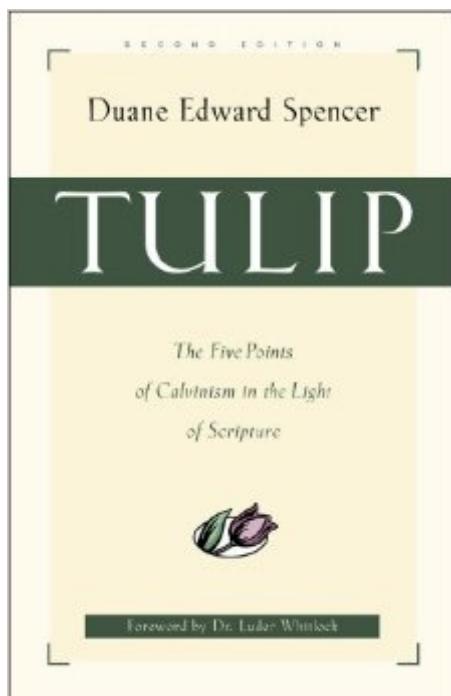


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Tulip: The Five Points Of Calvinism In The Light Of Scripture



Synopsis

TULIP is a popular acronym for the five points of Calvinism--total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. In this book, these five points are not only concisely explained in the light of the Bible but are also helpfully contrasted to the corresponding five points of Arminianism. The differences between Calvinistic and Arminian beliefs are also summarized at the end of the book for quick reference. Anyone looking for an accessible explanation of this somewhat difficult and controversial doctrine, or looking for help in explaining it to others, will find this an invaluable resource. TULIP has had steady sales since its original Baker publication in 1979, and there is now nearly 55,000 copies in print.

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Customer Reviews

As can easily be deduced from the other reviews of this book, Duane Edward Spencer has charged headlong into a theological minefield with his effort here to succinctly outline the 5 points of Calvinism. I found this book to be a solid introduction to explaining the 5 points, as well as providing the Scriptural support that is regularly called upon to defend the 5 points. I am frankly startled that

the negative reviews of this book are so seething, given that the purpose of this book is to explain the 5 points in summary fashion and citing what Spencer believes is Biblical support. If that is the purpose of the book, and since the negative reviews of this book have little to do with critiquing whether Spencer adequately achieved this purpose, I'm not sure the negative reviews are a good reflection of whether the author achieves what he sets out to do here. This book is a succinct introduction to the theology of Calvinism, and I think the author does a good job of presenting Calvinism in an honest light. Whether someone personally agrees with Calvinism is a separate issue. My review is based on whether Spencer does a good job or not of honestly presenting Calvinism to the reader. I believe he does, and does it well. This book is definitely a summary. The book is less than 100 pages, and devotes between 10-15 pages to each of the 5 points. These chapters, in a succinct and precise way, explain each point, the Biblical passages that Calvinists believe support each point, and there is also a discussion of the Arminian point that the Calvinist point is responding to.

Many Christians appropriately associate the acronym TULIP with Calvinism, but often get stuck trying to remember what each letter stands for, or more importantly, what each point means. Duane Edward Spencer's book, TULIP, is often described as a classic work for explaining the five points. TULIP, after a brief foreword and preface, begins with a summary of the five points of Arminianism, to which the five points of Calvinism are a response. The following chapter compares the two systems of thought to bring clarity to the distinctions. Next is a foundational chapter on the will of God, followed by chapters on each of the five points (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints) and a concluding chapter. At the back of the short book are selections from the Westminster Confession of Faith (1648), a summary of the historical background of the debate, and a point-by-point comparison of the two systems. The best part of the book is the point-by-point section at the end. It contains an objective and concise explanation of each point with supporting scripture as promoted by both sides. Aside from that, I didn't find the book very helpful. Take, for example, this error: "Total Depravity, according to the giants of the Protestant Reformation (such as Luther, Calvin, and Know) meant that man was as bad off as man could be." (32) This would be true if a qualifier were added that it is meant in regards to man's relationship with God. However, the way it's stated it sounds as if man can do nothing good in any sense (as if Oscar Schindler saving countless Jewish lives was bad), and this is not the general teaching of Reformed theology. Worse than that is the uncharitable attitude with which Spencer wrote this book.

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