

Tulip Or Weeds?

by Daniel Parks

Is salvation the work of God alone? or of man cooperating with God? Is salvation bestowed by God's grace alone? or does man merit it through an act of self-righteousness performed by his own free will?

Church history is highlighted by confrontations on this doctrine. Those who preach salvation involves man's free will and works have ever opposed those who preach salvation by God's grace alone. Scribes and Pharisees opposed Jesus Christ and the apostles. In the fifth century, disciples of Pelagius opposed disciples of Augustine. During the Middle Ages, Roman Catholics opposed Anabaptists and, from 1517, Protestants. And from 1611, Arminians (free-willers) have opposed Calvinists.

These two beliefs are identified by the acronyms WEEDS and TULIP.

Are you a TULIP basking in God's sovereign grace?

Or are you among the WEEDS, boasting of self-righteousness?

As you examine the table below, you will see that the references to Bible verses in the right column are verses that the Arminians (free-willers) either ignore, misunderstand or don't even acknowledge. It is easy to see how people can fall into the trap of believing the free-will gospel when they completely ignore verses that state the opposite of what they believe about man, God and salvation. As with any Bible doctrine, it is easy to make a case for your particular interpretation if you and your hearers examine only one or two verses in isolation. And of course it is natural for people to NOT believe the true Gospel of salvation by grace alone if they do not possess that salvation but are still dead in their trespasses and sins. It is also natural for the unsaved to think that they are free to choose Christ at any time, when in reality, the God of the Bible says they are totally in bondage to sin, lost and *unable* to come to Christ of their "own free will". Without a supernatural act of God - without a new heart and spirit - that will remains in rebellion to the true Savior and true Gospel.

WEEDS THE FALSE FREE-WILL GOSPEL INVOLVING MAN'S WILL	TULIP THE TRUE GOSPEL OF SALVATION BY GOD'S GRACE ALONE
Will of Man Is Free - Mankind is influenced by sin, but not under its dominion, as all yet have free will and the ability to determine their own destiny. Anyone can of his own free will come to Christ for salvation. All men have faith, but not all will exercise it.	Total Depravity - Mankind is spiritually dead and under the dominion of sin (Ephesians 2:1-3; John 8:34). None will of his own will come to Christ for salvation (John 5:40; 6:65). None has faith unless God graciously bestows it (Ephesians 2:8).

Election Is Conditional -

Election to salvation involves both the sinner choosing God and God choosing the sinner. God's choice was conditioned upon man's choice, as God chose in eternity past those whom he foresaw in time believing in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Every Man Is Redeemed -

Jesus Christ died for every one, paying the price of redemption for them all. But this does not guarantee their forgiveness, as many of His redeemed will be eventually damned because of unbelief.

Denial Confounds Grace -

The sovereignty of God does not extend to His salvation, as man's will can here thwart God's purpose. God is trying to save every sinner, but He is helpless to save any sinner who will not let Him.

Some Will Lose Salvation -

God cannot preserve in salvation those who of their own free will refuse to be preserved. Those believers who do not remain faithful to the very end will lose their salvation, "fall from grace," and eventually perish.

Unconditional Election -

God the Father has graciously chosen and predestined to salvation some of our fallen race (2 Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 1:3-6). His choice was in no way conditioned upon foreseen good or merit in the chosen ones (John 15:16).

Limited Atonement -

Jesus Christ died as the substitute of God's elect, forever redeeming and forgiving them (Isaiah 53:4-6,8b; Ephesians 1:7). He did not die for any who will die in unbelief (John 10:11,26).

Irresistible Grace -

God will not be thwarted in His purpose of salvation (Daniel 4:35). Every one of His chosen and redeemed sinners will be brought to saving faith in Jesus Christ (John 5:37,45; Romans 8:29).

Perseverance Of The Saints -

God preserves in salvation all believers in Christ, and none will ever perish (Jude 24, John 3:16; 10:28). And He enables them to persevere to the end, so that none will be lost (Jeremiah 32:40; Romans 8:35-39).

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." [Matthew 13:24-30]

DO YOU POSSESS TRUE SALVATION OR ARE YOU STILL CLINGING TO A MAN-CENTERED GOSPEL?

(some minor editing by RM Kane)

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