the Protestant Reformation are generally considered to be:
 - **Martin Luther** – the German monk who started it all with his Ninety-five Theses
 - **John Calvin** – the French theologian who developed what we refer to today as Calvinism
 - **Ulrich Zwingli** – the Swiss reformer who established the Reformed tradition in Switzerland
- The upshot of the Protestant Reformation was not reform but exclusion – the Reformers were not tolerated by the Roman Catholic Church.
- Consequently, the Reformers ended up establishing **new** churches which eventually branched off into the many Christian denominations and churches that we see in the world today.

The Five Solas

- The five *solas* were not exactly Reformation slogans, but they serve as a good summary of the Reformed faith.
- Neither Martin Luther nor John Calvin nor any other Protestant Reformer summarized his teachings in a tidy list including Scripture alone, Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, to the glory of God alone.
- If Wikipedia can be believed, the big five were not put forth as a slogan until 1965! ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five solae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_solae))
- While it was not until the twentieth century that this fivefold summary became the shorthand version of what is known today as Reformed theology, it still captures well the distinctive teachings of the Reformers and the core of the gospel as it is revealed in the Scriptures.

What Are the Five “Solas” of the Protestant Reformation?

- The word “sola” is Latin for “alone” or “only”
- The Five Solas of the Reformation are:
 - Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone)
 - Solus Christus (Christ Alone)
 - Sola Gratia (Grace Alone)
 - Sola Fide (Faith Alone)
 - Soli Deo Gloria (To the Glory of God Alone)

Why are the “Five Solas” Important?

- The Five Solas of the Reformation are important because they define the biblical gospel itself and guard it from distortion.
- Each sola addresses a foundational question about authority, salvation, and the glory of God, and together they form an integrated theological framework rather than isolated slogans.
- The Five Solas stand or fall together.
- Scripture alone reveals Christ alone, who saves by grace alone, received through faith alone, all to the glory of God alone.
- Their importance lies in preserving the biblical gospel, anchoring assurance, humbling human pride, and exalting God as both the source and goal of salvation.
- In short, the Five Solas are important because they are not merely historical markers of the Reformation; they are enduring summaries of the gospel itself.

Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone)

- The Reformation principle of sola Scriptura has to do with the sufficiency of Scripture as our supreme authority in all spiritual matters.
- Sola Scriptura simply means that all truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life is taught either explicitly or implicitly in Scripture.
- It is not a claim that all truth of **every** kind is found in Scripture.
- The most ardent defender of sola Scriptura will concede, for example, that Scripture has little or nothing to say about DNA structures, microbiology, the rules of Chinese grammar, or rocket science.
- But Scripture is a “more sure Word,” standing above all other truth in its authority.
- Therefore, Scripture is the highest and supreme authority on **any** matter on which it speaks.

Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone)

- Furthermore, we are forbidden to add to or take away from Scripture (cf. Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18-19).
- To add to it is to lay on people a burden that God Himself does not intend for them to bear (cf. Matt. 23:4).
- Scripture is therefore the perfect and only standard of spiritual truth, revealing infallibly all that we must believe in order to be saved and all that we must do in order to glorify God.
- That—no more, no less—is what *sola Scriptura* means.
- *“The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.”* (Westminster Confession of Faith)

Solus Christus (Christ Alone)

- There is no other name by which a man can be saved other than the name of “Jesus”. (Acts 4:11)
- His sacrifice is sufficient to atone for the sins of the Church.
- There is no biblical basis to turn to anyone but Christ for intercession between us and God.
- Everything necessary to atone for our sins and to provide the righteousness necessary to please God, was finally and completely done by Christ in his life, death, and resurrection.
- He is the sole focus and object of our faith and the only source of truth – *“I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by me.”* (Jn 14:6)

Solus Christus (Christ Alone)

- Salvation is never attained by anything apart from Christ, or offered in addition to Christ.
- Saying that we need Christ ***plus*** anything in order to be saved is a blatantly ***false teaching***.
- The Catholic Church, for example, elevated Mary beyond the role the mother of Jesus, and made her an additional intercessor between man and God. And that is Christ plus.
- The Catholic Church later made lists of recognized “Saints” who they claimed could serve as intercessors on behalf of men, and prayers began to go up to these departed saints. And that too is Christ plus.
- We are forbidden from placing our faith in anything or anyone other than Christ ***alone***.

Sola Fide (Faith Alone) and Sola Gratia (Grace Alone)

- We are saved solely through faith in Jesus Christ because of God's grace and Christ's merit alone.
- We are not saved by our merits or declared righteous by our good works.
- God grants salvation **not** because of the good things we do, and **despite** our sin.
- As humans, we inherited (from our ancestor Adam) a nature that is enslaved to sin.
- Because of our nature, we are naturally enemies of God and lovers of evil.
- We need to be made alive (regenerated) before we can even **have** faith in Christ.
- God graciously chooses to give us new hearts so that we can then trust in Christ and be saved through faith alone.

Sola Fide (Faith Alone) and Sola Gratia (Grace Alone)

- God graciously preserves us and keeps us.
- We can only stand before God by his grace because:
 - Our sin was laid on Christ as he hung on the cross
 - Jesus' life of perfect righteousness is counted as ours when we come to him in faith (2Cor. 5:21).
- Sola fide and sola gratia express the teaching of Ephesians 2:8 –
*For by **grace** you have been saved through **faith**. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*

Soli Deo Gloria (To the Glory of God Alone)

- Glory belongs to God alone.
- God's glory is the central motivation for salvation, not improving the lives of people—though that is a wonderful by-product.
- God is not the ***means*** to an end—he ***is*** the means ***and*** the end.
- The goal of all of life is to give glory to God alone: “*Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- As The Westminster Catechism says, the chief purpose of human life is “*to glorify God and enjoy him forever.*”

The Five Points of Calvinism

Historical Roots

- John Calvin, the famous theologian and pastor of Geneva, died in 1564.
- Along with Martin Luther in Germany, he was the most influential force of the Protestant Reformation.
- His commentaries and *Institutes of the Christian Religion* continue to have tremendous influence on the Christian church today.
- The churches which have inherited the teachings of Calvin are usually called Reformed as opposed to the Lutheran or Anglican/Episcopalian branches of the Reformation.
- While not all Baptist churches hold to a Reformed theology, there is a significant Baptist tradition which flowed out of that stream and still cherishes the central doctrines inherited from the Reformed branch of the Reformation.

Arminius and the Remonstrants

- The controversy between Arminianism and Calvinism arose in Holland in the early 1600s.
- The founder of the Arminian party was Jacob Arminius (1560–1609).
- He studied in Geneva under Calvin's successor, Theodore Beza, and became a professor of theology at the University of Leyden in 1603.
- Gradually Arminius came to **reject** certain Calvinist teachings.
- The controversy spread all over Holland, where the Reformed Church was the overwhelming majority.
- The Arminians drew up their creed in **Five Articles**, and laid them before the state authorities of Holland in 1610 under the name Remonstrance, signed by forty-six ministers.

Arminius and the Remonstrants

- The official Calvinistic response came from the ***Synod of Dort*** which was held November 13, 1618, to May 9, 1619, to ***consider*** the Five Articles.
- There were eighty-four members and eighteen secular commissioners.
- The Synod wrote what has come to be known as the ***Canons of Dort***. These are still part of the church confession of the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church.
- They state the Five Points of Calvinism in response to the Five Articles of the Arminian Remonstrants.
- So, the so-called Five Points were ***not*** chosen by the Calvinists as a summary of their teaching.
- They emerged as a ***response*** to the Arminians who chose these five points to disagree with.

The Five Points of Calvinism

- These five points are the *heart* of true gospel-centered biblical theology.
- Where we stand on these things deeply affects our view of God, man, salvation, the atonement, regeneration, assurance, worship, and missions.
- Somewhere along the way (nobody knows for sure when or how), the five points came to be summarized in English under the acronym TULIP:
 - T - Total Depravity
 - U - Unconditional Election
 - L - Limited Atonement
 - I - Irresistible Grace
 - P - Perseverance of the Saints

Calvinism and Arminianism Compared

TULIP Point	Arminian View	Calvinist (or Reformed) View
T — Total Depravity	Free will: Although human nature was seriously affected by the Fall, every sinner still has the ability to repent and believe.	Total inability: sin renders humans spiritually dead and unable to believe apart from divine intervention.
U — Unconditional Election	God's election is conditioned on foreseen faith in the sinner.	Election is un conditional and grounded solely in God's will.
L — Limited Atonement	Christ died for all , making salvation possible for everyone.	Christ died specifically and effectively for the elect.
I — Irresistible Grace	Grace is resistible; sinners may use their free will to reject God's inward call.	Grace is irresistible ; God's inward call effectually brings the elect to faith.
P — Perseverance of the Saints	Classical Arminianism teaches that true believers may fall away, though not all Arminians agree; some hold that believers are eternally secure and cannot be lost after regeneration.	True believers will persevere by God's preserving grace.

The Controversy Between Pelagius and Augustine

- The fundamental principles of each system can be traced back many centuries **prior** to the time when Calvin and Arminius lived.
- For example, the basic doctrines of the Calvinistic position had been vigorously defended by Augustine against Pelagius in the fifth century.
- Pelagius and his followers, in the fifth century, were as decidedly opposed to what we call “Calvinism” as Arminius was, though they deviated much further from sound doctrine than he did.
- Pelagius denied that human nature had been corrupted by sin.
- He maintained that the only ill effect which the race had suffered as the result of Adam’s transgression was the **bad example** which he had set for mankind.

The Controversy Between Pelagius and Augustine

- According to Pelagius, every infant comes into the world in the same condition as Adam was before the Fall.
- His leading principle was that man's will is ***absolutely*** free.
- Hence, ***everyone*** has the power, ***within himself***, to believe the gospel, as well as to keep the law of God perfectly.
- Augustine, on the other hand, maintained that human nature had been so completely corrupted by Adam's fall that no one, in himself, has the ability to obey either the law or the gospel.
- Divine grace is essential if sinners are to believe and be saved, and this grace is extended only to those whom God predestined to eternal life before the foundation of the world.
- The act of faith, therefore, results, not from the sinner's free will (as Pelagius taught), but from God's free grace, which is bestowed on the elect only.
- Augustine's unanswerable polemic had so fully discredited Pelagianism in the field of argument, that it could no longer be made plausible to the Christian mind. It collapsed.

The Five Points of Calvinism Explained and Defended

Total Depravity

- “Total depravity” does not mean that every sinner is as totally or completely corrupt in his actions and thoughts as it is possible for him to be.
- Instead, the word “total” is used to indicate that the ***whole of man’s being*** has been affected by sin.
- Because of this, unregenerate sinners are unable to do ***anything*** that is spiritually pleasing in God’s sight.
- While unbelievers may perform admirable acts by ***human*** standards, they are spiritually ***incapable*** of pleasing God or saving themselves.
- This condition arose from Adam’s fall: though created upright and free from sin, Adam’s disobedience brought spiritual death and bondage to sin upon himself and all his descendants.
- As a result, human beings have the ability to make choices but because they are under sin’s dominion, apart from regeneration they ***cannot*** please God.

Total Depravity – Supporting Scriptures

- The fall has resulted in spiritual death to all men:
 - **Romans 5:12** – *Therefore, just as **sin came into the world through one man** [Adam, see vs. 14], and death through sin, and **so death spread to all men** because all sinned [in Adam]...*
 - **Ephesians 2:1-3** – *And **you were dead in the trespasses and sins** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and we were **by nature** children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*
 - **Colossians 2:13** – *And **you, who were dead in your trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.*
- The heart of fallen man is now hopelessly defiled, being dominated by sin and evil:
 - **Jeremiah 17:9** – ***The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?***
 - **Genesis 6:5** – *The Lord saw that **the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.***
 - **Mark 7:21–23** – *For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. **All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.***

Total Depravity – Supporting Scriptures

- Fallen man is now under the control of Satan and in bondage to sin:
 - **John 8:44** – *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*
 - **Ephesians 2:2** – *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins... following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—*
 - **1 John 5:19** – *We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*
 - (see also 2 Tim. 2:25–26; 1 John 3:10; Rom. 6:20; Titus 3:3)
- Fallen man, left in his dead state, is **totally unable** to repent, to believe the gospel, or to come to Christ:
 - **John 6:44** – *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*
 - **Romans 8:7–8** – *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*
 - **1 Corinthians 2:14** – *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*
 - (see also John 6:65; Rom. 3:9–12)

Unconditional Election

- God would have been perfectly just to leave all people in their sin, as He was under ***no obligation*** to save ***anyone***.
- In this context, Scripture teaches the doctrine of election: before the foundation of the world, God sovereignly chose certain fallen individuals to receive His undeserved mercy, purposing to save them alone.
- Though He had the authority to save ***all*** or ***none***, He chose instead to save ***some*** and ***pass over*** others.
- This choice was not based on ***any*** foreseen actions or responses, but solely on God's sovereign will and good pleasure.
- Those ***not*** chosen were left to their own sinful choices.
- If God had not graciously elected a people for Himself, ***none*** would be saved, and His mercy toward some does not imply injustice toward others, since Scripture denies that God ***owed*** salvation to ***any*** sinner.

Unconditional Election – Supporting Scriptures

- God has an elect people whom He has chosen to grant salvation.
 - **Ephesians 1:4–5** – *even as **he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,*
 - **John 6:37, 39** – ***All that the Father gives me will come to me**, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ... And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.*
 - (see also Deut.10:14–15, Matt.24:22–24, Matt.24:31, John.6:65, John.17:9, Romans 8:28–30, Rom.8:33, Rom.11:5, Eph.1:11, 1Thes.1:4–5, 1Thes.5:9, 2Thes.2:13, 1Pet.1:1–2, 1Pet.2:8–9)
- God's choice was not based upon any foreseen faith or good works.
 - **Romans 9:11–13** – *though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that **God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls**—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” As it is written, “**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.**”*
 - **2 Timothy 1:9** – *who saved us and called us to a holy calling, **not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace**, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,*
 - (see also Deuteronomy 7:7–8, Rom.9:16, 1Cor.1:27–29)

Limited Atonement (Particular Redemption)

- Historic Calvinism teaches that Christ's atonement was ***definite*** in design and accomplishment: it ***actually secured salvation***—including faith and repentance—for those given to Him by the Father, and all for whom He died will infallibly be saved.
- Although Christ's obedience and suffering were of infinite value and ***sufficient*** to save ***all*** humanity, He intended to save ***only the elect***; thus the atonement is ***limited in design, not in worth***.
- Arminians ***also*** limit the atonement, but by denying its ***effectiveness***, holding that it merely makes salvation ***possible if*** sinners believe.
- Therefore, the atonement ***must be limited*** either in extent (Calvinism) or in effectiveness (Arminianism).
- For the Calvinist, the atonement is like a ***narrow*** bridge which goes ***all the way*** across the stream; for the Arminian it is like a ***great wide*** bridge that goes only ***half-way*** across.

Limited Atonement – Supporting Scriptures

- Jesus Christ was sent into the world to save the people whom the Father had given Him.
 - **John 6:37-40** – *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.** For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”*
 - **John 10:14-16** – *I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and **I lay down my life for the sheep.** And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*
 - (see also John 10:11; Eph. 1:3–4; Eph. 1:7; Eph. 1:13)
- Christ’s sacrificial and intercessory work as high priest is for those the Father had **given Him, not for the world.**
 - **John 17:1-2; 9-11** – *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, **to give eternal life to all whom you have given him...** **I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me,** for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.*
 - **John 17:24** – *Father, **I desire that they also, whom you have given me,** may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.*
 - (see also Heb. 2:17; Heb. 3:1; Heb. 9:28)

Limited Atonement – Supporting Scriptures

- Christ's saving work was intended to save a particular people.
 - **Matthew 1:21** – *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save **his people** from their sins.*
 - **Acts 20:28 28** – *Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for **the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.***
 - (see also Ephesians 5:25-27; John 10:11; John 10:15; John 10:26; Rom. 8:32–34; John 15:13; Matt. 20:28; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:28)
- Those for whom Christ died are an innumerable host from every tribe, tongue, people and nation in the world.
 - **Revelation 5:9** – *And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood **you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation...***
 - **John 3:16-17** – *“For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*
 - (see also John 4:42; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 John 4:14; Rom. 5:18; 2 Cor. 5:14–15; 1 Tim. 2:4–6; Heb. 2:9; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:1-2)

Limited Atonement – Supporting Scriptures

- **Note:** The Bible often uses the words “all” and “world” in a restricted, limited sense.
 - **Luke 2:1** – *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that **all the world** should be registered.*
 - **John 12:19** – *So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, **the world** has gone after him.”*
 - **1 Corinthians 6:12** – *“**All** things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “**All** things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.*
 - **John 12:32** – *And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw **all** people to myself.”*
 - **1 Corinthians 15:22** – *For as in Adam **all** die, so also in Christ shall **all** be made alive.*

Irresistible Grace

- The Trinity works together in salvation: the Father elects, the Son redeems, and the Holy Spirit applies redemption.
- Because sinners are spiritually dead and unable to respond, the general outward call of the gospel cannot save by itself.
- Therefore, the Spirit gives the elect a special inward call, regenerating them, renewing their minds and wills, and bringing them to faith and repentance.
- This inward call ***never*** fails and is given ***only*** to the elect, who then come freely to Christ.
- For this reason, Calvinists describe God's saving grace as ***efficacious*** or ***irresistible***.

Irresistible Grace – Supporting Scriptures

- **Every one** whom the Father has chosen and for whom Christ died, will **certainly** experience the application of that salvation by the Holy Spirit.
 - John 6:37 – *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*
 - Romans 8:29–30 – *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And **those whom he predestined he also called**, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
 - (see also John 6:44; John 10:16; Rom 8:32; 1 Cor 6:11; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 3:6, 17–18; Eph 1:3-14; 1 Pet 1:2)
- Spiritual Regeneration is an inward change in man performed **solely** by the Holy Spirit and is **not** dependent upon man's help or cooperation.
 - John 3:3–8 – *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."...The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*
 - Titus 3:5 – *he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,*
 - Ezekiel 36:26–27 – *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*
 - (see also John 1:12–13, Rom 9:16, 1 Pet 1:3, 1 Pet 1:23, 1 John 5:4, Deut 30:6, 2 Cor 5:17–18, Gal 6:15, Eph 2:10, John 5:21, John 11:14,15,25,38–44, Eph 2:1, Eph 2:5, Col 2:13, John 17:2, 1 Cor 4:7)

Irresistible Grace – Supporting Scriptures

- Repentance and Faith are divine gifts which are the **result, not the cause**, of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.
 - Ephesians 2:8–9 – *For **by grace you have been saved through faith**. And **this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God**, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
 - Acts 11:18 - *When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also **God has granted repentance that leads to life.**”*
 - Acts 13:48 - *And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and **as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.***
 - Acts 16:14 - *One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord **opened her heart** to pay attention to what was said by Paul.*
 - Philippians 1:29 – *For **it has been granted to you** that for the sake of **Christ you should not only believe** in him but also suffer for his sake...*
 - (see also Acts 5:31; Acts 18:27; 2 Tim 2:25–26)

Perseverance of the Saints

- The elect are redeemed by Christ, renewed by the Spirit, and kept in faith by God's almighty power.
- All who are spiritually united to Christ through regeneration are eternally secure, unable to be separated from God's unchangeable love, having been predestined to eternal glory.
- The perseverance of the saints does not teach that all who **profess** faith are saved; rather, it applies to **true** saints—those set apart by the Spirit and given **genuine** faith—who persevere to the end.
- Many profess belief and fall away, but they were never truly saved.
- True believers may fall into serious sin, but they do not lose their salvation or union with Christ.
- This doctrine is inseparable from Calvinism, since Election and Efficacious Grace necessarily imply the certain salvation of those whom God has unconditionally chosen and effectually redeemed.

Perseverance of the Saints – Supporting Scriptures

- All those who come to genuine saving faith in Christ are kept secure in him for eternity by the Power of God.
 - Jn. 10:27-29 – *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.***
 - Rom. 8:38-39 – *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
 - Phil. 1:6 – *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
 - (John 6:35-40; Jn.17:11-12; Jn.17:15; Rom.8:29-30; 1Cor.1:8; Eph.1:5, 13-14; Eph.4:30; 1Pet.1:3-5)
- True believers **will** persevere to the end in faith and obedience by the Power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Phil. 2:12-13 – *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, **for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.***
 - 1Jn. 2:19 – *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for **if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.** But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*
 - (Jn.14:21; Jn.15:1-11; Eph.2:10; 1Pet.5:10; 2Pet.1:10; Phil.3:12-15; 1Jn.3:9; 1Jn.5:18; Heb.6:9-12; 1Jn.2:25)

Closing Thoughts

- C.H. Spurgeon, arguably one of the ablest Baptist preachers of all time, said concerning the teachings of Calvinism: *“there is no such thing as preaching Christ and him crucified, unless we preach what is nowadays called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else.”*
- In his autobiography, Spurgeon recounts how, at the age of 16, he came to be a Calvinist :
 - *Born, as all of us are by nature, an Arminian, I still believed the old things I had heard continually from the pulpit, and did not see the grace of God. When I was coming to Christ, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. . . . I can recall the very day and hour when first I received those truths in my own soul — when they were, as John Bunyan says, burnt into my heart as with a hot iron. . . . One week-night, when I was sitting in the house of God, I was not thinking much about the preacher’s sermon, for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, “How did you come to be a Christian?” I sought the Lord. “But how did you come to seek the Lord?” The truth flashed across my mind in a moment — I should not have sought Him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek Him. I prayed, thought I, but then I asked myself, “How came I to pray?” I was induced to pray by reading the Scriptures. “How came I to read the Scriptures?” I did read them, but what led me to do so? Then, in a moment, I saw that God was at the bottom of it all, and that He was the Author of my faith, and so the whole doctrine of grace opened up to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day, and I desire to make this my constant confession, “I ascribe my change wholly to God.”*

Closing Thoughts

- As a final closing thought, I can think of no better thing to say than to quote what the Apostle Paul wrote at the end of what is arguably one of the most “Calvinistic” portions of scripture (Romans 9-11) where he says:
 - *For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.* (Rom 11:32-36 NIV)