

## ***The Five Points of Calvinism: TULIP***

### **T**otal inability or total depravity.

Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the Gospel. The sinner is dead, blind and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free; it is in bondage to his evil nature; therefore, he will not--indeed he cannot--choose good over evil in the spiritual realm.

Consequently it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ--it takes regeneration, by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation; it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God (1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; Jeremiah 13:23; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:10-12).

### **U**nconditional election.

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response of obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause, of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner--not the sinner's choice of Christ--is the ultimate cause of salvation (Acts 13:48; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 1:4-6; 2 Timothy 1:9; Romans 9:10-18; Titus.3:4-7; Romans 11:4-7; 1 Corinthians 1:27-29; Romans 8:28-29; John 10:26-27; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; 1 Corinthians 4:7; John 6:44, 65; Romans 9:6-7,16,22-24; Philippians 1:28-29).

### **L**imited atonement (or particular redemption)

Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only, and actually secured salvation for them. His death was the substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation; including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, therefore guaranteeing their salvation (Luke 19:10 note to save, not to make possible; Isaiah 53:8; John 10:10-11,14-18,25-29; Mark 10:45; Luke 1:68; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:28; Galatians 1:3-4; Matthew 1:21; Acts 20:28).

## **I**rrresistible grace (or the efficacious call of the Spirit)

In addition to the outward general call to salvation (which is made to everyone who hears the Gospel), the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be--and often is--rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call, the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended (Romans 9:16; Philippians 2:12-13; James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2,23-29; Romans 8:30; John 6:37,44-45,64-65; Acts 13:48).

## **P**erseverance of the saints.

All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end (John 6:47; Romans 8:1, 29-32, 35, 37-39; 1 Corinthians 1:7-9; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 2:19; Philippians 1:6; Jude 24-25).

According to Calvinism, salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the triune God: the Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to willingly obey the Gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone. Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation. This is the biblical Gospel.

adapted from *Putting Amazing Back Into Grace* by Michael Horton (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994).