

Calvinism Refuted: A Bible Study

1. Over and over again, the Scriptures tell us that it is The Word of God that changes us and leads to salvation! The Calvinist argument is that men believe only AFTER they're regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The Bible says man must believe to be saved. Man's responsibility is to believe...of his own volition. Remember, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23) Believe what, exactly? Once we're drawn by God, the Bible teaches we must be changed.

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
1 Peter 1:23	How are men born again?	Through the Word of God.
James 1:18	What does God use to "bring us forth"?	The word of truth.
Ephesians 1:13	Breakdown the progression for salvation, taking note of the past tense in the two steps.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salvation came <u>AFTER</u> they heard the Gospel. 2. They were sealed with the Holy Spirit <u>AFTER</u> they believed.
Romans 1:16 Romans 10:17 1 Corinthians 1:18	Why is God's Word so important?	It is the power unto salvation for everyone who believes.
Jeremiah 23:29	What three ways is God's Word described?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Like a Fire 2. Like a Hammer 3. It breaks rocks in pieces.
John 6:63	What does Jesus indicate gives life?	The words He speaks.
John 6:68	How did Peter describe Jesus' words?	The words of eternal life.
John 15:3	What made them clean?	The words Jesus spoke to them.
John 17:17	How are men sanctified?	The Word of God.
Acts 2:14-37	What specifically moved these people so deeply?	Peter's sermon.

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Acts 11:12-14	What specifically would save the household?	The words that Peter would tell them.
Romans 1:16	What is the power of God to salvation?	The Gospel.
	What is the ONLY requirement for salvation?	Believing the Gospel.
Romans 10:17	Faith is required for salvation. Where does one obtain this faith?	Hearing the Word of God.
1 Corinthians 1:18; 21	What does God use to save men?	The message of the cross: The Gospel.
1 Corinthians 4:15	How did Paul “birth” these Corinthian believers?	Through the Gospel.
1 Corinthians 15:1-2	What did Paul preach?	The Gospel
	What did the Corinthians do with what Paul preached?	They received it. Literally, they joined it to themselves.
	Where did the Corinthians who believed find their standing?	They found their standing in the Gospel.
	Ultimately, what saved these Corinthians?	They believed the Gospel.
1 Thessalonians 2:13	What does the word of God physically do?	It effectively works in those who believe.
Jeremiah 23:29 Hebrews 4:12	How is the Word of God (that we are to preach) presented that proves it is more than just words on a page?	1. It is living and powerful.
		2. It pierces and divides the soul and spirit, and joints and marrow.
		3. It discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart.
James 1:18	What does God use to “bring us forth”?	The word of truth.
James 1:21	What is able to save?	The Word of God.
1 Peter 1:23	How are men born again?	Through the Word of God.

Regeneration Precedes Faith

- † One way to argue theologically for OT Spirit regeneration is by holding that regeneration precedes faith.
 - † The argument is that since regeneration is necessary for faith, and OT Saints exercised faith, then they must have been regenerated.
 - † Put simply, OT Saints could not believe unless they were first regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
 - † This theological argument comes from a Reformed (Calvinistic) view of the Scriptures.
 - † **The problem is that the Scriptures DO NOT teach that the Spirit regenerates a person BEFORE they believe.**
 - † We're going to examine NINE (9) questions/concepts related to Calvinism in an effort to disprove, from the Scriptures, that regeneration must precede belief:
1. **Men must first be drawn before they can accept the Gospel and be saved.**
 2. **How are men drawn to God?**
 3. **Once drawn, what does God expect us to do?**
 4. **Once we seek after Him, hear the Gospel, what next?**
 5. **How many times does the bible exhort us to believe and then be saved?**
 6. **Salvation is a gift for the whole world.**
 7. **Salvation is a free gift.**
 8. **To whom is the gift offered & who can accept the gift?**
 9. **Q: Is faith, itself, a gift? A: No**

CALVINISM REFUTED

Total Depravity - From a Calvinistic Perspective

- † In a general sense, the unregenerate are unable to do good (as well as unable to refrain from doing bad) spiritually.
- † They are completely dead, and are therefore *unable* to respond to God or the Gospel (to any degree) while in an unregenerate state or before being born again.
- † According to this view, the will of unregenerate man (in so far as responding to God, the Gospel, etc., is concerned) is dead and therefore *inoperable*.
- † Thus, according to Calvinism, the unregenerate man cannot receive Christ or believe the Gospel preached to him, *because he hasn't been regenerated by the Spirit first*.
- † He cannot do anything to accept the free gift of eternal life offered to him and thereby be saved.
- † Those who are going to be regenerated must be regenerated (i.e., born again) BEFORE they can believe in Christ.
- † You must be born again first before you can believe and be born again.
- † Only after spiritual rebirth can you have and exercise saving faith from a Calvinist's point of view.
- † The Holy Spirit first regenerates those Elect believers SO THAT they can hear and believe the Gospel.
- † This, therefore, is why some believe that OT Saints must have been regenerated, since they exercised faith and were saved.

MEN MUST FIRST BE DRAWN BEFORE THEY CAN ACCEPT THE GOSPEL AND BE SAVED

† Calvinists use John 6:44 as a proof text for why men cannot possibly come to the Father, seek after salvation, or accept the Gospel before being regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

2. What does John 6:44 say about who can come to the Father, and how they can come to the Father?

One of the passages of Scripture Calvinists use to prove their point is John 6:44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

HOW ARE MEN DRAWN TO GOD?

3. I contend that men ARE drawn, but they have the responsibility to accept the Gospel. Read the following passages and complete the last column based on how men are drawn to God?

Bible Reference	Quotation	Answer
Jeremiah 31:3	The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.	God draws
John 5:40	But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.	We have to be willing
John 6:44	No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.	The Father draws
John 11:25-26	Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"	We have to believe what we hear: The Word of God
John 12:32	And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."	Christ draws
Romans 1:16	For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek	The Gospel draws
Romans 10:14	How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?	The Word of God draws
Romans 10:17	So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.	The Word of God draws

Bible Reference	Quotation	Answer
2 Timothy 1:12	For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.	We are persuaded
Luke 6:47 Matthew 11:28 John 6:35 John 7:37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Whoever</i> comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like ▪ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ▪ And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ▪ "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 	ANYONE can come to Christ

ONCE DRAWN, WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT US TO DO?

4. If we are completely dead and unable to respond to the Gospel, why then are we repeatedly given the responsibility to believe? Complete the chart below by answering the question about what God expects men to do once drawn by Him.

Bible Reference	Quotation	Answer
Acts 17:30	Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent	REPENT
2 Peter 3:9	The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.	REPENT
1 Chronicles 16:11	Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face evermore!	SEEK HIM
1 Chronicles 22:19	Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God.	SEEK HIM
Amos 5:6	Seek the Lord and live, Lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, And devour it, With no one to quench it in Bethel –	SEEK HIM

Bible Reference	Quotation	Answer
Zephaniah 2:2-3	Before the decree is issued, Or the day passes like chaff, Before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, Before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you! Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, Who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden In the day of the Lord's anger.	SEEK HIM
Isaiah 11:10	And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.	SEEK HIM
Matthew 6:33	But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.	SEEK HIM
Luke 11:9-13	So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!	SEEK HIM
Acts 17:22-27	Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. [BUT PEOPLE DON'T SEEK AFTER GOD, RIGHT?] Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord , in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;	SEEK HIM

**HOW MANY TIMES DOES THE BIBLE EXHORT US
TO BELIEVE AND THEN BE SAVED?**

5. Too many times in Scripture are we exhorted to believe what we hear. Over and over again we are told to believe, yet when exhorted, no mention of the Calvinistic regenerating work of the Spirit is given to allow for us to exercise faith! Faith means “firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth; conviction of the truth of anything, belief; confidence, certainty, trust.”

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Matthew 12:21	What will Gentiles trust in?	His name.
Mark 16:16 John 3:18 John 3:36	What is required for salvation? What results in condemnation?	Belief Unbelief
Luke 7:48-50	What saved this woman?	Her faith.
John 1:12-13	What affords one the right to become children of God?	Receiving Jesus.
John 3:15-16	What is required for eternal life?	Belief in Jesus.
John 5:24	What keeps a person from judgement?	Hearing the word and believing in Jesus.
John 5:39-40	What reason did Jesus give that explains why these people didn't gain eternal life?	They were UNWILLING to come to Him.
John 6:28-29	What was the one work Jesus required?	Believe in Him.
John 6:35	What is the only requirement given?	Belief
John 6:40; 47	What is the only requirement for eternal life?	Belief in Jesus.
John 9:35-38	If regeneration precedes faith, it's odd that Jesus would ask if the man believed. What was his response.	Lord, I believe.
John 14:1	What is the exhortation?	Jesus exhorts them to believe in Him.
John 14:6	What is the only way to the Father?	Through Jesus.

**HOW MANY TIMES DOES THE BIBLE EXHORT US
TO BELIEVE AND THEN BE SAVED?**

Bible Reference	Question	Answer		
John 16:7-9	Why does the Holy Spirit convict the world of sin?	Because they do not believe in Jesus.		
	Why would the Holy Spirit HAVE to convict the world of sin if regeneration is required in order to believe?	He wouldn't.		
John 17:20	What is it that will allow people to believe?	The words that are spoken to them.		
John 20:24-29	What did Thomas refuse to do?	Believe		
	If Calvinists are correct, what would the text have to say?	It would have to say that Thomas COULD not believe.		
	What does Jesus exhort Thomas not to do, and then do?	Be NOT:	Unbelieving	
		Instead:	Believe	
Why did Thomas believe?	Because he'd seen Jesus.			
John 20:30-31 1 John 5:13	For what two reasons did John write?	So that we could believe		
		In believing we could have life.		
Acts 2:21	What is required for salvation that is the same as believing?	Calling on the name of the Lord.		
Acts 8:36-37	What was the stipulation offered that was necessary?	He had to believe.		
Acts 10:43	What is required to receive remission of sins?	Belief in Jesus.		
Acts 11:17-18	When did they receive the gift?	When they believed on the Lord Jesus.		
Acts 16:30-31	If the Calvinists are correct, how would these passages have to be rewritten?	"Wait for the Holy Spirit to regenerate you, then you can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved."		

**HOW MANY TIMES DOES THE BIBLE EXHORT US
TO BELIEVE AND THEN BE SAVED?**

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Acts 26:17-18	Again, if the Calvinists are correct, Jesus seems to be sending Paul to do the Holy Spirit's job. What was Paul sent to do?	Open their eyes. Turn them from darkness to light. Turn them from the power of Satan to God.
	Ultimately, what is the reason for Jesus sending Paul?	So that they may receive forgiveness of sins. Salvation.
Romans 1:16	What is the power of God to salvation?	The Gospel.
Romans 1:17	What makes life possible?	Faith
Romans 3:28	How is a man justified (declared righteous)?	By Faith
Romans 4:3	What did Abraham do BEFORE righteousness was accredited to his account?	Abraham believed God.
Romans 4:5	What are the two stipulations for righteousness being accounted?	You cannot work for righteousness.
		You have to believe in Jesus.
Romans 4:16-22	What did Abraham do BEFORE Abraham had righteousness accredited to his account?	He was fully convinced that God would perform what He promised.
Romans 9:30-32	Why did Israel not attain righteousness?	Because they sought it by works of the Law rather than by faith.
Romans 1:17 Romans 10:17 Galatians 3:5-7	What do we need to live?	Faith
	Where does faith come from?	Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.
Romans 11:20	Why was Israel broken off?	Because of unbelief.
Galatians 2:16	Since faith comes by hearing the Word of God, what is the result of our faith?	Justification
Galatians 3:14	What do we receive through faith?	The promise of the Spirit.

**HOW MANY TIMES DOES THE BIBLE EXHORT US
TO BELIEVE AND THEN BE SAVED?**

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
2 Thessalonians 2:11-12	For what two reasons are these people condemned?	They didn't believe the truth.
		They had pleasure in unrighteousness.
1 Timothy 1:16	"But I obtained mercy for the reason that in me, as the foremost [of sinners], Jesus Christ might show forth and display all His perfect long-suffering and patience for an example to [encourage] those who would thereafter believe on Him for [the gaining of] eternal life." (Amplified) What requirement is given for eternal life?	Belief in Jesus.
1 Timothy 4:10 1 John 2:1-2	Since Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, what is the only stipulation men have for salvation?	They have to believe.
2 Timothy 1:12	What is the one word that Paul uses about what he believes that defeats the Calvinist argument?	Persuaded
2 Timothy 3:15	What made Timothy wise for salvation?	The Holy Scriptures.
Hebrews 3:12-14	What is odd about this passage if we cannot believe until we're regenerated?	Why would we have to be warned about unbelief?
Hebrews 11:6	Calvinists say that men never seek after God. How does this passage refute that?	God rewards those who seek after Him.
1 John 3:23	What are we commanded to do that makes Calvinism difficult to prove?	We are commanded to believe, but how can we before we're regenerated?

7. Calvinists often read the NT back into the OT as a method of interpretation. One Calvinist position is that Christ died ONLY for the Elect. Since they believe this, it makes sense from their perspective that OT Saints must be part of the Elect, though no OT evidence exists for this. This is one way they read the NT back into the OT. The main problem with this interpretation is that Christ died for the sins of the whole world, not only the Elect. Once we understand this, we have no reason to read the NT back into the OT. Propitiation, or Satisfaction, means that Christ's redemptive sacrifice has satisfied God's righteous wrath against all sin (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; cf. Isaiah 53:10-11; Romans 1:18; Ephesians 2:3). Propitiation is a result of Christ's infinite sacrifice to satisfy divine justice. OT Saints did not have to be regenerated in order to believe, and the only requirement for salvation in both the NT and the OT is belief. The reason is because Christ's death was enough to satisfy God's wrath against sin for the whole world

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Isaiah 53:6	For whom did Jesus die?	All, everyone, all!
John 1:29 John 3:16	Jesus' death took away the sins for quantifiable group?	The sin of the entire world.
2 Corinthians 5:18-19	God was in Christ reconciling who?	The world.
Colossians 1:19-20	What specifically was reconciled?	ALL THINGS!
1 Timothy 4:10	Who has the opportunity to be saved?	All men have the opportunity to be saved.
	What is the stipulation for salvation?	Belief
1 John 2:2	What does John say that makes the Calvinist argument completely wrong?	Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.
1 John 4:14	Why did the Father send the Son?	To save the world!

8. Salvation is a free gift that is offered to all men. The Greek word used in the following passages is *dorea* (*dwrea*) and denotes "a free gift," stressing its gratuitous character; it is always used in the NT of a spiritual or supernatural gift. If regeneration must precede faith, like the Calvinists teach, then salvation cannot be a free gift.

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
John 4:10	What did the woman have to do?	Ask for the gift.
	What did Jesus say He would do?	He would have given it to her.
Acts 2:38	What has to happen before the gift of the Holy Spirit would be given?	Repentance (this includes believing in the name of Jesus).
Acts 10:44-45 Acts 11:15-18	What is the implication for why and how the gift of the Holy Spirit was given?	Those who believed had the Holy Spirit poured out on them.
Ephesians 2:8	What is the gift of God?	Salvation

Some argue that Ephesians 2:8, like Philippians 1:29 and 2 Peter 1:1, demonstrate evidence that faith is a gift from God only to the Elect, and therefore the Holy Spirit MUST regenerate a believer BEFORE he/she can believe or exercise that faith.

- Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."
- THAT not of yourselves; (*touto*, should be translated THIS and refers to salvation).
 - Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and THIS not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."
- The Greek pronoun *touto*, THIS, is in the neuter gender and cannot stand for *pistis*, faith, because *pistis* in the feminine.
- The antecedent of *touto* (THIS/THAT) is the whole sentence that goes before it.
- This, Salvation, and not faith, is the Gift of God.

TO WHOM IS THE GIFT OFFERED & WHO CAN ACCEPT THE GIFT?

9. Again, if regeneration must precede faith, why is the gift of salvation offered to all men? Each of the passages below contain specific information that answers the question of who can accept the free gift.

Bible Reference	Who Can Accept The Free Gift?
Isaiah 45:22	<i>All you ends of the earth</i>
Matthew 11:28	<i>All you</i>
Matthew 28:19	<i>All the nations</i>
Mark 16:16	<i>He who believes</i>
John 1:12	<i>As many as received; To those who believe</i>
John 3:14-15	<i>Whoever believes in Him</i>
John 3:16	<i>The world; Whoever believes</i>
John 3:17	<i>The world; The world; the world</i>
John 3:18	<i>He who believes</i>
John 3:36	<i>He who believes</i>
John 4:14	<i>Whoever</i>
John 5:24	<i>He who hears and believes</i>
John 6:35	<i>He who comes he who believes</i>
John 7:37	<i>Anyone</i>
John 6:40	<i>Everyone and believes</i>
John 6:47	<i>He who believes</i>
John 6:51	<i>Anyone</i>
John 6:54	<i>Whoever</i>
John 6:56	<i>He who eats</i>

TO WHOM IS THE GIFT OFFERED & WHO CAN ACCEPT THE GIFT?

Bible Reference	Who Can Accept The Free Gift?
John 6:57	<i>He who</i>
John 6:58	<i>He who eats</i>
John 11:25	<i>He who believes</i>
John 11:26	<i>Whoever</i>
John 12:44	<i>He who believes</i>
John 12:46	<i>Whoever believes</i>
John 12:47-48	<i>Anyone</i>
John 20:31	<i>But these are written that YOU may believe</i>
Acts 8:36-37	<i>If YOU believe</i>
Acts 16:30-31	<i>Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ</i>
Romans 1:16	<i>For everyone who believes; Jew and Greek</i>
Romans 10:9-10	<i>One</i>
Romans 10:14	<i>They; they; they; they; they</i>
Romans 10:11	<i>Whoever believes</i>
Romans 10:12	<i>For the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.</i>
Romans 10:13	<i>Whoever</i>
1 Corinthians 1:2	<i>With all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord</i>
Galatians 3:22	<i>Those who believe.</i>
1 Timothy 2:3-4	<i>God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved</i>
1 Timothy 4:10	<i>The living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.</i>

TO WHOM IS THE GIFT OFFERED & WHO CAN ACCEPT THE GIFT?

Bible Reference	Who Can Accept The Free Gift?
2 Peter 3:9	<i>The Lord wants none to perish but that all should come to repentance.</i>
Hebrews 7:25	<i>Those who come to God through Him</i>
1 John 5:1	<i>Whoever believes</i>

QUESTION: Is Faith Also A Gift? ANSWER: No

10. Several passages of Scriptures seem to indicate that Faith is a gift given only to the Elect. One such passage Calvinists use to demonstrate this is 2 Peter 1:1, "Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who **have obtained** like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:"

- The Greek word for "have obtained" means "to receive by divine allotment."
- Is 2 Peter 1:1 saying that faith (the power or ability to believe) is given by divine allotment; given by God?
- If it is, we have too many other passages that seem to contradict that:
- It is the Word of God that changes people, leads to salvation, and is the tool God uses. Review the chart below that demonstrate this truth:

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Jeremiah 23:29	What three ways is God's Word described?	1. <i>Like a Fire</i>
		2. <i>Like a Hammer</i>
		3. <i>It breaks rocks in pieces.</i>
John 6:63	What does Jesus indicate gives life?	<i>The words He speaks.</i>
John 6:68	How did Peter describe Jesus' words?	<i>The words of eternal life.</i>
John 15:3	What made them clean?	<i>The words Jesus spoke to them.</i>
John 17:17	How are men sanctified?	<i>The Word of God.</i>
Acts 2:14-37	What specifically moved these people so deeply?	<i>Peter's sermon.</i>

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Acts 11:12-14	What specifically would save the household?	The words that Peter would tell them.
Romans 1:16	What is the power of God to salvation?	The Gospel.
	What is the ONLY requirement for salvation?	Believing the Gospel.
Romans 10:17	Faith is required for salvation. Where does one obtain this faith?	Hearing the Word of God.
1 Corinthians 1:18; 21	What does God use to save men?	The message of the cross: The Gospel.
1 Corinthians 4:15	How did Paul “birth” these Corinthian believers?	Through the Gospel.
1 Corinthians 15:1-2	What did Paul preach?	The Gospel
	What did the Corinthians do with what Paul preached?	They received it. Literally, they joined it to themselves.
	Where did the Corinthians who believed find their standing?	They found their standing in the Gospel.
	Ultimately, what saved these Corinthians?	They believed the Gospel.
1 Thessalonians 2:13	What does the word of God physically do?	It effectively works in those who believe.
Jeremiah 23:29 Hebrews 4:12	How is the Word of God (that we are to preach) presented that proves it is more than just words on a page?	1. It is living and powerful.
		2. It pierces and divides the soul and spirit, and joints and marrow.
		3. It discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart.
James 1:18	What does God use to “bring us forth”?	The word of truth.
James 1:21	What is able to save?	The Word of God.
1 Peter 1:23	How are men born again?	Through the Word of God.

2 Peter 1:1-4: Many Calvinists teach that faith is a gift that God grants at the moment the Holy Spirit regenerates a person, and that it is this gift of faith that enables one to believe and be saved. One of the primary, albeit few, passages of Scripture they use as a proof text is 2 Peter 1:1-4. Here are a few facts to consider:

- † 2 Peter 1:1 “Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:”
- † The Greek word translated “faith” can mean three different things”
 1. To trust in and be committed to Jesus Christ.
 2. A body of authoritative teaching. That which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith.
 3. The Christian faith as a religious movement.
- † Faith can be Subjective AND/OR Objective:
 - Faith subjectively means firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness (though rare).
 - Objectively, faith means that which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith.
- † In light of the plethora of Scripture in the above chart, it seems unlikely that faith here in 2 Peter 1:1 means the ability to believe.
- † Further, since it is by the knowledge of the Gospel that leads to salvation, it seems more likely given the context of verses 2-4 that it is the knowledge that is being given, not faith.
- † Since 2 Peter 1:1 is not saying that faith (the ability to believe) is given by God, what IS being given?

11. Given the three definitions of faith, and since 2 Peter 1:1 is best defined as A body of authoritative teaching. That which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith, decide which definition best fits the following passages:

Bible Reference	Best Faith Definition	Answer
2 Peter 1:2	in the <u>knowledge</u> of God	A body of authoritative teaching. That which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith.
2 Peter 1:3	through the <u>knowledge</u> of Him	A body of authoritative teaching. That which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith.
2 Peter 1:3	<u>by which</u> : meaning the knowledge.	A body of authoritative teaching. That which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith.
Jude 3	Further, in light of the above passages in the chart, if we look carefully we find the faith that was delivered.	Faith here cannot mean the ability to believe, but must be the Gospel - that which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith.

- † Of *faith* (the ability to believe) described in 2 Peter 1:1, John MacArthur writes: “Clearly it refers to something not obtained by human effort or based on personal worthiness but issued from God's sovereign purpose. Peter's readers received faith because God graciously willed to give it to them.” This is a Calvinistic position.
- † He then references the following four passages of Scripture as evidence: Acts 11:15-17; Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 1:13; Philippians 1:29. Answer the following questions based on each passage given as proof.

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Acts 11:15-17	Since Reformed theology teaches that people must be regenerated BEFORE belief, why does this passage NOT support this claim?	The gift of the Holy Spirit was given AFTER they believed.
Galatians 3:14	The argument is that faith is a gift that precedes salvation. How does this passage demonstrate the opposite?	The promise of the Spirit is received <u>through</u> faith, not the other way around. Faith is not received, but the Spirit is received THROUGH faith.
Ephesians 1:13	Offer there pieces of evidence that regeneration does NOT precede faith, and/or the true activity of the Holy Spirit in salvation.	AFTER hearing the Gospel, people trusted in Him!
		HAVING BELIEVED (past tense), believers were sealed with the Holy Spirit OF PROMISE.
		The Gospel is what changes, what saves people, and what allows for the giving of the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 1:29 is a difficult passage to interpret simply because of the Greek language: “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

- † The Greek verb rendered *has been granted* is from the noun meaning “grace, or graciously,” and denotes a free, unmerited favor or kindness from God (Ephesians 4:32; Romans 8:32).
- † “has been granted on behalf of Christ” means that we have been given the privilege to do two things:
 - a. “believe in Him”
 - b. “suffer for His sake”
- † Therefore, a more precise translation would be “for to you it has been granted the privilege not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Acts 5:41 Philippians 1:29	How does Acts 5:41 shed light on the proper interpretation of Philippians 1:29?	They rejoiced that they were <u>counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.</u> "
Philippians 1:29	Both <i>believing</i> and <i>suffering</i> are present infinitives in Greek, meaning they're not a once for all action but are continuous. How does this demonstrate that this believing cannot be for salvation?	We are saved once, instantaneously when we believe. We don't constantly believe for salvation.
Philippians 1:27-30	Further, verse 29 begins with the conjunction "For," and connects it to v.28. Paul is telling the Philippians in v.27-30 to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel," AND "and not in any way terrified by your adversaries." Why? Keep in mind that Paul was speaking to believers, and therefore is describing a continuous privilege to believe and suffer.	They're continued steadfastness (both belief and suffering) is proof of their salvation, and Paul is their example.

The privilege to believe for salvation and actually believing unto salvation are two different things.

- † [For unto you] Unto you as Christians. This favor is granted unto you in your present circumstances.
- † [It is given] God concedes to you this privilege or advantage.
- † [In the behalf of Christ] In the cause of Christ, or with a view to honor Christ. Or, these things are brought on you in consequence of your being Christians.
- † [Not only to believe on him] It is represented here as a privilege to be permitted to believe on Christ.

† As stated earlier, some argue that Ephesians 2:8, like Philippians 1:29 and 2 Peter 1:1, demonstrate evidence that faith is a gift from God only to the Elect, and therefore the Holy Spirit MUST regenerate a believer BEFORE he/she can believe or exercise that faith.

- Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."
- THAT not of yourselves; (touto, should be translated THIS and refers to salvation).
- The Greek pronoun touto, THIS, is in the neuter gender and cannot stand for pistis, faith, because pistis in the feminine.
- The antecedent of touto (THIS/THAT) is the whole sentence that goes before it.

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Ephesians 2:8	Given the above, what is the Gift of God	Salvation

	then?	
Romans 10:17	Many ask, "Isn't faith the gift of God?" The simple answer is Yes, but as to the grace by which it is produced. From where do we get our faith?	Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.
Ephesians 2:8	Without God's grace, nobody could EVER be saved. But the grace or power to believe, and the act of believing, are two different things. Read Ephesians 2:8 again. How are we saved, and by what means are we saved?	We are saved BY God's grace THROUGH our faith.
Acts 17:30	If the Calvinists are right, and only the Elect will be given faith to believe, then God commands men to do something they are unable to do. Read. What is the command and who is God commanding?	Truly, these times of ignorance <u>God</u> overlooked, but now <u>commands all men everywhere</u> to repent."
John 20:25	God never believes for any man, any more than He repents for him. Each person must, through God's grace enabling him, repent and believe for himself. By God's grace man is enabled to repent and believe, but this doesn't ensure man WILL believe. How many exhortations are there in Scripture to believe? How many can believe but WON'T? How does Thomas exemplify this in?	Thomas states, "I will not believe." The Scriptures don't say he <u>CAN'T</u> believe, but won't.
John 5:39-40	How does John also exemplify this idea that God doesn't give some faith, and not give others faith, thus completely taking free will out of the salvation equation?	Jesus stats that these are <u>UNWILLING</u> to come to Him for life.
Revelation 16:11	How does this reveal the truth about men and their free will toward God?	This passage doesn't say people <u>CAN'T</u> but rather <u>WON'T</u> repent and believe.

12. Going back the Ephesians 2:8, it seems clear that salvation does not proceed from the Holy Spirit specifically. The Greek word translated as "that" - touto - is in the neuter gender, and the word

"faith" - pistis - is in the feminine. The word "that," therefore, does not refer particularly to faith as being the gift of God, but to "the salvation by grace" of which Paul had been speaking.

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Acts 26:16-18	Specify why Jesus appeared to Saul?	Jesus appeared to Saul for the purpose of making him a "minister and a witness both of the things which [he had] seen and of the things which [HE would] yet reveal [to him].
	To whom did Jesus specifically send Saul?	Jesus sent Saul specifically to the Gentiles
	Offer four (4) specific things that Jesus wanted Saul to accomplish by sending him to the Gentiles:	Open their eyes
		In order to turn them from darkness to light
	And [turn them] from the power of Satan to God	
	That they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.	

13. Bear in mind that Christ is the one (and only one) who has reconciled the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Read and See also

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
2 Corinthians 5:20 1 Timothy 2:3-4	Offer two pieces of evidence Paul uses that demonstrates that it is our responsibility to believe and be saved, or in this case, accept the reconciliation already made.	1. *Paul implores us . Why would we have to be implored if the Holy Spirit simply regenerates us?
		2. Why do we have to be reconciled to God? Isn't that a work? The Greek expresses God was the RECONCILER in Christ ... let this conciliation have its designed effect. Be reconciled to God. Accept the reconciliation already made.
		<i>*The Greek word implores literally means, to beseech, entreat, plead.</i>

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
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Revelation 12:9	What does the Devil do to the whole world?	The Devil deceives the world.
Luke 8:11-12	What does the Devil do and what is the effect?	The Devil takes the Word of God out of the hearts of the people who hear, keeping them from believing and being saved.

14. If people are dead, as the Calvinists say, and must be regenerated BEFORE they can respond to the Gospel, what purpose does it serve for the Devil to deceive people, and why does Jesus say the Devil takes the Gospel away from the people, keeping them from being saved? The answer seems clear: The Gospel is what saves people, and the Devil doesn't want people to hear and be saved, therefore the Calvinists are wrong about the need for the Holy Spirit to regenerate people BEFORE they can respond to the Gospel and be saved. The chart below offers some aspects of this Calvinistic doctrine that must be considered:

Bible Reference	Question	Answer
Luke 4:5-6 2 Corinthians 4:4 1 John 5:19	Who is in control here, and how much control does he have?	The god of this age, Satan, has control over the whole world, even keeping people from hearing the Gospel.
2 Corinthians 4:3	What is veiled now?	The Gospel is veiled.
	For whom?	It's veiled to those who are perishing.
2 Corinthians 4:1-4 Luke 8:12	While Moses had his face veiled to keep Israel from seeing that God's glory was fading, who veils God's glory from man today?	The god of this age, Satan is blinding men from seeing God's glory in Christ.
	Why is the god of this age blinding men from seeing God's glory? What are the three consequences?	Satan doesn't want men to be saved.
		1. They don't hear. 2. They don't believe. 3. They are not saved.
Matthew 13:10-17	Lastly, if the Calvinists are correct, and men cannot respond to the Gospel unless first regenerated by the Holy Spirit, why did Jesus speak in parables?	Jesus knew that if He spoke plainly, the people would hear, believe, and come to Him for salvation.