Paul vs. Calvin: Unconditional Election

Opening Remarks
I. Introduction (1:15) (6:15)
   a. Description of Herod’s Temple
      i. Divided into six areas
      ii. Each one was higher than the previous
         1. The court of the Gentiles
         2. The Sacred Enclosure (3 ft higher)
         3. The court of the women (3 ft higher)
         4. The court of Israel (ten feet higher)
         5. The court of the priests (3 ft higher)
         6. The house of God (8 ft higher)
            a. Holy Place
            b. Holy of Holies
      iii. The design of the temple depicted the separation between Holy
            God and sinful man.
      iv. The wall of separation – divided the court of the Gentiles from the
           sacred enclosure.
           1. 4.5 ft tall
           2. Inscriptions on the wall at intervals warned that no Gentile
              should enter on pain of death
              a. “No outsider shall enter the protective enclosure
                 around the sanctuary. And whoever is caught will
                 have only himself to blame for his ensuing death”
              b. Two of these inscriptions are still in existence today
            3. Emphasized the Jews as God's chosen people
            4. Also emphasized the exclusion of all other tribes and
               nations.
   b. Preview
      i. Compare and contrast the concept of the Jews as the chosen people
         of God with the Calvinist doctrine of Unconditional Election
      ii. Make the case that the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ is for all
          is inconsistent with the Calvinist view of unconditional election
      iii. Explain the proper understanding of the predestination mentioned
           in the New Testament, namely, that the eternal purpose of God was
           that salvation would be available to all through the gospel of Jesus
           Christ.
      iv. Illustrate the glory of God and His truth
II. Unconditional Election (7:31) (10:40)
   i. The doctrine
      1. “Predestination, according to Calvin, is the eternal
         and unchangeable decree of God by which he
         foreordained, for his own glory and the display of his
         attributes of mercy and justice, a part of the human
         race, without any merit of their own, to eternal
salvation, and another part, in just punishment of 
their sin, to eternal damnation.” - Creeds of 

ii. Discussion
1. Necessary conclusion of the Calvinist doctrine of Total 
   Inherited Depravity (Original Sin)
2. A misdirected attempt to give God glory by making 
   Him responsible for every aspect of our redemption
3. Scriptural basis:
   a. Rom. 8:29-30
   b. Eph. 1:5, 11
   c. 1 Pet. 1:2, 1 Th 1:4

iii. Initial Objections
1. Lead the “elect” to take no concern for spiritual 
   things, since their destiny is secure
2. Unfair - Leave the “unelect” without hope or any 
   reason to attempt to be godly.

iv. Calvin's defense
1. With regard to the elect sinning - God forbid – Rom 
   6:1-2
2. God is always righteous, even when from man's 
   perspective he is acting unfairly
   a. There is no injustice with God – Rom 9:14
   b. We as the creatures, have no right to question 
      the deeds and decrees of God – Rom 9:18-21
3. These arguments are unanswerable. Whatever God 
   does is right and just.
4. But this defense is only amounts to saying: “If my 
   understanding of God’s deeds are correct 
   (unconditional election), then unconditional election 
   is right and just”
5. It leaves unanswered the question as to whether, in 
   fact, God practices unconditional election with respect 
   to the salvation of men’s souls.

v. Predestination is a term that
1. Predestine – to determine beforehand, to write down 
   or mark out in advance (Acts 4:27-28)

III. The Jews as God's chosen people (18:12) (6:26)
   a. Promises to Abraham
   b. They were predestined to inherit the land of Canaan – the boundaries of 
      their inheritance were decreed beforehand, and marked out in advance
   c. The Jews thought that they were God's chosen people simply because they 
      were descended from Abraham, without any regard for their love of God 
      or obedience to His will
   d. The Jews were wrong:
      i. Luke 3:7-8
      ii. OPTIONAL - Romans 9 – They are not all Israel who are of Israel
1. Isaac, but not Ishmael
2. Jacob, but not Esau – The promise regarded their offspring, not the individuals themselves
3. Not even all of Jacob’s descendents would be saved, and not all Gentiles would be lost.
e. Calvin thought that God chooses individual people to be saved without any regard to their personal attitude toward Him or obedience to His will.
f. He was also wrong

IV. The Gospel is for All (24:38) (10:20)
a. One of the most wonderful features of the Gospel
   i. In Jesus teaching:
      1. Parable of the day laborers (Matt. 20:1-16) So the last will be first, and the first last.
      2. Parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:2-14)
      4. John 10:16
   ii. The renewed hope of Ephesians 2:11-19
   iii. The continual theme of heavenly praise – Rev 5:8-10; 7:9-10; 15:3-4;
b. Indicated the superiority of the gospel to the Old Law
   i. No boundaries on who can be saved
   ii. The middle wall of separation is removed
   iii. Ended enmity between people because all are equal before God
   iv. All can be citizens of the kingdom
   v. All can be members of the household of God.
   vi. Demonstrates the wisdom of God
   vii. Demonstrates the praiseworthiness of God

V. The Inconsistency of Unconditional Election with the Gospel for All Nations (35:00) (6:10)
a. Replaces the middle wall of separation with an insurmountable wall that reaches all the way to heaven.
b. It makes the gospel inferior to the Mosaic Law with respect to providing access to God:
   i. A Gentile could have access to God, even under the Old Covenant
      1. Ex. 12:48-49
      2. OPTIONAL - Proselytes to Judaism “submitted to be circumcised, obliged themselves to observe all the rites and ceremonies of the law, and were in nothing different from the Jews but merely in their having once been heathens. The former, or proselytes of the gate, might not eat the passover or partake of any of the sacred festivals; but the latter, the proselytes of the covenant, had the same rights, spiritual and secular, as the Jews themselves.” Clarke’s Commentary
      3. Isa 56:6-7 – The foreign convert to Judaism was welcome in the Jewish assembly
   ii. What recourse do those who have not been unconditionally elected have if they wish to have access to God? Eph. 2:12 with no vs 13!

VI. Conclusion
a. Whosoever wills may come
b. Joh_1:29; Joh_3:16; 1Jo_2:2; 1Jo_4:14; 1Ti_2:4; 2Pe_3:9
c. 