

CALVINISM (1)

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

- 1) **Calvinism** is a theological belief system of interconnected doctrines which attempt to explain the nature and roles of God and man as to sin and salvation
- 2) Appeared early on in the teachings of Augustine in 5th century AD
 - a) Was fully developed in the period of the Reformation (16th century AD)
 - b) It is often called the **Reformed** tradition/faith – developed by men such as William Farel, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, and John Knox
 - c) Found primarily in Baptist, Presbyterian, and Reformed churches, but basic elements are found in most Protestant denominations (original sin, faith only, direct operation of the Holy Spirit, once saved always saved, etc.)
- 3) **John Calvin** – Born in 1509, a French theologian who moved to Geneva, Switzerland, in 1536, and published the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
 - a) “*Calvinism*” first used by a Lutheran in 1552 as a negative, but became increasingly popular
- 4) The Reformation was a movement to reform the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church
 - a) Martin Luther taught salvation by “faith alone”
 - b) Calvin and others broke from Catholicism over differences on predestination and election

I) **The Central Principle of Calvinism = *The Sovereignty of God***

- A) “The one rock upon which Calvinism builds is that of the absolute and unlimited sovereignty of the eternal and self-existent Jehovah” (Ben A. Warburton, *Calvinism*, p. 169)
- B) “These other doctrines are an expression of this one central theme. Thus if God is absolutely sovereign -- the Alpha and Omega -- then it follows that salvation depends entirely on him and not on man” (Edwin H. Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 74)
- C) “God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter III)

II) **The Central Problem of Calvinism = *The Free Will of Man***

- A) Calvinism denies that man has the free will to choose his own way either in accepting the way of God unto salvation or rejecting the way of God leading to destruction
- B) See Genesis 4:7; Deuteronomy 30:19; Ezekiel 18:30-31; Matt. 7:24-27; Revelation 22:17
- C) Calvinism claims that God has already predestined [pre-determined] every “choice” we make and that no action is of our own free will

III) **The Five Points of Calvinism**

- A) Represented by the acronym T-U-L-I-P
 - 1) **T**otal Hereditary Depravity
 - 2) **U**nconditional Election
 - 3) **L**imited Atonement
 - 4) **I**rresistible Grace
 - 5) **P**erseverance of the Saints

B) The following chart defines each of the five points of Calvinism

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| T | Total Hereditary Depravity | All people inherit the sin of Adam at birth through their parents and are wholly depraved and totally corrupt in their heart. They therefore are unable to choose good over evil or to respond to the gospel message of Christ. |
| U | Unconditional Election | God, before the foundation of the world, chose certain individuals to be saved. This election was not conditioned upon any quality or act of the individual, but upon God's unchangeable sovereign decree. All not elected will be lost. |
| L | Limited Atonement | Christ's atoning death and redeeming work was intended only for and limited to those whom God has unconditionally elected to be saved. |
| I | Irresistible Grace | The Holy Spirit is sent directly into the hearts of the elect in order to create a saving faith in Christ. This direct operation and inward call of God cannot be resisted or rejected. |
| P | Perseverance of the Saints | Once one who is chosen of God is saved, he cannot be eternally lost. The saved are kept by the power of God and will persevere to the end. |

IV) Why We Need to Examine the Doctrines of Men

- A) The teachings of men are to be tested by the inspired word of God (1 Jn. 4:1, 6)
- B) Must warn concerning any and all departures from the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3-4; 1 Tim. 4:1; Eph. 5:11)
- C) Some will twist the Scriptures and follow a perverted gospel (2 Pet. 3:16; Gal. 1:6-9)
- D) Answering error with Scripture helps in understanding the truth (Matt. 22:23-33)

Conclusion

The doctrines of **Calvinism** stand or fall together. We will give a fair examination of each of the five points of Calvinism in light of what the Bible teaches. May glory be to God in our every defense of the gospel of Christ.