

I will admit that this study has uncovered some things that I was not expecting; my brief forays into the doctrines of Calvinism up to this point, had given me sufficient evidence to recognize that they are holding to some unbiblical teachings. It is always surprising to me (although, by now maybe it shouldn't be) the extent to which some will go to convince the unwary that what they teach is the truth. I'm sure that no one within the Reformed umbrella would knowingly teach what contravenes God's Word – they are thoroughly convinced that what they have been taught (and are teaching) regarding their theology is correct. They can spend a lifetime studying the Scriptures, but unless they are willing to look beyond their theology, they will never come to see God's full truth because their theology is blinding them.

I was amazed to read of one who identified ONLY two views of the Gospel: Calvinism and unbelief.<sup>1</sup> Wow! I guess that I have felt that in how some Calvinists' have responded to me, but I have never actually seen it in print before! Calvinism, a man-made theology, holds the only complete understanding of God, His eternal character, what He requires, and how He works in this world today! What arrogance; *the one who is thinking that he stands, must be taking heed lest he should fall* (1 Corinthians 10:12, literal).<sup>2</sup> Our study of Scripture must be with this in mind: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 55:8). If we think that we understand God fully, then our focus has not been on the God of the Bible; Calvinists know Calvinism, but they do not know God!

I always find it disturbing when words are redefined in order to provide support for a particular teaching. The outstanding example of that was the redefinition of *kosmos* (world) to mean "the children of God scattered abroad."<sup>3</sup> Clearly, this had not been thought through very carefully, otherwise I'm sure it would have never been proposed. Nevertheless, this is a tactic that is used quite extensively among those who need to make some words to mean that which fits with their thinking. This is an illustration of our need to be alert – don't accept what someone says as being the truth (just because of who they are or the position that they hold), always examine everything in the light of Scripture (1 John 4:1).

Perhaps the most surprising tactic came from none other than John MacArthur, well known for his Master's Seminary – a bastion of indoctrination into the tenets of Calvinism. While teaching on the *perseverance of the saints*, in one sweeping statement he dealt with all of the warnings in Scripture against falling away and the need to remain steadfast in the faith: "those are warnings to false believers."<sup>4</sup> Jesus spoke of *false christs* and *false prophets*, and warned that they would come with signs and great persuasion so as to deceive even *the elect* (the children of God) if they are sufficiently persuasive (Matthew 24:24). A *false christ* is someone who claims to be the promised Messiah, and, through the years, there have been many who have claimed to be Jesus or His reincarnation – the pinnacle of a *false christ* will be the coming Antichrist. A *prophet* is someone who proclaims the truth of God, and so a *false prophet* is someone who desires to be seen as a teacher of God's truth when he is not; there have been a multitude of *false prophets* through the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.apuritansmind.com/tulip/>.

<sup>2</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT, *Bibleworks* 8.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.monergism.com/understanding-1-john-22-john-samson-0>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-270>.

years, and even today there is such a profusion that any aberrant belief will have its teacher – the coming False Prophet (of the Antichrist) will be well qualified for this. On the other hand, a *believer*, within the context of our consideration, is someone who has evaluated and considered carefully the call of the Lord Jesus, and has been persuaded of His truth so as to make a life-changing commitment to Him; that is what the Greek word for *belief* requires even though that is not how most would define it today. To add the word *false* to this makes no sense; a *false belief* is no belief and so the whole concept of a *false believer* falls apart. Yes, there will be (and are) many who profess to believe, and may even use the language of a Christian, but that does **not** make them a *believer*; they may well deceive many by their religious-righteousness, but when the Lord sees them, He will immediately recognize the sham and reject them (Matthew 7:22-23) – why? Because they are *false believers*? No, because He *never knew* them! MacArthur’s flagrant dismissal of the many warnings that the Lord has given to those who are walking on His narrow pathway to life, reveals a spirit of arrogance and carelessness in his handling of God’s Word – in reality, it places him in contradiction to God! What God has included as **His Truth** to us for our admonition, MacArthur rejects out-of-hand as being irrelevant to him! “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, **neither shall ye diminish ought from it**, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Something that I have had in the back of my mind is this: how does a Calvinist **know** that he is among those whom the Lord has chosen from before the beginning of time? After all, if God has made the apparently arbitrary selection in eternity past and since His Word to us does not include a directory of who they are, how is it possible for the Calvinist to have any assurance that he is among the *elect* (according to their understanding)? If we think for a moment on this matter, it seems evident that he cannot! It is at this point that the waters of Calvinism become very muddied.

John MacArthur, who, through his Master’s Seminary, is influencing many into the faulty doctrines of Calvinism, when it comes to the matter of assurance of being God’s child, exposes Calvinism to be a hopeless, man-made theology. Romans 8:6 tells us this: “For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace”; the *carnal mind* is one that is taken up with the matters of this life, and is declared to be in opposition to God (Romans 8:7). Referring to those who are *carnally minded*, MacArthur makes this observation: “They are already spiritually dead ... and **unless they repent** they are headed for eternal death” (emphasis added).<sup>5</sup> What? That does not sound at all like *total inability*, *unconditional election* or *irresistible grace*! In the preface to his book *The Vanishing Conscience*, he writes this: “God’s purpose is to save **those who will repent of their sins and believe** the gospel” (emphasis added);<sup>6</sup> later in the same book, he says: “Unbelievers are called to repent and flee to Christ.”<sup>7</sup> Is this the same man who said: “Being born physically is something that happened to you, completely out of your control. And **being spiritually born is something that happened to you completely out of your control**” (emphasis added)?<sup>8</sup> Is this a man who is trying to hold two contradictory concepts of salvation in his mind?

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<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur, *The Vanishing Conscience*, p. 154.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 156.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-12/the-blueprint-for-being-born-again>.

He teaches and preaches Calvinism with great enthusiasm when it's expedient, but if it can't provide an adequate explanation, then he will whistle a different tune – all the while retaining a façade of theological *integrity*? “A double minded man [having two minds] *is unstable in all his ways*” (James 1:8);<sup>9</sup> this is commonly referred to as the very stressful state of *cognitive dissonance*.<sup>10</sup> Mixed throughout MacArthur's teachings, you will find things like this: “I was saved from the penalty of sin in the past **when I believed** and the righteousness of Christ was imputed to me and my sin imputed to him” (emphasis added).<sup>11</sup> MacArthur may be unwittingly revealing what is obvious to those who still retain the ability to think objectively about Calvinism: there can be **absolutely no assurance** of salvation within these so-called *doctrines of grace*. For some unknown reason, he will not forsake Calvinism as being wholly inadequate nor embrace the teachings that God has given to us in His Word; in essence, he has become a fountain that appears to be presenting both truth and falsehoods (James 3:11-12), something that James identifies as being an impossibility: because he is mixing truth and lies together, the truth is destroyed! In essence, MacArthur has become a tool in the hands of Satan to entice those who hear his brief moments of Biblical lucidity in the midst of general falsehood, he assures those who are committed to the myths of Calvinism, and he generally sows confusion in the hearts of thousands.

From our study, one thing is certain: the Calvinists are exuberantly confident that they are right, yet the evidence would indicate that they fail miserably at handling God's Word with care. They will quickly take the superficial understanding of a word (if it fits their theology), they will give little or no heed to the context of their selected Scripture, and they will go so far as to redefine words in order to meet their needs. This has not been an exhaustive examination of TULIP by any means, but the consistency in the general failure of Calvinists to investigate the Word with carefulness has done much to limit this study. When the same shallow use of the Scriptures is found in passage after passage, there is little enthusiasm for expending additional time and energy in exposing the same things over and over. I trust that this brief look into the Calvinists' TULIP has illustrated the need to weigh all things according to God's Word, and to be cautious about taking the teachings of any popular teacher/preacher at face value. There have been many times throughout my time of teaching that I have encouraged my listeners to take what I have taught back to the Word of God: if it agrees, then do it; if it doesn't agree, then tell me so that I may re-evaluate my position to ensure that I remain Biblical. It is always my prayer that all of the studies that I have done will be used to strengthen God's truth in the heart of the reader. God bless you to that end!

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<sup>9</sup> Friberg Lexicon, *Bibleworks* 8.

<sup>10</sup> “The term cognitive dissonance is used to describe the mental discomfort that results from holding two conflicting beliefs, values, or attitudes.” (<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-cognitive-dissonance-2795012>).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-271/~/about>.