



Is Calvinism Biblical? How do Calvinistic views agree or disagree with the Bible? Are Calvinism and predestination Biblical? The following article from *The Christian Post*, January 7, 2025, examines these issues.

The Gospel according to Calvinism

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"The salvation of a single soul is more important than the production or preservation of all the epics and tragedies in the world ... The glory of God, and, as our only means to glorifying Him, the salvation of human souls, is the real business of life" (C.S. Lewis).

In Luke Chapter 2 we get an account of the first words spoken by Jesus in the Gospels, " ... I must be about My Father's business" (Luke 2:49 NKJV)

In a sense, the balance of the New Testament details for us the nature of the "Father's business." It seems the Father is in the soul-saving business and what God shares with us in the Christian Bible is his business plan, of sorts.

Of course, in every business enterprise the goal is success, and success is generally measured by profitability. The soul-saving business is no exception. God is looking for profit. Nowhere is this clearer than in the "Great Commission" where Jesus tells his apostles to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. In essence, the Great Commission is a command by the "boss" to his "employees" to grow the business and to be profitable.

A parable on soul-redemption profit

God's desire for profitability is illustrated in Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus tells a parable intended to teach us what God expects from his servants. In the Parable of the Talents ([Mat 25:14-30](#)), Jesus tells of a man going away on a journey who gives one servant five talents, another two talents and another one talent. A talent was an exceptionally large sum of money.

The servant with five talents invests wisely and returns 10 talents to the master. The servant with two talents also doubles what he was given. These two servants are praised as "good and faithful." But the servant who was given one talent, buries his talent in the ground and returns to the master only what he was originally given. For this he is rebuked, called "wicked and slothful" by the master.

Note that God (the master) expects his servants, those in whom he has invested and gifted with special abilities (talents), to be effective and profitable, that is, to return to him more than they are given. In other words, God, whose business is the redemption of lost souls, expects profit, and

profit in the soul-redemption business simply means more saved people. Note also that breaking even is not an option. The chosen servant who gives back to the master only what he was originally given is severely rebuked.

A bad business model

With the Parable of the Talents in mind, let's look at the Augustinian/Calvinistic view of the Gospel. I've created a simple model to help us better understand the basics of the Gospel according to Calvinism.

The Father → "The Elect" → Jesus → "The Elect" → The Father

Here's how the model works:

- *From before the foundation of the world, the Father divided all people into two groups: the elect and the non-elect.*
- *The Father gives the elect to Jesus (John 6:37,44, 65). The non-elect are never enabled to believe in Jesus which leaves them in their sins and subject to the righteous judgment of God.*
- *At the end of the age, Jesus gives the elect back to the Father (John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 15:24). The non-elect, unable to believe in Jesus, remain in their sins and are condemned.*

In its most basic form, the Calvinistic doctrine of election can be explained like this: In the beginning, the Father chooses only certain people (the elect) to give to the Son to be saved. At the end, the Son gives the same people (the elect) back to the Father.

Divine regifting

Although there are a number of biblical difficulties with Calvinism, there is one glaring shortcoming revealed by the model above: In Calvinism, since the Father gets back only those originally given to Jesus, there's no profit, there's no increase.

What we see in Calvinism is a kind of "divine regifting" where Jesus merely re-packages the same people who were given to him before returning them to the Father. In view of the Parable of the Talents, this is the exact result for which a servant is called wicked and slothful by the master.

Of course, Calvinists might argue that the elect is sanctified and refined by the Holy Spirit, so the gift returned is not the same as the gift originally given. But the master's complaint in the parable is not the condition of the talents returned to him, but the quantity. A good harvest should provide fruit that is both ripe and plentiful.

The Calvinistic model of the Gospel fails to support God's requirement that his servants provide profit. In view of the goal of God's soul-saving business plan — the salvation of the world through his Son, Jesus Christ ([John 3:17, 12:47](#)) — the failed Calvinistic model should give us pause.

Throughout the Scriptures, God's purpose of election — that is, God's choosing of the people through whom all the nations will be blessed — was designed to promote growth and inclusion. His business strategy can be summed up like this; "through the elect, to the world."

Yet the Calvinistic model exposes the fact that Calvinism provides a very exclusive Gospel with no provision for kingdom growth. Any “gospel” that is not good news for the whole world is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ which, according to the apostle Paul, is no Gospel at all.

Let’s look at some other scriptures to get more information so we can consider whether Calvinism and predestination are Biblical.

“I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life.”

(Deuteronomy 30:19 NIV). God made clear there is a very serious choice to make, and he urged, but did not force, the right choice..

“Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to destruction is wide and spacious, and *many take it*; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” **(Matthew 7:13-14 NJB,** emphasis added) Notice how the NLT renders the key phrase: “broad, and its gate is wide, for *the many who choose that way.*” Jesus clearly articulates the choice that people have, and that many, unfortunately, make the wrong choice. Jesus urges the imperative: *“Enter by the narrow gate.”*

“Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God, or I speak on my own.” **(John 7:17 NIV)** Doing God’s will, or not doing it, is a choice. Anyone, and everyone, has a very serious choice to make.

“Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”

(James 4:4 NIV) Being an enemy of God is also a choice each person has.

So, although God chooses who will serve him, human will is also at work. God allows each person to make their own choices. People have the free will to make choices in life, which can either be contrary to God's will, or in harmony with His purpose.

However, belief in predestination, meaning that long ago God decided which humans will get eternal life, and which ones will get eternal damnation, is also quite popular. Due to this belief, or dogma, the Greek words "*proginsko*" and "*proginzo*" are translated as "**predestined**" in many Bible translations at **Romans 8:29,30; Ephesians 1:5,11 (NIV; NKJV)**. However, these scriptures are more accurately translated as follows:

"Because whom He foreknew, He also foreordained conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be firstborn among many brothers; and whom He foreordained, these He also called; whom He called, these He also declared righteous; and whom He declared righteous, these He also glorified"—Romans 8:29,30 LSV

"For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. and having given them right standing, he gave them his glory"—Romans 8:29,30 NLT

"Having foreordained us to the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will"—Ephesians 1:5 LSV

"God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. this is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure"—Ephesians 1:5 NLT

"In whom also we obtained an inheritance, being foreordained according to the purpose of Him who is the working all things according to the counsel of His will"—Ephesians 1:11 LSV

“Because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance and he makes everything work out according to his plan”—Ephesians 1:11 NLT

While God foretold that he would have people who would serve him, he did not decide in advance exactly who those individuals would be, because he allows each person to choose to do his will, or not do his will. This means that humans are not predestined, and that they do have free will.

Therefore, Calvinism and predestination are not Biblical.