

understanding the
doctrines of grace



May 14, 2025



- T total depravity
- U unconditional election
- L limited atonement
- I irresistible grace
- P perseverance of the saved

Thorns, Thistles, and Weeds in the TULIP Garden

(Arminian Objections to Total Depravity)

1. In Arminian theology the effects of sin have not been so grave as to render the sinner totally incapable of reaching out to God for help.

Arminian anthropology asserts man's freedom to will his way to God.

Arminian theology renders God as a mere bystander who can only hope that the person will choose to reach out to the Lord for salvation.

Thorns, Thistles, and Weeds in the TULIP Garden

(Arminian Objections to Total Depravity)

2. RC Sproul explains the Arminian view of man's need for God as that of "cooperative grace."

"Man in his fallen state must reach out and grasp this grace by an act of the will, which is free to accept or reject this grace. Some exercise the will rightly (or righteously), while others do not."

Thorns, Thistles, and Weeds in the TULIP Garden

(Arminian Objections to Total Depravity)

3. Sproul (quoting JI Packer and OR Johnston) further states that the Arminian picture is that of “God and man approaching each other almost on equal terms, each having his own contribution to make to man’s salvation and each depending on the dutiful cooperation of the other for the attainment of that end.”

Thorns, Thistles, and Weeds in the TULIP Garden

(Arminian Objections to Total Depravity)

4. The principal Arminian disagreement with doctrine of total depravity:

The idea of the complete corruption and total inability of man's will.

Arminianism asserts the free (uncorrupted) will of man, often expressed as "man as a free moral agent."

Arminianism contends that man's will is essentially unaffected by the fall and, therefore, man is able to choose to move toward God.

Review: Total Depravity

We believe and teach that the total inability of mankind means:

1. That all human faculties, before new birth, are dominated by sin and controlled by Satan.
2. That the fallen human will, being dominated by sin, cannot desire salvation nor accept Christ on its own initiative without a miracle of the grace of God.

Review: Total Depravity

We believe and teach that the total inability of mankind means:

3. That the new birth is a sovereign act of God, in which the sinner is entirely passive, until the gift of saving faith is granted by God. It is not because we have faith that we are born again. We have faith *because* we are born again. The human will is not the cause of the new birth.

“The instant we realize that our will is not the grounds of our salvation, then the meaning of ‘grace’ becomes clear. We learn that we did not convert ourselves, and that salvation is not a cooperative work between God and man. ‘Salvation is of the Lord.’ (Jonah 2:9)” *(Roger Smalling; also points above)*

Review: Total Depravity

We believe and teach that the total inability of mankind means:

Since we are spiritually dead to God and incapable of moving toward the Lord or of doing any spiritual good for ourselves or others, God must act—He must initiate any change in our spiritual condition.

This movement of God to save us begins with God's electing grace.

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

1. Unconditional = God's choice (electing grace) of who to save is not conditioned by man in any way or at any time.
 - God is not limited or impelled by anything or anyone in His choice of who will be saved.
 - He chooses whom He chooses based solely on His good pleasure and the kind intentions of His will.
 - While God knows all possible outcomes, those outcomes do not dictate God's actions.

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

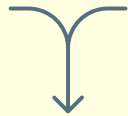
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Unconditional Election

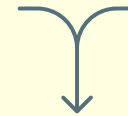
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God knows all contingencies, but His knowledge is not contingent.



possibilities



dependent upon or subject to

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

2. Election = God's sovereign choice of who He will save and who He will leave to their own evil consequences.
 - God's sovereign work whereby, before He created the world, God acted to freely choose some human beings to be saved.
 - He did this according to the good pleasure of His will and not based on some foreseen merit on the part of those whom He chose.

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

3. Predestination = God's sovereign decree to determine beforehand what He would do with those people whom He chose/elected to salvation.

“The word *predestination* provokes more theological discussion than perhaps any other word in the Bible.” (RC Sproul)

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

4. How do predestination and election differ as doctrines?

- Both are decrees of God pertaining to God's word to save us. Predestination is the more general and election the more specific.
- Predestination: God arranges circumstances to bring about His decrees which He established before the foundation of the world.
- Election: God's decree "to call out from among lost humanity certain individuals to be beneficiaries of the free gift of salvation." (*Roger Smalling*)

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

4. How do predestination and election differ as doctrines?

- Predestination is God's work of predetermining, deciding beforehand, or decreeing to provide that salvation to His elect people before they were ever created.
- Election is God's work of marking out individuals for that salvation which He decided to gift to them before they were every created.

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

5. Electing grace is God's predetermined favor set on certain individuals for future salvation.

Keep in mind that election does not save us. It marks us out for salvation.

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

6. Though predestined for salvation by God's decree and elected for salvation by God's favor, we still need to be spiritually transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit applying that same grace to our spiritually dead hearts.

We are justified by faith, and not by election.

That application involves our calling, regeneration, and faith, just to name a few. Each of these aspects of our salvation are ministered to us by the Holy Spirit at a specific moment in our life.

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

7. John 6:44, 65; Romans 8:28-33

- Romans 9:10-33 – What is at issue concerning salvation?
- The issue is that God gets to decide who He saves and who He doesn't save. Why did God say in Romans 9:22 that He prepared some people for destruction? The answer is in verse 23.

Unconditional Election

God Gave, Because He Chose to Save

7. What is at issue concerning salvation?

- His saving purpose is even set on Gentiles—Romans 9:24-26
- What about Romans 10:13? How do we answer this in light of Romans 9?
- *CONTEXT!*

Unconditional Election

More Thorns, Thistles, and Weeds in the Tulip Garden

Universal Salvation and Free Will

- 2 Peter 3:9
- 1 Timothy 2:4

Unconditional Election

More Thorns, Thistles, and Weeds in the Tulip Garden

Reprobation – God passes over or leaves the lost and rebellious to answer for their sins.

- Romans 9
- 1 Peter 2:8
- Jude 4

Unconditional Election

More Thorns, Thistles, and Weeds in the Tulip Garden

Double Predestination – God does not “elect” sinners to eternal death in the same way in which He elects sinners for salvation.



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