Your friend might get excellent answers to his questions by looking for the related topics and their discussion of scripture in Calvin's *Institutes*, Turretin's *Institutes*, the *Canons of Dordt*, the *Westminster Confession*, and perhaps Lorraine Boettner's *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*. Frankly, the only significant thing I disagree with in your friend's email is where your friend says Jesus "lost" Judas, therefore people can lose their salvation. Most of the rest is affirmed by the *Westminster Confession*. So in part your friend's arguments contain a misunderstanding of what Calvinism teaches--we are very concerned to affirm that "without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14) and that you must "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12) I'm glad your friend asks the question, "What does this mean if you can't lose your salvation? What does it mean that He 'lost' Judas?" Here's an answer:

In John 17:10, the word "lost" (*apoleto*) comes from the same root in Greek as the word "destruction" (ESV) or "perdition" (KJV) (*apoleias*). The meanings are related, and the translations are accurate. *apoleias* typically refers to final destruction in Hell. Your friend focuses on the meaning of the words "lost, except," but how can he affirm that Judas was a "son of destruction?" The phrase "son of destruction" is a Hebraism which means "identified with destruction" (in the present), but it simultaneously means "originating from/in destruction" (in the past) and "destined for destruction" (in the future). He was a "son of lostness." Jesus means that Judas was never saved, and was destined for destruction.

The rest of scripture bears out Jesus' statement that Judas was never saved. When did Jesus "lose" Judas, in your friend's view? And in what way was Judas "lost?" It would appear he was already "lost" in the sense of not being saved, in John 6:70, where Jesus calls Judas a "devil," that is, unless a person can be a "devil" and be saved at the same time, which I doubt your friend could affirm. And can Judas be shown to ever bear the fruit of good works in any passage of scripture? Calvin remarks that Christ "elsewhere numbers Judas among the elect, although he 'is a

devil' [John 6:70]. This refers only to the office of apostle" (*Institutes* 3.22.7), which is evident in that Christ says "Did I not choose you, the Twelve?" This interpretation is confirmed by Acts 1:17, 25. It would appear to be more biblical to say that Jesus "lost" Judas when Satan entered into Judas' heart, Judas left the group of the Twelve apostles, thereby deserted his apostolic office, and subsequently betrayed Jesus. But in Jesus' own words, as a "son of destruction" Judas was already "lost" before Jesus "lost" him from the number of the Twelve. How else could your friend respect the meaning of 1 John 2:19 and apply it to Judas, as John very likely was also doing, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us."? John says that if Judas had been saved, "he would have continued with us." Under
Institutes
3.24.9, "The example of Judas is no counterevidence," Calvin argues this point in further detail, saying "But when he speaks of election unto salvation, he banishes him far from the number of the elect: 'I am not speaking of you all; I know whom I have chosen' [John 13:18]."

Your friend did not mention Calvin, but I find very often that those who criticize Calvin's views have never read Calvin's good answers to their criticisms, and Calvin normally has a direct answer to their criticism, as he does in this case. I'd recommend your friend get a copy of Calvin's *Institutes* and read it.

The broader issue that the Reformed tradition is concerned about is the question of whether God saves, or man saves. The Reformed tradition is the only one in Christendom that can answer that God alone saves, as B. B. Warfield demonstrates in his little book, *The Plan of Salvation* .

It's important to recognize the benefit of the biblical teaching that God is the only guarantee of our present and final salvation. While sanctification and perseverance are essential and necessary parts of the salvation God gives--and we even cannot enter heaven without them--they do not ultimately come from us, else to some extent we would be our own savior, and would deserve part of the glory that is due to God alone. But when we admit that all things in creation, and specially in salvation, are "from Him, through Him, and unto Him," then we can worship Him as fully and truly as He deserves to be worshiped. I'd encourage your friend to join us in saying what I'm sure he also wants to say, "Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!" (Psalm 115:1) To Him be the glory forever!