

Calvinism, The Reformed Tradition, and the TULIP Model

The TULIP model is a mnemonic tool for explaining five of the core tenets of Calvinist theology. It stands for

T – Total Depravity
U – Unconditional Election
L – Limited Atonement
I – Irresistible Grace
P – Preservation or Perseverance of the Saints.

I'll explain each principle, then give Scripture verses adduced for or against those principles. This list will not be a conclusive list of all verses, but will give you the general idea. Also, note that latter three that are most objected to.

(Note: This is not a good way to do theology in general, as it is preferable to look at the entire witness of Scripture – *tota Scriptura* – when formulating doctrinal statements. However, for the sake of simplicity and brevity, I'll use this method.)

Total Depravity:

Definition - “Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or prepare himself thereunto.” Westminster Confession of Faith 9:3

Biblical Verses:

Rom 3:9-20, John 15:4-51, Cor 2:14, Psalm 51, Colossians 2:13

Unconditional Election:

Definition - Unconditional Election refers to the belief that God, from eternity past, chooses certain individuals for salvation based on His sovereign will and purpose rather than on any foreseen merit or action in individuals themselves. This view upholds that no work, choice, or qualification on the human side incites or compels this divine selection; it is entirely grounded in God's gracious and unmerited favor.

Biblical Verses:

Mark 13:20, Rom 9:11-18, Romans 8: 28-29, Ephesians 1:4-5

Limited Atonement:

Definition: Limited atonement, also known as definite atonement or particular redemption, is a Christian doctrine that asserts that Jesus Christ's death was intended to atone specifically for the sins of the elect, rather than for everyone in the world. This means that while Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for all, it is effective only for those whom God has chosen for salvation.

For: Ephesians 1:4, Romans 8: 29-30, Isaiah 53:12, Matthew 1:21, John 10:14,26, Matthew 22:14

Against: 1 John 2:1-2, Colossians 1:15-20, Romans 11:32, Ezekiel 33:11

Ironically, Calvin himself may not have placed much value on the idea of a limited atonement. After all, the five points of what is called “Calvinism” came from a synod in the Netherlands almost 60 years after his death. Calvin had this to say about [John 3:16](#): “It is a remarkable commendation of faith, that it frees us from everlasting destruction. . . . And he has employed the universal term *whosoever*, both to invite all indiscriminately to partake of life, and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. Such is also the import of the term *World*; . . . he shows himself to be reconciled to the whole world, when he invites all men without exception to the faith of Christ, which is nothing else than an entrance into life”

Irresistible Grace:

(I'm going to quote directly from Westminster Confession of Faith Article 10

Definition: I. “All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call,^a by his word and Spirit,^b out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ;^c enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God;^d taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh;^e renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power determining them to that which is good;^f and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ;^g yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.^h”

^a Rom. 8:30 ; Rom. 11:7; Eph. 1:10,11.

^b 2 Thess. 2:13,14; 2 Cor. 3:3,6.

^c Rom. 8:2; Eph. 2:1-5; 2 Tim. 1:9,10.

^d Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 2:10,12; Eph. 1:17,18.

^e Ezek. 36:26.

^f Ezek. 11:19; Phil. 2:13; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27.

^g Eph. 1:19; John 6:44,45.

^h Cant. 1:4; Ps. 110:3; John 6:37; Rom. 6:16-18.

Also: Acts 13:48, John 6:37-40, Colossians 1:13,

Against: Joshua 24:15, Ezekiel 18:21-24, Acts 7:51-53, Luke 9:5, John 12:40

Perseverance of the Saints:

Definition: The elect cannot relapse and are predestined to salvation.

For: John 10:28, Philippians 1:6, 1 John 2:19, 1 Peter 1:3-5

Against: 1 Cor 9:26-27, Matthew 10:21-22, 1 Timothy 4:1-3, Hebrews 3:12, ex.
Solomon, Nicodemus