

A Brief Statement on What Scripture Teaches in Relation to the Points of the TULIP of Calvinism

In relation to the points of the TULIP of Calvinism, Scripture teaches that man is pervasively and awfully depraved in his entire being before regeneration (Ephesians 2:1-3; Genesis 6:5), and nobody will exercise saving faith without the enablement of grace (John 6:44; Romans 3:11). Nevertheless, prevenient grace is given to all men (John 12:32) to enable them to respond to the gospel positively and receive the gifts of repentance and faith (2 Timothy 2:25; Philippians 1:29) from the Spirit through the Word (Romans 10:17) since God is not willing that any perish (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4). Personal election to salvation (cf. Romans 16:13) is based upon foreknowledge (1 Peter 1:2), which is not synonymous with foreordination. While there is a special sense in which Christ died for “me” (Galatians 2:20), for the congregation of immersed believers (Ephesians 5:25), and for the elect (Romans 8:32), Scripture plainly states that Christ died for all men (1 John 2:2; 1 Timothy 2:6) including specifically those who are never born again (2 Peter 2:1). The grace of God is resistible, not irresistible (Acts 7:51; Matthew 23:37). All believers are eternally secure and are preserved by the power of God from both hell and the domination of sin (John 10:27-30), so that no regenerate person ever can be eternally lost (Romans 8:28-39) or, during his earthly life, totally unchanged and exactly like the unregenerate (Ephesians 2:10).

John 12:32 affirms that the Lord Jesus draws “all men” to Himself, employing the same verb for drawing (ἔλκω) as that which is employed to state that nobody can come to Christ without being drawn (John 6:44). The Calvinist contention that John 12:32 should be altered to affirm that Christ draws not “all men,” but “all the elect,” is purely gratuitous. There is no exegetical or syntactical basis whatsoever for changing the “all men” of John 12:32 to “all the elect,” nor does any similar text with πᾶς provide exegetical support for such an alteration—the Calvinist view of John 12:32 is eisegesis, not exegesis. On the other hand, there are sound exegetical reasons for supplying “men” with the “all” in John 12:32 and many other texts with the like syntax—including, it is worthy of note, every related text in John’s gospel (compare John 1:7 & 9; John 2:24 & 2:25; John 3:26 & 27; John 5:23 & 5:21-22; John 11:48 & 12:19; John 13:35 & 17:21; also Luke 9:23 & 25; Acts 21:28 & 22:15; Romans 16:19 & 1:8; Ephesians 3:9 & 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:12 & 5:14-15; 2 Timothy 2:24 & 2 Timothy 2:25-26; 1 Timothy 2:4; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 2:17 & 2:15; etc.)

Furthermore, there is no evidence in the New Testament or in extrabiblical Koiné that the noun *foreknow* (πρόγνωσις) or the verb *to foreknow* (προγινώσκω) mean anything other than precognition. The Calvinist contention that the words really signify *predetermine* or something of the sort are arbitrary, and no such meaning for the word appears in the Liddell-Scott Greek lexicon, since in that work theology is not driving the meaning assigned to these words. In all the clear instances, the words simply signify precognition, and no text requires a different meaning, either in the NT (Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:2, πρόγνωσις, Acts 26:5; Romans 8:29; 11:2; 1 Peter 1:20 (the perfect tense probably explains the translation in the KJV); 2 Peter 3:17, προγινώσκω), the LXX (Judith 9:6; 11:19, πρόγνωσις, Wisdom 6:13; 8:8; 18:6, προγινώσκω), or elsewhere (cf. (1 Clement 44:2; 2 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 32:4; Justin Martyr, Dialogue with

Trypho 1:39, 92, 134; Josephus, Antiquities 8:234, 418; 13:300; 15:373; 17:43; 18:201; Apion 1:232, πρόγνωσις, Shepherd of Hermas 31:4; 66:5, Apology of Justin 1:28, 43, 45, 49, 53; Trypho 1:42, 70, 77, 140–141; Athenagoras, Resurrection 1:2; Josephus, Antiquities 1:311; 2:86; 4:121; 5:358; 6:54, 348; 7:57; 8:419; 13:175; 16:214; 18:218; War 1:55, 608; 2:159; 3:484; 4:236; 6:8; Life 1:106; Apion 1:204, 256; Pseudo-Hecateus 6:23; προγινώσκω). Nor is it valid for the Calvinist to assume that senses of other words, such as *know*, uniformly transfer to the noun and verb *foreknow* (by such reasoning, βαπτίζω could be made to signify “to dye” because the verb derives from βάπτω, which has this meaning); rather than making such an assumption, the actual words for *foreknow*, which are common enough, must themselves be analyzed. While John 15:16, isolated from other texts of Scripture, is certainly consistent with an unconditional personal election to salvation, it does not require such a doctrine, even if one assumes that election to salvation, rather than the election of the twelve to their apostolic office, is in view. The syntax “ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” while it certainly places the emphasis upon God’s choice of man, does not require the exclusion of all activity on the part of humanity any more than Paul’s “the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Romans 7:19) means that Paul did no good at all, or the statement that “it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Matthew 10:20; Mark 13:11) excludes human speech entirely.

Furthermore, while regeneration and faith are temporally simultaneous, the new birth is logically subsequent to faith (cf. John 3:1-21). Scripture neither teaches the soteriology of Arminianism nor of TULIP Calvinism. Furthermore, statements advocating baptismal regeneration by Calvin must be unequivocally repudiated and anathematized (Galatians 1:8-9). Calvin taught: “God, regenerating us in baptism, ingrafts us into the fellowship of his Church, and makes us his by adoption . . . whatever time we are baptized, we are washed and purified . . . forgiveness . . . at our first regeneration we receive by baptism alone . . . forgiveness has reference to baptism. . . . In baptism, the Lord promises forgiveness of sins” (*Institutes*, 4:17:1, 4:15:3, 4, 15). “We assert that the whole guilt of sin is taken away in baptism, so that the remains of sin still existing are not imputed. . . . Nothing is plainer than this doctrine” (1547 *Antidote to the Council of Trent*, Reply to the 1st Decree of the 5th Session). Note the discussion in “Were the Reformers Heretics?” and *Heaven Only For the Baptized?* by Thomas Ross, <http://sites.google.com/site/thross7>, in “Paedobaptism and Baptimal Efficacy,” Rich Lusk, *The Federal Vision*, ed. Steve Wilkins & Duane Garner. (Monroe, LA: Athanasius, 2004), and in “Regeneration: A Crux Interpretum,” David R. Anderson. *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 13:2 (Autumn 00) 43-65. Some advocates of Reformed theology follow Calvin in his error of baptismal regeneration (e. g., “The Bible teaches us that baptism unites us to Christ,” pg. 55, *The Federal Vision*; cf. pgs. 89ff., while others reject his doctrine and attempt to explain his statements away (e. g., James J. Cassidy, “Calvin on Baptism: Baptismal Regeneration or the *Duplex Loquendi Modus?*” pgs. 534-554 in *Resurrection and Eschatology: Theology in Service of the Church*, ed. Lane G. Tipton & Jeffrey C. Waddington. Cassidy nonetheless has to admit (pg. 546): “[T]here are some quotations that make us scratch our heads and wonder whether [Calvin] did not, in fact, believe in baptismal regeneration”). Baptismal regeneration as the view of the Westminster Standards is advocated by modern Reformed writers in

Reformed Is Not Enough, Doug Wilson (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2002) pgs. 103-104; Lusk, *Federal Vision*, pgs. 96-99, etc.

Many Calvinists also hold the dangerous soteriological error, based on their view that regeneration precedes faith, that infants and others may be regenerated, grow up, and go to heaven, without ever consciously coming to a recognition of their lost estate and consciously, for the first time, repenting and believing the gospel. Thus, for instance, John Murray affirmed that those who receive infant baptism are to be treated as children of God (cf. pgs. 56ff., *Christian Baptism*, John Murray. (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980) Many others even repudiate the necessity of any kind of experimental religion (cf. the discussion in “Historic Calvinism and Neo-Calvinism,” William Young, *Westminster Theological Journal* 36:1 (Fall 1973) 48-65 & 36:2 (Winter 1974) 156-173, and the related discussion in “Edwardsean Preparation For Salvation,” John H. Gerstner & Jonathan Neil Gerstner, *Westminster Theological Journal* 42:1 (Fall 1979) 5-71). Thus, while it is true that in exceptional and very unusual situations, such as a believer who suffers a mental disease and loses his memory of thirty years of his life, including that portion in which he was converted, when the Reformed affirmed “against the Anabaptists . . . that believers did not have to know, and could not always know, the time of their regeneration” (pg. 74, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Herman Bavinck, J. Bolt, & J. Vriend, vol. 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), they placed themselves on very dangerous ground.