

Calvinism...I

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10

1. Who was John Calvin and why is he important?
 - a. John Calvin (1509-1564) was a French-born theologian who spent most of his adult life in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - b. Calvin is best known for his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a work in which he sought to systematically explain God’s dealings with man.
 - c. His teachings did not launch the Protestant Reformation, but had a tremendous impact on the Protestant world and his influence is still felt today.
 - d. Calvinism is most easily explained by the acronym TULIP. (Calvin himself did not use the acronym, but his followers did and it is a fair representation of his teachings).

Total Hereditary Depravity. Because of the sin of their “father” Adam, babies are born in sin. And not only are they born in sin, but their depravity is so complete that they cannot choose to respond to the gospel of their own “free-will.”

Unconditional Election. Calvin taught that God’s predestination involved the creation of a “master list” of the saved and the lost before creation and the names on the list were unchangeable. Before your birth God had decided if you would be saved or lost.

Limited Atonement. Christ did not die for all men, but only those whom God had already put on His list.

Irresistible Grace. Because men had a completely depraved nature, even those on the list to be saved could not choose to believe. Thus God would send the Holy Spirit to remove the depravity, create saving faith in the ones already chosen, and then guide the saved in their understanding and interpretation of Scripture.

Perseverance of the Saints. Those who were on the list to be saved would be saved and could not be lost for any reason. Once saved, always saved.

Sovereignty of God. Some Calvinists have said the TULIP is rooted in the Soil that is God’s sovereignty. Calvinists assert that if man has any part in his salvation, then God has been stripped of His sovereignty. This is also their answer to the charge that the doctrines of unconditional election and limited atonement seem unfair. They reply that God is the sovereign ruler and can do whatever He wants to do.

2. Original Sin.
 - a. An important concept in both Roman Catholicism and Calvinism is the doctrine of original sin.
 - b. “Adam’s sin was not confined to himself but was transmitted, with its long train of dire consequences, to all his posterity. It is called original sin because it is derived from our original progenitor.” *Handbook of Church Doctrines*
 - c. Though previously taught by others, Augustine made this view prominent by ca. A.D. 400. Augustine is viewed by many as the father of Roman Catholic theology, but he also had a great influence on the thinking of John Calvin, a Protestant reformer.

3. Original sin and infant baptism. The practice of infant baptism (usually by sprinkling or pouring) is directly connected to this doctrine.

4. Original sin and the *Immaculate Conception*.
 - a. A question for Catholics and Calvinistic Protestants is this: if sin is inherited, was Jesus born in sin? If not, why not?
 - b. Calvinists give varying answers, but Roman Catholicism developed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception which taught that by a miracle Mary was spared the stain of original sin at the time of her conception.
 - 1) Pope Pius IX: “by authority of Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a special grace and privilege of the Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, was preserved free from the stain of all original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore is to be firmly and steadfastly believed by all faithful.” This doctrine had been around for centuries but was not made official dogma until 1854.
 - c. Roman Catholicism would go on to teach that Mary never committed any sin and received the Bodily Assumption (her body did not decay in the grave, but was carried into heaven immediately). Made official dogma in 1950.

5. How do the following passages refute the idea of original sin?
 - a. Ezekiel 18:20
 - b. 2 Cor. 5:10
 - c. 1 Peter 1:17

6. 1 John 3:4 defines sin as _____, not being born.

7. Does the Bible picture infants as sinners?
 - a. When a generation was sentenced to die in the wilderness, the children did not perish with their parents because the children had no knowledge of _____ and _____.
Deut. 1:39

- b. New Testament baptism was for those who...
- 1) _____. Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12; 18:8
 - 2) _____. Acts 2:38
- c. Is Acts 16:33 an example of infant baptism? Are there any examples of infant baptism in the New Testament?

Calvinism...II

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

1. Review of John Calvin and why he is significant. (See Lesson Six).
 - a. John Calvin (1509-1564) is best known for his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a work which sought to systematically explain God’s dealings with man.
 - b. While Calvin did not launch the Protestant Reformation, his teachings had a tremendous impact on Protestant thought and that influence is still felt today.
 - c. Calvinism is most easily understood through the acronym TULIP. (Calvin himself did not use the acronym, but his followers did and it is a fair representation of his teachings).

Total Hereditary Depravity.

Unconditional Election.

Limited Atonement.

Irresistible Grace.

Perseverance of the Saints.

Sovereignty of God. Calvinists assert that if man has any part in his salvation, then God has been stripped of His sovereignty. They also respond to the charge that their doctrine makes God seem unfair by asserting that He is the sovereign ruler and can do whatever He wishes.

2. If the point on total depravity is scripturally accurate everything else does fit together logically. But if, despite Adam’s sin, men still have the power to choose good or evil, obedience or disobedience, the entire system crumbles.
 - a. Review Lesson 6 and the section on Original Sin.
 - b. Be able to explain how Ezek. 18:20 and 2 Cor. 5:10 disprove the idea of inherited guilt.
 - c. Read Matt. 11:28-30 and Rev. 22:17. Calvin says man is unable to accept invitations such as those extended in these two passages. What kind of cruel God would tantalize men with an invitation impossible for them to accept?
3. Understanding Unconditional Election.
 - a. “God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass....By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly

and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.” *The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.*

- b. In other words, God had chosen who was to be on the list of the saved (or elect) and if you were not on the list you could not be saved, you were predestinated to perish.
4. Limited Atonement.
 - a. “Christ’s redeeming work was intended to save the elect only....” *The Five Points of Calvinism*, David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas (quoted in *What Love Is This?* by Dave Hunt)
 - b. Calvinists have written that the blood of Christ was shed in vain if it was shed for all men.
 5. The atoning blood of Christ. For whom did Christ die?
 - a. John 3:16
 - b. 1 Tim. 2:3-7
 - c. Hebrews 2:9
 - d. 1 John 2:1, 2
 6. How do the following refute the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election?
 - a. Acts 10:34
 - b. 2 Peter 3:9
 - c. Mark 16:15, 16
 - d. Acts 17:30, 31
 7. Salvation is not based upon an unconditional election, but is determined by...
 - a. _____ . Heb. 5:8, 9
 - b. _____ . Mark 16:15, 16
 - c. _____ . Acts 10:35
 - d. _____ . James 2:24, 26
 8. The Biblical doctrine of predestination.
 - a. What was foreordained in 1 Peter 1:18-20?
 - b. Read Eph. 1:3-14.
 - 1) Every spiritual blessing is _____ . 1:3
 - 2) He chose us _____ . 1:4
 - 3) We were predestined to adoption as sons _____ . 1:5
 - c. While the Bible does not teach Calvinistic unconditional election, it does teach that God had foreordained that Jesus would die for the sins of the world. He had also determined that the elect, the saved, those adopted as sons, etc. would be those who put their faith in Jesus. God

predetermined that His spiritual blessings would be limited to those who would come to Christ (#7 above), but it is up to each individual to decide if they are coming to Christ. God chose to put salvation in Christ—we can now choose to be in Christ or we can choose to remain outside of Christ. The choice is ours. What will we do with that choice?

Calvinism...III

“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”” 2 Peter 2:20-22

1. Review Lessons 6 and 7 for the significance and meaning of Calvinism. What are the five main points of Calvinism, i.e. what is represented by the TULIP?

2. Defining Irresistible Grace.
 - a. Because Calvin went beyond just teaching that man inherited the guilt of Adam’s sin (in itself a false doctrine) and taught that man was born in total depravity, it stood to reason that man could not choose salvation for himself.
 - b. Calvin taught that God did the choosing (the unconditional election), and then sent the Holy Spirit to call those elect to conversion and salvation. The elect, when they are called, do not have the ability to reject God’s call, but must submit to it.
 - c. “The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ...For the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ.” David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented* (from www.bible.ca/cal-1-creeds.htm)

3. Examining how men are called and if God’s grace is irresistible.
 - a. What is God’s power to save? Rom. 1:16
 - b. What did Jesus instruct His apostles to do in Mark 16:15, 16?
 - c. How many of the recorded conversions in the book of Acts took place without a human being preaching the gospel to the lost?
 - d. Stephen told his audience, “You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you” (Acts 7:51-53). How did his audience resist the Holy Spirit? How had their fathers done that?
 - e. Where do we read that men are called by the gospel?
 - f. Faith comes by _____, and _____ by the word of God. Rom. 10:17
 - g. The sword of the Spirit is the _____ of God. Eph. 6:17
 - h. If the doctrines of unconditional election and the subsequent irresistible grace are true, God is guilty of mocking mankind with every invitation to come and accept His blessings. E.g. Matt. 11:28-30; John 3:16; Mark 16:16; Rev. 22:17.

4. Perseverance of the saints defined.
 - a. This is also known as eternal security and once saved—always saved.
 - b. It follows logically that if God predestined a specific individual to salvation, then God cannot allow that one to be lost.
 - c. The once saved—always saved position is not limited to Calvinists. E.g. most Baptists today believe that man has the power to choose when it comes to accepting Christ and they also believe the invitation is open to all, but follow Calvin in teaching that once you are saved you can never choose to be lost again.
 - d. There are significant differences among the advocates of this doctrine when it comes to dealing with sin in the life of a “believer.”
 - 1) Some believe that sin, or at least gross sin, is proof one was never really saved. True Calvinists often struggle with doubts about being among the elect because they know they continue to sin.
 - 2) Some have taught that the body continues to sin, but the spirit is pure and does not participate in the sin.
 - 3) It is commonly taught that the “Christian” who sins will miss out on some of the rewards of heaven, but will not lose his salvation.

5. Once saved—always saved is not a Bible doctrine.
 - a. Many passages promise blessedness to a child of God “if...” See Gal. 6:9; Heb. 3:6, 14; 2 Peter 1:8; et al
 - b. List two passages where we are commanded to restore the erring brother and/or the one overtaken in a trespass.
 - c. Can a Christian be guilty of the sins listed in 1 Cor. 6:9, 10?
 - d. Was Simon ever saved? (Acts 8:12, 13) Do the words of Acts 8:20-23 describe one who is still saved?
 - e. Study the following passages: Ezekiel 18:24; 1 Cor. 8:11; 9:27; 10:1-13; Gal. 5:1-4; Heb. 10:26-31; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; 3:17

6. The sovereignty of God.
 - a. Calvinism makes two arguments from the sovereignty of God.
 - 1) First, if man had the power to choose (i.e. possessed free will), God would no longer be the Almighty ruler.
 - 2) Second, while the doctrine of unconditional election might seem unfair to us, God is the Sovereign Ruler and man has no right to question Him (Rom. 9:20).
 - b. God as the Creator had the right to choose the nature of those He created. That He chose to give man the power to reject Him does not strip Him of His sovereignty, for He will one day hold all men accountable for their rejection of Him.
 - c. God’s sovereignty does not allow Him to contradict His own nature. What do the following say about God?

1) Acts 10:34	2) 1 Tim. 2:3, 4
3) Titus 1:2	4) 1 John 4:8