

# Salvation

Soteriology [sō ,tirē 'äləjē] NOUN

*In theology* - the doctrine of salvation.

## Martin Luther's Solas

February 20, 1748 – July 10, 1826

Sola Gratia – Grace Alone

Sola Fide – Faith Alone

Solus Christus – CHRIST Alone

Soli Deo Gloria – Gloria of GOD Alone

Soli Scriptura – Scripture

**John Calvin** - French theologian, pastor and reformer in Geneva during the Protestant Reformation. July 10, 1509 – May 27, 1564

1. **Total Depravity** – Man is completely touched/affected by sin in all that he is (in nature he is completely fallen), but is not as bad as he could be (in action, i.e., not all murder, etc.). Furthermore, this total depravity means that the unregenerate will not, of their own free will, choose to receive Christ.

It is the unbeliever who is deceitful and wicked ([Jer. 17:9](#)), full of evil ([Mark 7:21-23](#)), loves darkness rather than light and does evil ([John 3:19](#)), does not seek for God nor does any good ([Rom. 3:10-12](#)), is ungodly ([Rom. 5:6](#)), dead in his sins ([Eph. 2:1](#)), by nature a child of wrath ([Eph. 2:3](#)), cannot accept or understand spiritual things ([1 Cor. 2:14](#)), and a slave of sin ([Rom. 6:16-20](#)).

2. **Unconditional Election** – God elects a person based upon nothing in that person because there is nothing in him that would make him worthy of being chosen; rather, God's election is based on what is in God. God chose us because he decided to bestow his love and grace upon us, not because we are worthy, in and of ourselves, of being saved.

Election is the sovereign act of God where, from before the foundation of the world, he chose those whom he would save ([Eph. 1:4](#)). This election to salvation is not conditioned upon any foreseen faith ([Rom. 9:16](#)) or good works of any individual ([Rom. 9:11](#); [2 Tim. 1:9](#)). The election is

based completely on God's sovereign choice according to the kind intention of His will ([Eph. 1:11](#)). God chose the elect because he decided to bestow his love upon them ([John 3:16](#); [Eph. 2:4](#)) based solely on his sovereign grace ([Gal. 1:15](#)) and for his glory ([Isaiah 43:7](#)).

3. **Limited Atonement** – Christ bore the sin only of the elect, not everyone who ever lived.

Christ's blood was sufficient for all, but not all sin was imputed to Christ. Christ's blood is sufficient to cover all people. But the sufficiency relates to his divine value which is different than our legal debt. Sin is a debt ([Matt. 6:12](#) with [Luke 11:4](#)) since it is breaking the Law of God ([1 John 3:4](#)). In limited atonement, Calvinists are saying that there was a limit to whose sins were imputed to Christ in a legal sense. They are not denying the sufficiency of Christ's blood to cover all people. Instead, they look at the legal aspect of the sin debt. Peoples' sin debts were transferred to Jesus ([1 Pet. 2:24](#)) and were canceled on the cross, not when we believe ([Col. 2:14](#)). Therefore, legally speaking, those canceled sins cannot be held against the sinner because their quality of being a debt has been canceled by being paid on the cross ([John 19:30](#); [Col. 2:14](#)). If the debt is canceled, it does not exist and cannot be held against the debtor/sinner. Therefore, Christ only legally bore the sins of the elect even though his blood was sufficient to cover all. Also, consider [1 Sam. 3:14](#) which says, "Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

4. **Irresistible Grace** – The term, unfortunately, suggests a mechanical and coercive force upon an unwilling subject. This is not the case. Instead, it is the act of God making the person willing to receive him. It does not mean that a person cannot resist God's will. It means that when God moves to save/regenerate a person, the sinner cannot thwart God's movement and he will be regenerated

God moves the heart of the person where he wishes it to go ([Proverbs 21:1](#)). The choice and mercy of God depend on God's desire, not man's ability ([Romans 9:18](#)).

5. **Perseverance of the Saints** – That we are so secure in Christ, that we cannot fall away.

Jesus will not lose any who had been given to him by the Father ([John 6:38-39](#)); he gives eternal life to them so they will never perish ([John 3:16](#); [10:27-28](#)), and those who leave the faith whenever believers to begin with ([1 John 2:19](#)).

## **Calvinist Denominations**

- 1. Primitive Baptist or Reformed Baptist Churches**
- 2. Presbyterian Churches**
- 3. Reformed Churches**
- 4. The United Church of Christ**
- 5. The Protestant Reformed Churches in America**