THE DANGERS OF CALVINISM

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COURSE OUTLINE

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STUDY PACK 1

MANY DEFINITIONS OF REFORMED THEOLOGY

"The Sovereign of the universe decided to let us have a free will. That is one thing Calvinists say that God cannot do. Isn't it amazing! God can do anything except give us a free will. They teach that God goes against His nature and makes us sin rather than admit that God gave us a free will." ~~ Michael Floyd ~~

The Six Points of Calvinism, p.40, "If God cannot control a universe in which there is genuine free will … then such a God is of truly limited power indeed." ~~ Zane Hodges ~~

The following are definitions of Calvinism from different perspectives.

I. FROM A MODERN CALVINIST, MATT SLICK

Reformed Theology

Reformed Theology is the theology of the Protestant movement that "reformed" the theological perspective held by the Roman Catholic Church. This movement began in the 16th Century with Martin Luther and has continued on since then. It has since come to be known as Calvinism and is a biblically centered theological perspective focusing on the sovereignty of Scripture, the sovereignty of God, his election, redemption, and our securing in Christ's work. Reformed Theology holds to the five solas.

1. Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone
2. Sola Christus – Christ alone
3. Sola Gratia – Grace alone
4. Sola Fide – Faith alone
5. Sola Deo Gloria – the Glory of God alone

It is also known by the Five Points.

1. Total Depravity
2. Unconditional Election
3. Limited Atonement
4. Irresistible Grace
5. Perseverance of Saints

II. FROM ANOTHER CALVINIST (*MOODY HANDBOOK OF THEOLOGY*)

Question: **"What is a Reformed Theology?"**

Answer: Broadly speaking. Reformed theology includes any system of belief that traces its roots back to the Protestant Reformation of the 16 Century. Of course, the Reformers themselves traced their doctrine to Scripture, as

indicated by their credo of "sola scriptura," so Reformed Theology is not a "new" belief system but one that seeks to continue to apostolic doctrine.

Generally, Reformed Theology holds to the authority of Scripture, the sovereignty of God, salvation by grace through Christ, and the necessity of evangelism. It is sometimes called Covenant Theology because of its emphases on the covenant God made with Adam and the new covenant which came through Jesus Christ. (Luke 22:20)

Authority of Scripture. Reformed Theology teaches that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God, sufficient in all matters of faith and practice.

Sovereignty of God. Reformed Theology teaches that God rules with absolute control over all creation. He has foreordained all events and is therefore never frustrated by circumstances. This does not limit the will of the creature, nor does it make God the author of sin.

Salvation by grace. Reformed Theology teaches that God in His grace and mercy has chosen to redeem a people to Himself, delivering them from sin and death. The Reformed doctrine of salvation is commonly represented by the acrostic TULIP (also known as the five points of Calvinism).

T – total depravity. Man is completely helpless in his sinful state, is under the wrath of God, and can in no way please God. Total depravity also means that man will not naturally seek to know God, until God graciously prompts him to do so (Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18).

U – unconditional election. God, from eternity past, has chosen to save a great multitude of sinners, which no man can number (Romans 8:29-30, 9:11; Ephesians 1:4-6, 11-12).

L – limited atonement. Also called "particular redemption." Christ took the judgment for the sin of the elect upon Himself and thereby paid for their lives with His death, in other words, He did not simply make salvation "possible," He actually obtained it for those whom He had chosen (Matthew 1:21; John 10:11, 17:9; Acts 20:28; Romans 8:32; Ephesians 5:25).

I – irresistible grace. In his fallen state, man resists God's love, but the grace of God, working in his heart makes him desire, what he had previously resisted. That is, God's grace will not fail to accomplish its saving work in the elect (John 6:37, 44, 10:16).

P – perseverance of the saints. God protects His saints from falling away, thus, salvation is eternal (John 10:27-29; Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:3-14).

The necessity of evangelism. Reformed Theology teaches that Christians are in the world to make a difference, spiritually through evangelism and socially through holy living and humanitarianism.

Other distinctives of Reformed Theology generally include the observance of two sacraments (baptism and communion), a cessationist view of the spiritual gifts (the gifts are no longer extended to the church), and non-dispensational view of Scripture. Held in high esteem by Reformed churches are the writings of John Calvin, John Knox, Ulrich Zwingli, and Martin Luther. The Westminster Confession embodies the theology of the Reformed tradition. Modern cultures in the Reformed tradition include Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and some Baptists.

III. FROM A BAPTIST BIBLICIST

"Calvinism" is a man-made system of theology which destroys soul-winning, makes man an automation or robot, makes God the author of sin, devastates missionary zeal and drains churches of their desire for service – not to mention their numbers. (They don't win folks to Christ; they steal sheep from Bible-believing churches.) Calvinism is a distortion of the teachings of God's Word which caters to man's intellect. *(Calvinists bask in the sunlight of their own intelligence rather than in the light of the Word or the Son of God)*. Calvinism's doctrines doom churches to failure to fulfill the Great Commission and damn Christians to loss of rewards for works at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It effectively neutralizes the child of Gods' efficiency. ~~ Paul Fedena ~~

IV. A MORE NEUTRAL DEFINITION OF CALVINISM

Quotation: "God preordained … 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." ~~ John Calvin ~~

What is Calvinism:

It is a series of theological beliefs first promoted by John Calvin (1509-1565), one of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation. They were affirmed by the *Synod of Dordt* (1618-1619) as being the doctrine of salvation which is contained in the Bible. It laid the foundation for Reformed Theology.

Calvinism is often summarized by *The Five Points of Calvinism*, which are easy to recall by using the acrostic "TULIP."

T – This usually stands for "Total depravity." This is often mistaken to mean that humans are all hopelessly, intensely sinful. Actually it means something quite different: as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience to god – the Fall of Man – sin has extended to all parts of every person's being: "his thinking, his emotions and his will."

Sometimes, this has been called "Total inability." This is the concept that it is impossible for the ordinary "natural" human to understand the Gospel's message. They are spiritually helpless. First, God must first decide to intervene in the form of the third personality within the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, the person is lost forever.

See: See: Romans 5:12: "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."*

Mark 4:11: *"And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done parables."*

U – This stands for "Unconditional election." This is the concept of predestination: that God has divided humanity into two groups. One group is "the elected." This includes all those whom God has chosen to make knowledgeable about himself. The rest will remain ignorant of God, and the Gospel. They are damned and will spend eternity in Hell without any hope of mercy or cessation of the extreme tortures. God made this selection before the universe was created, and thus before any humans existed. The ground or grounds that God uses to select the lucky few is unknown. What is known is that it is not through any good works on the part of the individual. It is not that he extends knowledge to some in order to find out who will accept salvation and who will not.

There is a degree of tension within the Bible concerning precise division of responsibility between God and humans on this matter. The Bible does not resolve this issue.

Hyper-Calvinists believe that a person has zero responsibility for their own salvation; it is all up to God.

Arminians teach that humans have free will and thus can accept or resist the call of God.

See: Romans 9:15: *"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*

Romans 9:21: *"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?"*

L – This stands for "limited atonement" or "Particular Redemption." This is the belief that Jesus did not die to save all humans. He only died for the sake of specific sins of those sinners who are saved.

See: Matthew 26:28: *"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*

Ephesians 5:25: *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."*

I – This stands for "Irresistible Grace." This is the belief that every human whom God has elected will inevitably come to a knowledge of God. The elect cannot resist the call.

See: John 6:44: *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."*

Romans 8:14: *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."*

1 Peter 5:10: *"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."*

P – This stands for "Perseverance of the saints." This is the "Once saved, always saved" belief – that everyone who has been saved will remain in that state. God will begin and continue a process of sanctification which will continue until they reach heaven. None are lost; it is impossible for them to lose their salvation.

See: Philippians 1:6: *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."*

Romans 8:28-39: *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified … who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? … For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

John 6:39: *"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."*

STUDY PACKS 2 & 3

TULIP THEOLOGY

"What is Calvinism? What it all comes down to is this: ARE MEN ELECTED TO SALVATION OR ARE THEY NOT? All Calvinists, whether they be Presbyterian or Reformed, Primitive Baptist or Sovereign Grace Baptist, four-point or five-point Calvinist, Supralapsarian or Infralapsarian, all Calvinists: premillennial or amillennial, dispensational or covenant theologist; all Calvinists, whether they go by the name or not, all Calvinists have one thing in common. God by sovereign, eternal decree, has determined before the foundation of the world who shall be saved and who shall be lost."

~~ Laurence Vance, *The Other Side of Calvinism,* p. 15 ~~

I. WHAT IS TULIP THEOLOGY?

"A tulip is a beautiful flower but a bad theology." ~~ Philip Congdon ~~

"The gospel preacher can declare without any kind of mental reservation the blessed fact that whosoever will may take of the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17). That is not at all a question of being allowed to take Christ as Saviour. It is an earnest entreaty to do so." ~~ Harry Ironside ~~

II. THE DOCTRINE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY

A. A Calvinist statement about the doctrine of Total Depravity.

"Total depravity is probably the most misunderstood tenet of Calvinism. When Calvinists speak of humans as "totally depraved," they are making an extensive, rather than an intensive statement. The effect of the fall upon man is that sin has extended to every part of his personality – his thinking, his emotions, and his will. Not necessarily that he is intensely sinful, but that sin has extended to his entire being.

The unregenerate (unsaved) man is dead in his sins (Romans 5:12). Without the power of the Holy Spirit, the natural man is blind and deaf to the message of the gospel (Mark 4:11f). This is why Total Depravity has also been called 'Total Inability.' The man without a knowledge of God will never come to this knowledge without God's making him alive through Christ (Ephesians 2:1-5)."

B. Calvinism teaches that man does not have a free will.

Joshua 24:15
1 Kings 18:21
Joshua 24:22

C. Man is a sinner by choice and nature.

Genesis 8:21
Psalm 51:5
Romans 5:12
Ephesians 2:1
Romans 3:12
Romans 3:23

D. This does not mean that man can never do a good thing – like obey the gospel.

1. God has given man a spirit which is capable of calling upon Him (Psalm 32:2; John 1:47; Proverbs 17:27; Daniel 6:3; Proverbs 29:23; Isaiah 66:2; Zechariah 12:1; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Proverbs 20:27; Job 32:8, Job 38.36).

2. Total depravity is not total inability (John 5:40; Matthew 23.37; Revelation 22:17).

3. Christ will draw men unto Him – John 6:44, compared to John 12:32; Romans 1:19-20; John 1:9; Romans 2:11-16.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

A. A Calvinistic statement about the doctrine of Unconditional Election.

Unconditional Election.

"Unconditional Election is the doctrine which states that God chose whom he was pleased to bring to a knowledge of himself, not based upon any merit shown by the object of his grace and not based upon his looking forward to discover who would "accept the offer of the Gospel." God has elected, based solely upon the counsel of his own will, some for glory and others for damnation (Romans 9:15, 21). He has done this act <u>before the foundation of the world</u> (Ephesians 1:4-8).

This doctrine does not rule out, however, man's responsibility to believe in the redeeming work of God the Son (John 3:16-18). Scripture presents a tension between God's sovereignty in salvation, and man's responsibility to believe which it does not try to resolve. Both are true – to deny man's responsibility is to affirm an unbiblical hyper-Calvinism; to deny God's sovereignty is to affirm an unbiblical Arminianism.

The elect are saved unto good works (Ephesians 2:10). Thus, though good works will never bridge the gulf between man and God that was formed in the Fall, good

works are a result of God's saving grace. This is what Peter means when he admonishes the Christian reader to make his "calling" and "election" sure (2 Peter 1:10). Bearing the fruit of good works is an indication that God has sown seeds of grace in fertile soil."

B. Foreknowledge is not the same as election – Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2.

C. Predestination refers to the blessings that God has ordained for those He foreknew would be saved – Romans 8:29-30; John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4-5.

D. Scripture about the eternal purpose of God in reference to salvation is very clear – 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4; Acts 17:30; John 1:7; Titus 2:11.

Salvation is clearly based upon God's choice, and He clearly chooses to save <u>those who believe</u> (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:12-13; 2 Corinthians 5:14 Hebrews 2:10).

E. God has <u>elected</u> to save those <u>who believe</u>.

F. It is God's perfect will for men to be saved, but he <u>permits men to reject His offer</u> of free salvation.

G. Election in Romans 9 refers to God's election <u>of Israel</u> to carry out His plan.

Romans 9:12-21
Isaiah 45:4
Isaiah 42:1

H. All scripture must be in harmony with each other.

1. Real Bible doctrine includes every statement the Bible makes on a subject.

2. Systematic theology is <u>a life-time pursuit</u>.

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF LIMITED ATONEMENT by George Zeller

"This is commonly known as a belief in a "limited atonement" (some Reformed men prefer to call it "definite atonement"). It is the teaching that Christ died on the cross and paid the penalty only for the sins of the elect. He did not die for the ones who eventually will be in the lake of fire. Often it is worded as follows: "Christ died for all men WITHOUT DISTINCTION, but He did not die for all men WITHOUT EXCEPTION." This is a subtle game of semantics which makes it possible for them to say that He died for all without really meaning that He died for all. What they really mean is that Christ died for **all kinds of people** and **all classes of people**, but He did not die for every single person. That is, He died for Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, slave and free, male and

female, etc., but it is understood that He died for only elect Jews and Gentiles, only elect rich and poor, etc.

HE DIED

1. For all (1 Timothy 2:6; Isaiah 53:6; Acts 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9).
2. For every man (Hebrews 2:9).
3. For the world (John 3:16).
4. For the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).
5. For the ungodly (Romans 5:6).
6. For false teachers (2 Peter 2:1).
7. For many (Matthew 20:28).
8. For Israel (John 11:50-51).
9. For the Church (Ephesians 5:25).
10. For "me" (Galatians 2:20).

It is evident that the extreme Calvinist must ignore the clear language and obvious sense of many passages and he must force the Scriptures and make them fit into his own theological mold. Limited atonement may seem logical and reasonable, but the real test is this: **IS IT BIBLICAL**? "What saith the Scriptures?" (Romans 4:3). In childlike faith we must simply allow the Bible to say what it says.

Those who promote this erroneous doctrine try to tell us that "world" does not really mean "world," and "all" does not really mean "all" and "every man" does not really mean "every man" and "the whole world" does not really mean "the whole world." We are told that simple verses such as John 3:16 and Isaiah 53:6 must be understood ***not as a child would understand them*** but as a theologian would understand them. That is, we must reinterpret such verses in light of our system of theology.

The true doctrine of the atonement could be stated as follows:

> The Scriptures teach that the sacrifice of the Lamb of God involved the sin of the world (John 1:29) and that the Savior's work of redemption (1 Timothy 2:6; 2 Peter 2:1), reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:19) and propitiation (1 John 2:2) was for all men (1 Timothy 4:10), but the cross-work of Christ is efficient, effectual and applicable only for those who believe (1 Timothy 4:10; John 3:16). We could even say it in a simpler way: "Christ's death was **SUFFICIENT FOR ALL** but **EFFICIENT** only for those who believe." The cross-work of Christ is not limited, but the ***application*** of that cross-work through the work of the Holy Spirit is limited to believers only.

The extreme Calvinist would say that the cross was designed only for the elect and had no purpose for the "non-elect" (persistent unbelievers). But the death of God's Son had a divine purpose and design for both groups. For the elect, God's design was salvation

according to His purpose and grace in Christ Jesus before the world began (2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). For unbelievers, God's purpose and design is to render the unbeliever ***without excuse***. Men are CONDEMNED because they have rejected the Person and WORK of Jesus Christ and refused God's only remedy for sin (John3:18, 5:40). Unbelievers can never say that a provision for their salvation was not made and not offered. They can never stand before God and say, "The reason I am not saved is because Christ did not die for me." No, the reason they are not saved is because they rejected the One who died for them and who is the Savior of all men (1Timothy 4:10). They are without excuse.

This issue is not merely academic. It is extremely practical. If affects the very heart of the gospel and its presentation. The gospel which Paul preached to the unsaved people of Corinth was this: "Christ died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3). Do we really have a gospel of good news for **all men** (compare Luke 2:10-11)? In preaching the gospel, what can we say to an unsaved person? Can we say, "My friend, the Lord Jesus Christ died for you. He paid the penalty for your sins. He died as your Substitute"?

One Reformed writer said this:

> But counselors, as Christians, are obligated to present the claims of Christ. They must present the good news that Christ Jesus died on the cross ***in the place of His own***, that He bore the guilt and suffered the penalty for their sins. He died that all whom the Father had given to Him might come unto Him and have life ever-lasting. ***As a reformed Christian***, the writer believes that counselors ***must not tell any unsaved counselee that Christ died for him, FOR THEY CANNOT SAY THAT***. No man knows but Christ Himself who are His elect for whom He died (emphasis mine). ~~ J. Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, p. 70 ~~
>
> As C. H. Mackintosh has said, "A disciple of the high school of doctrine (extreme Calvinist) will not hear of a world-wide gospel – of God's love to the world – of glad tidings to every creature under heaven. He has only gotten a gospel for the elect."
>
> How can we sincerely offer to men what has not been provided for them? How can we offer them a free gift if the gift has not been purchased for them? How can we urge them to drink from the fountain of life if no water has been provided for them? How can we tell them to be saved if the Lord Jesus Christ provided not for their salvation? How can we say to a person, "Take the medicine and be cured!" if there is no medicine to take and no cure provided. W. Lindsay Alexander explains: "On this supposition (that of a limited atonement) the general invitations

and promises of the gospel are without an adequate basis, and seem like a mere mockery, an offer, in short, of what has not been provided."
~~ W. Lindsay Alexander, *A System of Biblical Theology*, 2nd volume, p. 111 ~~

If the Reformed preacher were really honest about it, he would need to preach his "gospel" along these lines:

"Perhaps Christ died for you."
"Maybe God so loved you."
"Christ shed His blood for you, perhaps."
"Salvation has been provided for you, maybe."
"Possibly God commendeth His love toward you."
"Hopefully He's the propitiation for your sins."
"There is a possibility that Christ died as your Substitute."
"I bring you good news, maybe."
"It's possible that Christ died for you. If you get saved then we know that He did die for you, but if you continue to reject Him then He did not die for you."
"Christ died for you only if you believe that Christ died for you (thus proving you are elect), but if you do not believe this and if you continue in your unbelief until the day you die, then Christ did not die for you."

Those who hold to a definite or limited atonement do not present the gospel in this way, but would not such a presentation be consistent with their theology? Would it not be a correct and cautious and sincere way for sharing with the unsaved? An extreme Calvinist must be very careful how he presents the cross-work of Christ to an unsaved person because he never really can be sure if Christ has made provision for that person. As Robert Lightner has said, "Belief in limited atonement means that the good news of God's saving grace in Christ cannot be personalized. Those who hold to such a position cannot tell someone to whom they are witnessing that Christ died for him because that one may, in fact, not be one for whom Christ died."
(This quote is from an article by Robert Lightner in the book, *Walvoord: A Tribute*, p. 166)

John Bunyan made this observation: "The offer of the Gospel cannot, with God's allowance, be offered any further than the death of Christ did go; because if it be taken away, there is indeed no Gospel, nor grace to be extended." (Bunyan's *Works*) In other words, how can you offer the gospel to a person if Christ did not die for that person? How can we offer the sinner what has not been provided? As Lightner has said, "No maxim appears more certain than that a salvation offered implies a salvation provided."
~~ Robert Lightner, *The Death Christ Died*, p. 114 ~~

Boettner says: "Universal redemption means universal salvation" (cited by Lightner, *The Death Christ Died*, p. 96) The extreme Calvinist argues that Christ must save everyone that He died for. They reason thus: "If Christ died for everyone, then everyone will be saved." Let's think about the logic of this statement. This would be like saying, "If medicine is available, for everyone then everyone must be healed." This is obviously

false. “The medicine, though available, will not do any good unless it is taken.” “There is more than enough cool, refreshing water for every thirsty person in the village.” Does this mean that every person in the village will have his thirst quenched? Only if every person drinks! We need to make difference between redemption accomplished and redemption applied.”

> “Lord, I believe were sinners more
> Than stands upon the ocean shore,
> Thou hast for all a ransom paid,
> For all a full atonement made.”
> ~~ Nikolaus L. von Zinzendorf, 1739 ~~

V. THE DOCTRINE OF IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

A. A Calvinist explanation for the Doctrine of Irresistible Grace.

Irresistible Grace.

“The result of God’s irresistible Grace is the certain response by the elect to the inward call of the Holy Spirit when the outward call is given by the evangelist or minister of the Word of God. Christ, himself, teaches that all whom God has elected will come to a knowledge of Him (John 6:37). Men come to Christ in salvation when the Father calls them (John 6:44), and the very Spirit of God leads God’s beloved to repentance (Romans 8:14). What a comfort it is to know that the gospel of Christ will penetrate our hard, sinful hearts and wondrously save us through the gracious inward call of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 5:10)!”

B. Salvation comes by grace through faith – Ephesians 2:8-9.

1. God gave man dominion over the earth – Genesis 1:26.

2. Satan tries to blind the mind of man – 2 Corinthians 4:4.

3. We are commanded to preach the gospel to all men just as if they could all believe – Matthew 28:1-8-20.

C. “If God is sovereign …?

A common claim of Calvinists is that “<u>if God is sovereign, He must make the choice</u> about who is saved and when.”

This is human logic and is faulty. If God is sovereign, <u>we do not tell Him what He must do</u>. He tells us and <u>we simply accept what He says.</u>

He says repeatedly that He has given man a free will to exercise about salvation (John 3:14-18; Proverbs 1:24-26; Acts 7:51; Titus 2:1; John 1:12).

VI. THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

A. A Calvinist statement about the Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints.

Perseverance of the Saints.

"Perseverance of the Saints is a doctrine which states that the saints (those whom God has saved) will remain in God's hand until they are glorified and brought to abide with Him in Heaven. Romans 8:28-39 makes it clear that when a person truly has been regenerated by God, he will remain in God's stead. The work of sanctification which God has brought about in his elect will continue until it reaches its fulfilment in eternal life (Philippians 1:6). Christ assures the elect that he will not lose them and that they will be glorified at the "last day" (John 6:39). The Calvinist stands upon the Word of God and trusts in Christ's promise that he will perfectly fulfil the will of the Father in saving all the elect.

This is not the same as the doctrine of eternal security. This doctrine teaches not just that a person will remain in possession of the gift of eternal life, but a person will <u>always live in victory over the flesh and the world</u>."

John MacArthur bases his doctrine of Lordship Salvation (the Gospel According to Jesus, the Gospel According to Paul) on the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints.

B. Biblicists believe in the perseverance of the Saviour.

Jude 1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Peter 4-5.

C. New Testament reasons not to believe in the Perseverance of the Saints as defined by Calvin.

1. Much of the New Testament was written to <u>warn believers about spiritual failure</u> – Galatians 6:1-3.

2. The New Testament describes a <u>continual struggle</u> in the Christian life – Romans 7:15-25.

3. The New Testament illustrations of salvation are Abraham and David – neither of whom <u>always lived in victory</u>.

4. A genuine understanding of salvation leads to humility – not pride.

5. Justification by works can only justify you <u>before men</u> – James 2:14-26; Titus 2:11-15.

STUDY PACK 4

THE DANGERS OF TEACHING THAT REGENERATION PRECEDES FAITH

By George Zeller, Pastor Middletown Bible Church

John Wesley offered this comment on Calvinism: "A doctrine full of blasphemy, representing our Lord as hypocrite, a deceiver of the people, a man void of common sincerity, as mocking his helpless creatures by offering what he never intends to give, by saying one thing and meaning another. It destroys all the attributes of God, his justice, mercy, and truth, yea, it represents the most holy God as worse than the devil as both more false, more cruel, and more unjust."

The doctrine of man's total depravity has been distorted by extreme Calvinists resulting in a wrong understanding of man's inability. The Philippian jailer once asked, "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" (Acts 16:30-31 and Acts 2:37-38). Some extreme Calvinists, if they had been in Paul's place, would have answered as follows: *What must you do to be saved? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! You are spiritually DEAD and totally unable to respond to God until you are regenerated!*

Extreme Calvinists teach that regeneration must precede faith, and that a person must be born again before he can believe. They would say that a person must have eternal life before he can believe because a person dead in sins is unable to believe. They teach that faith is impossible apart from regeneration. Such teaching seems logical and reasonable to them based on the theological system which they have adopted. But "WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?"

The Bible clearly teaches this BELIEVE AND THOU SHALT LIVE! "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15). The extreme Calvinist says, "LIVE AND THOU SHALT BELIEVE!" Please notice that John 1:12 does **not** say this: "But as many as have been regenerated, to them gave He the power to believe on His Name, even to those who have become the children of God." Notice also that John 20:31 says, "believing ye might have life." It does not say, "having life ye might believe." In his helpless and hopeless condition the sinner is told to LOOK to the Lord Jesus Christ AND LIVE (John 3:14-16)! (We sing the hymn "LOOK AND LIVE." The extreme Calvinist should change the words to "LIVE AND LOOK").

For the moment, let's assume that what the extreme Calvinists are saying is true. If regeneration precedes faith, then what must a sinner do to be regenerated? The extreme Calvinists have never satisfactorily answered this. Shedd's answer is typical: Because the sinner cannot believe, he is instructed to perform the following duties: (1) Read and hear the divine Word. (2) Give serious application of the mind to the truth. (3) Pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit for conviction and regeneration. (See W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology,* Vol. II, pp. 472, 512, 513.)

Roy Aldrich's response to this is penetrating: "A doctrine of total depravity that excludes the possibility of faith must also exclude the possibilities of 'hearing the word,' 'giving serious application to the divine truth,' and 'praying for the Holy Spirit for conviction and regeneration.' ***The extreme Calvinist deals with a rather lively spiritual corpse after all.***" Roy L. Aldrich's

article is highly recommended. It is found in the July, 1965 issue of *Bibliotheca Sacra* and is entitled, *The Gift of God* (pages 248-253).

The tragedy of this position is that it perverts the gospel. The sinner is told that the condition of salvation is prayer instead of faith. How contrary this is to Acts 6:31. The sinner is not told to pray for conviction and for regeneration. The sinner is told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some Reformed men, including R. C. Sproul, even teach that a person can be regenerated as an infant, and then not come to faith in Christ **until years later**.

THE DANGER OF TEACHING THAT FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD

This teaching is based on a wrong interpretation of Ephesians 2:8-9 which says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: **it is the gift of God:** not of works, lest any man should boast." Many Reformed men wrongly conclude that the pronoun "it" refers to "faith." What Paul is really teaching is that SALVATION is the gift of God. The IFCA Doctrinal Statement is accurate and clear. "We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." Salvation is the gift; faith is the "hand of the heart" that reaches out and receives the gift which God offers.

The fact that SALVATION (ETERNAL LIFE, RIGHTEOUSNESS) is the gift of God is taught repeatedly throughout the New Testament (see John 4:10, Romans 5:15, 16, 17, 6:23). In the New Testament the word "GIFT" never refers to saving faith, though we certainly recognize that apart from God's mercy and gracious enabling and enlightenment, saving faith could not be exercised (John 6:44, 65; Matthew 11:27, 16:16-17; Acts 16:14, etc.).

The teaching that faith is the gift of God has some very practical implications and it will affect the way a person understands the gospel and how a person presents the gospel. **If faith is the gift of God, then how do I get this gift?** What must I do? WHAT MUST I DO TO BELIEVE? How can I get this gift from God? *First option:* Do I do nothing and hope that God will sovereignly bestow it upon me? Do I do nothing and hope that I am one of God's elect? *Second option:* Do I cry out to God and pray that He will give me the gift of saving faith?

John MacArthur holds to this second option. He teaches that faith is the gift of God, and he recommends that the sinner **pray** to God in order to obtain it.

"Faith is a gift from God … it is permanent … the faith that God gives begets obedience … God gave it to you, and He sustains it …May God grant you a true saving faith, a permanent gift that begins in humility and brokenness over sin and ends up in obedience unto righteousness. That's true faith and it's a gift that only God can give, **and if you desire it, pray and ask that He would grant it to you."**

~~ Transcribed from John MacArthur's tape GC 90-21 dealing with Lordship Salvation ~~

Notice carefully what MacArthur is doing. He is telling the sinner not to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31) but to pray and ask God to grant the gift of faith. This perverts the

gospel of Christ by making the condition of salvation prayer instead of faith. Sinners are commended to believe on Christ. They are not commended to pray for the gift of faith. We recommend the article by Roy L. Aldrich entitled, *"The Gift of God," Bibliotheca Sacra*, July 1965, pages 248-253).

THE DANGER OF ADDING ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO SAVING FAITH

In recent years, many Reformed men have been strongly promoting what has been called "Lordship Salvation." Essentially Lordship salvation teaches that simple faith in Jesus Christ is not enough for salvation. Something else is needed A solid commitment to Christ is needed. A person needs to surrender to the Lordship of Christ. A willingness to obey Christ's commands is a necessary condition. Also the sinner must fulfill the demands of discipleship or at least be willing to fulfill them in order to have eternal life.

We must never forget that a person is saved because he throws himself upon the mercy of a loving Savior who died for him. It is not our COMMITMENT that saves us, it is our CHRIST who saves us! It is not our SURRENDER that saves us; it is our Savior who died! It is not **what I do for God**; it is **what God has done for me**.

We need to avoid the dangerous error of taking what should be the RESULT of salvation and making it the REQUIREMENT for salvation:

It is **because I am saved** that I surrender to His Lordship.
It is **because I am saved** that I follow Him in willing obedience.
It is **because I am saved** that I agree to the terms of discipleship.
It is **because I am saved** that I submit to His authority over every area of my life.

Behavior and fruit are the evidences of saving faith, but they are not the essence of saving faith. Don't confuse the fruit with the root. Because we are justified freely by His grace we measure up to the full demands of Gods' righteousness in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21); because we are frail, we often fail to measure up to the full demands of discipleship (Luke 14:24-33, etc.). The requirements of discipleship are many, the requirement for salvation is simple faith and trust in the Savior.

My commitment to Jesus Christ does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My surrender to His Lordship does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My obedience to His Word does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My love for the Savior does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My ability or lack of ability to fulfill all the demands of discipleship does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My behavior (conduct) does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE.

God's saving grace is to be found in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone can satisfy God's holiness and righteousness! Eternal life is not something that we earn or achieve by our faithful living throughout our Christian life. Instead, it is a free gift that we receive at the moment we first believe in Christ. This LIFE is the present possession of every believer: "He

that **hath** the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God **hath** not life." (1 John 5:12, *all verbs are in the **present** tense*).

Have you been justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Is your hope built upon what you have done or is your hope based upon Jesus' blood and righteousness? "I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but WHOLLY LEAN ON JESUS' NAME!" May we be standing on Christ the solid Rock, not upon the sinking sand of our own fragile commitment.

Sir Robert Anderson has written the following: "In the early years of my Christian life, I was greatly distressed by the supposition that the plain and simple words of such Scriptures as John 3:16, I John 2:2, I Timothy 2:6 were not true, save in a cryptic sense understood by only the initiated. For, I was told, the over-shadowing truth of Divine sovereignty in election barred our taking them literally. But half a century ago a friend of those days – the last Dr. Horatius Bonar – delivered me from this strangely prevalent error. He taught me that truths may seem to us irreconcilable only because our finite minds cannot understand the infinite; and we must never allow our faulty apprehension of the eternal counsels of God to hander unquestioning faith in the words of Holy Scripture." (From the preface of Anderson's book *Forgotten Truths*.)

Dispensationalists have endeavored to follow this rule of Biblical interpretation: ***When the plain sense makes good sense seek no other sense lest it result in nonsense!*** But others have abandoned a literal approach when it comes to certain areas of Scripture, Limited redemptionists, for example, seem to have followed another rule. ***When the plain sense contradicts our theological system seek some other sense lest we end up contradicting our particular brand of Calvinism.***

Over 300 years ago, Richard Baxter wrote the following:

"When God telleth us as plain as plain can be spoken, that Christ died for and tasted death for every man, men will deny it, and to the end subvert the plain sense of the words, merely because they cannot see how this can stand with Christ's damning men, with his special love to his chosen. It is hard to see the fair and harmonious consistence: But what if you cannot see how two plain Truths of the Gospel should agree? Will you therefore deny one of them when both are plain? Is not that <u>in high pride to prefer your own understandings before the wisdom of the Spirit of God</u> who (inspired) the Scriptures? Should not a humble man rather say, doubtless both are true though I cannot reconcile them. So others will deny these plain truths, because they think that (All that Christ died for are certainly Justified and Saved: For whomsoever He died and satisfied Justice for, them He procured Faith to Believe in Him: God cannot justly punish those whom Christ hath satisfied for, etc.) But doth the Scripture speak all these or any of these opinions of theirs, as plainly as it saith that Christ died for all and every man? Doth it say, as plainly any where that he died not for all? Doth it any where except any one man, and say Christ died not for him? <u>Doth it say any where that He died *only* for his Sheep</u>, or his Elect, and exclude the Non-Elect? There is no such word in all the Bible; should not then the certain truths and the plain texts be the Standard to the uncertain points, and obscure texts?"

~~ Richard Baxter, *Universal Redemption of Mankind*, pgs. 282-283 ~~

Richard Baxter then skillfully applied these principles to the case at hand:

"Now I would know of any man, would you believe that Christ died for all men if the Scripture plainly speak it? If you would, do but tell me, what words can you devise or would you wish more plain for it than are there used? It is not enough that Christ is called the Savior of the World? You'll say is it of the whole World? Yes, it saith he is the propitiation for the sins for the whole World. Will you say, but it is not for All men in the World? Yes it saith he died for All men, as well as for all the World. But will you say, it saith not for every man? Yes it doth say, he tasted death for every man. But you may say, it means all the Elect, if it said so of any Non-Elect would believe. Yes, it speaks of those that denied the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And yet all this seems nothing to men prejudiced."

~~ Richard Baxter, *Universal Redemption of Mankind*, pgs. 286-287 ~~

The verses that are alluded to quotation are John 4:42, I John 2:2, I Timothy 2:4-6, Hebrews 2:9, II Peter 2:1.

I knew of a man who was not committed to the belief that Christ died for all men and yet he made this remarkable concession: "If Christ really did die for all men, then I don't know how the Bible could say it any clearer than it does." How true! This same man later embraced the doctrine of unlimited atonement because he could not deny the clear and plain statements of Scripture.

STUDY PACK 5

THE BACKGROUND OF REFORMED THEOLOGY—AUGUSTINE

"It is Augustine who gave us the Reformation. ~~ B. B. Warfield ~~

Reformed Theology, often called Calvinism, does not begin with John Calvin. Most of the main ideas associated with Calvinism are first seen in the Fifth Century with Augustine.

I. AUGUSTINIANISM

Calvinism is often called Augustinianism. Augustinianism specifically refers to the doctrines of the total depravity of man and the role of the sovereignty of God in human salvation.

II. SIN

Augustine taught that lost men were lacking a freewill and that every act of a lost man was sin.

III. SALVATION

Augustine taught that the grace of God necessary for salvation was free, predestined and has to come before any righteous act and before saving faith. Saving grace was considered irresistible.

He taught that grace was based upon the sovereign choice of God and had nothing to do with foreknowledge.

IV. PELAGIUS

A theologian named Pelagius opposed the teaching of Augustine. He taught that not every choice of an unsaved man was sin, and the men chose to accept God's offer of grace.

Augustine wrote many works against Pelagius. That controversy raged among the churches in North Africa.

Several church synods sided with Augustine and at least one with Pelagius. Both men appealed to the Pope. Innocent I sided with Augustine, but the next Pope, names Zosimus sided with Pelagius. In 431 A.D. the Council of Ephesus declared that Augustinian was the official doctrine of the state church and the Pelagianism was heresy.

V. SEMI-PELAGIANISM

A new version of Pelagianism declared that man was totally depraved, but that God in His grace still gave all men a chance to accept salvation. This theology gained great support across Europe and was declared orthodox by many churches. It was finally condemned as heresy by the Council of Orange in 529.

VI. THE REFORMATION

Martin Luther was a serious student of Augustine and John Calvin was a serious student of Luther. A millennium after his life, Augustine's ideas shaped the theology of millions.

VII. CALVINIST OR ARMINIAN?

Many teach that you must be either a follower of Calvin (Augustine) or Arminius (Pelagius). This is a false choice.

> "He, blessed be His Name, has not confined Himself within the narrow limits of any school of doctrine, high, low, or moderate. He has revealed Himself. He has told out the deep and precious secrets of His heart. He has unfolded His eternal counsels, as to the Church, as to Israel, the Gentiles, and the wide creation. Men might as well attempt to confine the ocean in buckets of their own formation as to confine the vast range of divine revelation within the feeble enclosures of human systems of doctrine. It cannot be done, and it ought not to be attempted. Better far to set aside the systems of theology and schools of divinity, and come like a little child to the eternal fountain of Holy Scripture, and there drink in the living teachings of God's Spirit.
>
> Nothing is more damaging to the truth of God, more withering to the soul, or more subversive of all spiritual growth and progress than mere theology, high or low – Calvinistic or Arminian. It is impossible for the soul to make progress beyond the boundaries of the system to which it is attached. If I am taught to regard *"The Five Points"* as "the faith of God's elect," I shall not think of looking beyond them: and then a most glorious field of heavenly truth is shut out from the vision of my soul. I am stunted, narrowed, one-sided; and not only so, but I am in danger of getting into that hard, dry state of soul which results from being occupied with mere points of doctrine instead of with Christ.
>
> A disciple of the high school of doctrine will not hear of a world-wide gospel – of God's love to the world – of glad tidings to every creature under heaven. He has only gotten a gospel for the elect. On the other hand, a disciple of the low or Arminian school will not hear of the eternal security of God's people. Their salvation depends partly upon Christ, and partly upon themselves. According to this system, the song of the redeemed should be changed. Instead of *"Worthy is the Lamb,"* we should have to add, "and worthy are we." We may be saved today

and lost tomorrow. All this dishonors God, and robs the Christian of all true peace."

~~ C. H. Mackintosh, *"One Sided Theology,"* The Macintosh Treasury ~~

STUDY PACK 6

THE DANGER OF COVENANT THEOLOGY
By George Zeller, Pastor Middletown Bible Church

"Is Calvinism founded upon the plain text of Scripture? Or does it require interpreting common words and phrases such as *all, all men, world, everyone that thirsteth, any man,* and *whosoever will* to mean "the elect"? Is a peculiar interpretation of Scripture required to sustain this doctrine?"

Those in the Reformed tradition generally embrace Covenant Theology. This system of theology evolved after the Reformation. It explains all relationships between God and man from the beginning to the end of time under the Covenant of Works, the Covenant of Grace, and (sometimes) the Covenant of Redemption. (In contrast to this, dispensationalists emphasize the covenants that are mentioned in the Bible, such as the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant.) Reformed/Covenant theologians teach that Old Testament Israelites and New Testament believers are one people and that the Church is but a continuation and successor of Israel. The CHURCH is usually understood as including the saints of all the ages. They teach that the Church, as the successor of Israel, has now absorbed and appropriated Old Testament prophecies and promises. According to their thinking, the promises which God made to Israel are now being fulfilled by the Church or they have been forfeited because of Israel's unbelief (but see Jeremiah 31:31-37). This system of theology is directly opposed to dispensationalism which makes a clear and Biblical distinction between God's program for Israel and God's program for the Church (Acts 15:13-18; Romans 11:25-26).

The following accurate and helpful statement has been formulated by the men of the New England Bible Conference and is entitled *"A Clarification Regarding Dispensationalism."*

> "When God's Word, the Bible, is taken in a consistent, literal manner it will result in dispensationalism. Dispensationalism is the result of a consistently literal, normal interpretation.
>
> A dispensation is a unique stage in the outworking of God's program in time, whereby some or all of mankind are to have a believing response, being responsible to be good stewards of the particular revelation which God has given (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25; Exodus 34:27, 28; Galatians 3:10-12; 1 Timothy 1:4; Ephesians 1:10, etc.).
>
> We believe that in order to be "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" it is essential to distinguish things that differ and to recognize certain basic Biblical distinctions, such as the difference between God's program for Israel and God's program for the Church (Acts 15:14-17; Romans 11:25-27), the separation of 1,000 years between the two resurrections (Revelation 20:4-6), the difference between the various judgments which occur at various times (2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15), the difference between law and grace (John 1:17; Romans 6:14-15; Romans 7:1-6) and the difference between Christ's present session at the right hand of the Father as the Church's

great high Priest and Christ's future session on the restored Davidic throne as Israel's millennial King (Hebrews 1:3, 10:12-13; Acts 15:16; Luke 1:32).

We believe the Church is a distinct body of believers which was not present on earth during the Old Testament period, and which was not the subject of Old Testament prophecy (Ephesians 3:1-9; Colossians 1:25-27). In accord with God's program and timetable the Church is on earth between the two advents of Christ with the beginning of the Church taking place after Daniel's 69th week (on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2) and with the completion of the Church's ministry on earth taking place at the rapture before the commencement of Daniel's 70th week (Daniel 9:24-27). During this interval of time God is visiting the nations to call out a people for His Name (Acts 15:14-16; Ephesians 3:1; Romans 11:25). Indeed, the Church is God's called-out assembly.

We believe God will literally fulfill His covenant and kingdom promises to the nation of Israel just as the prophets foretold (Genesis 12:2-3, 15:18-21; Deuteronomy 30:3-10; 2 Samuel 7:4-17: Jeremiah 31:31-37, 33:15-26). We believe that the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12, 15, 17), the Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30), the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7) and the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31) were made unconditionally to national Israel and that the thousand-year kingdom will include the literal fulfillment of these covenant promises to ethnic Israel (Jeremiah 31:31-37, 33:14-26; Ezekiel 36:25-28, 40-48; Romans 11:23-32). The church is not the "new Israel" or the "spiritual Israel," but rather "one new man" created of two groups, saved Jews and saved Gentiles (Ephesians 2:15; 1 Corinthians 10:32 The terms "Israel" "Israelite," and "Jew," are used in the New Testament to refer <u>to national ethnic Israel</u>. The term "Israel" is used of the nation or the people as a whole or believing remnant within. It is not used of the Church in general or of Gentile believers in particular. Saved Gentiles of this present age are <u>spiritual sons of Abraham</u> who is <u>the father of all who believe</u> (Romans 4:12, 16; Galatians 3:7, 26, 29), whether Jews or Gentiles; but believing Gentiles are not Israelites (that is, they are not the sons of Jacob). The Israelites are carefully defined by Paul in Romans 9:4-5.

We believe that in every dispensation God's distinctive programs are outworked for His great Name's sake and that in every dispensation persons have always been <u>saved by grace through faith</u> (Ephesians 2:8-9; Genesis 15:6; Hebrews 11:4-7; Romans 4:1-8). We believe that the glory of God is the determining principle and overall purpose of God's dealing with men in every age and that in every dispensation God is manifesting Himself to men and to angels so that all might redound to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14; 3:21; Romans 11:33-36; 16:27; Isaiah 43:7; 1 Timothy 1:17).

The prophecy found in Daniel 9:24-27 is a key to understanding the parenthetical nature of this present age. Israel's history from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the second coming of Messiah is incorporated in the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. We know that Messiah was **cut off (**referring to His violent death) **after** the 69th week. And we know from the book of Revelation and other Scripture passages that the 70th week is yet future and represents the final seven years before the Messiah returns to the earth. Between the 69th and 70th weeks is a "gap" of nearly 2,000 years, during which time God has been

building His Church (Matthew 16:18) and "visiting the nations to take out of them a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14).

It is highly significant that this 70-Week prophecy of Daniel, while detailing the History of God's people – "seventy weeks are determined upon thy people" (Daniel 9:24) – has nothing to say about a period of history which is now known to consist of nearly two millennia. When this remarkable "gap" or "parenthesis" is integrated with Daniel's great chronological prophecy, the interpreter is forced to distinguish two histories: 1) the stated history of Israel (490 years); 2) the unstated, parenthetical history of the Church (already nearly 2,000 years). God has a distinct history or program for Israel as well as a distinct history or program for His Church. The two programs harmonize perfectly but do not interfere one with another, nor do they overlap in time. The Church age in its entirety falls in the period of time after the conclusion of the 69th week and before the beginning of the 70th week."

STUDY PACK 7

THE REFORMATION

"… the doctrine of predestination, as maintained by rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought utterly to be abhorred, because it charges the most holy God with being the author of sin."

~~ Susanna Wesley ~~

"The High Renaissance in the south and the Reformation in the north must always be considered side-by-side. They dealt with the same basic problems, but they gave completely opposite answers and brought forth completely opposite results."

~~ Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live* ~~

The Reformation took place roughly during the same time as the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Fundamental believers often differ dramatically in their comments concerning the Reformation. While some list is as glorious, others list it as detrimental. The truth is probably found somewhere in the middle.

The Reformation was basically a revival of evangelical religion. Several large groups came out of Roman Catholicism in protest creating a protestant movement. There were some very good things which came out of the Reformation. The Gospel of salvation by grace was preached where it had not been preached before and, literally, millions of people made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Also, the line of Bibles used by the Catholic Church was broken and people began to return to the pure text of Scripture. While these results were glorious, by the same token, the reformers, the Protestants, discovered the Gospel but never seriously adapted the Bible to some other subjects and this created severe problems. These problems developed to the point that, in the turmoil of the times, Reformation believers put some of their own brothers and sisters in Christ to death for not belonging to state churches. Surely, it is difficult to be excited about that. There are aspects of the Reformation worthy of rejoicing and others which bring condemnation. In both cases there is much which can be learned.

The Reformation refers to the period of time in the 16th century when many Europeans broke from the Roman Catholic Church and formed state churches. It is common for people to believe that all Christian based churches are either Catholic or Protestant. Yet, there is another line of churches, which were never a part, and never came out of the Catholic Church. Baptists will emphasize that they are not protestant because they have always been independent of the Catholic Church. There had always been independent churches and regional groups of churches which had defied Roman Catholic control. However, the Reformation saw new church organizations take the official role of the state church – a role formerly reserved for Roman Catholicism.

I. LUTHER'S BACKGROUND

The story of the Reformation is intertwined with the life of Martin Luther. As a young man, Luther lived a wild life – one that he knew was in rebellion to God. One day during

a violent storm, Luther promised God that he would serve Him if God spared his life. After the story, Luther began to study to be a monk.

Luther tried many ways within the Roman Catholic Church to serve God. He devoted hours and hours to good works; but constantly felt that he had failed to gain peace with God. He devoted himself to confessing sin to the point that he became obsessed in the record keeping and confessing of his sins. Confession, though, did not bring him peace. He took pilgrimages, but they did not bring him any peace. He went through a period during which he would, literally, beat himself with a whip in hopes that the pain, paying for his sin, would bring him peace. None of this, however, brought him any peace. It is only the understanding of what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross of Calvary which can bring peace.

Luther was eventually assigned to be a teacher in the small German town of Wittenburg. There, while teaching the book of Habakkuk, he became confused about the little phrase *"the just shall live by faith:* (Habakkuk 2:4). Since this phrase is quoted in three New Testament books, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, he began to study these books. This study, inevitably, led Luther into the Biblical teaching of justification by faith. Luther came to an understanding of this and trusted Christ as his personal Savior. He began to teach justification by faith both in college classes and in the Wittenburg Church. Week after week. Luther preached this message and large groups of people came to hear it.

Today, just as then, there are people whose hearts are hungry for a message that offers them some consolation. Obviously, there are a great many people who are hostile toward the Gospel. Yet, if Christians will talk about the Gospel often enough, it soon becomes clear that many people in the world have souls which are hungry and open to hear the truth.

II. THE INDULGENCE CONTROVERSY

The Roman Catholic Church taught that when people sinned, they needed to confess their sins and ask forgiveness from a priest. The priest would assign a penance, (a type of good work) which was done to bring about God's forgiveness. They called this repentance.

The popes began to claim that they had the power to cancel a person's penance by selling them an indulgence. This made it possible for a person to "buy his way out" of having to do good works. The popes began to use this as a major fundraiser. Understanding that "the love of money is the root of all evil" exposes the roots of every plan of salvation by works. This new indulgence program prompted salesmen to bid for the job of selling indulgences. This allowed them to receive a percentage of what they sold. Soon indulgence salesmen were completing with one another in the sale of this unique type of insurance policy. This was so hypocritical that many people, including priests, began to criticize the selling of indulgences.

During Luther's time, the Pope told people that they could buy indulgences for family members who had passed away. According to the teaching of Roman Catholicism, these

people were in purgatory paying the penalty for any sins they had not paid for on earth. By purchasing an indulgence for them, family members of the deceased could reduce their time in purgatory or (if they paid enough) even eliminate it all together. For people who truly believed this, no sacrifice was too great. Certainly, freeing loved ones from purgatory is worth selling the family farm or any other financial sacrifice. This had tremendous power because of the guilt it could generate.

An indulgence salesman named Tetzel came to Wittenburg selling indulgences. In opposition to this teaching, Luther wrote out ninety-five points attacking, not only indulgences, but also other church abuses and countering this with the teaching of justification by faith. Each point was called a thesis. On October 31, 1517 (often called the birthday of the Reformation), Luther nailed these points to the church door in Wittenburg. This may have been the end of the story, had it not been tor the invention of the printing press.

Using the newly invented printing press, Luther's 95 theses were copied by the thousands and distributed throughout Germany. Luther quickly became a spokesman throughout Germany and then throughout Europe against indulgences and for justification by faith. The role of Luther during the Reformation, however, was that of a mixed character who could be debated as both a hero and a villain. He was, actually, no friend to the independent churches teaching the Gospel because he justified their persecution. By the same token, he did discover salvation by faith and he, too, suffered tremendous persecution to bring the Gospel to people. At first Luther wanted to remain in the Roman Catholic Church, but he was eventually excommunicated by the Pope. One of Luther's supporters, a German prince, kidnapped him and hid him in a castle for Luther's own safety.

Luther believed that everyone should read and study the for Bible himself. This opposed the teaching of Catholicism at that time, (and still taught today in some Latin countries), that it is a sin for anyone, other than a member of Catholic clergy, to read the Bible. The Latin Bible of Luther's day, however, could not be understood by the common man; so Luther translated the Bible into German. Today, there is a great debate over the text of Scripture used to produce a Bible translation. There are two basic families of old manuscripts which differ dramatically. This same debate, concerning which accurately preserved the Word of God, existed in Luther's day. Luther translated, (on this occasion the New Testament, later the entire Bible), from the same family of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts as was used in the translation of today's King James Bible. Luther's act of translating the Scriptures into the common language was highly controversial. Even today, there are people who will refuse to read the Scriptures in fear of God's judgment. However, when Luther began to urge people to read, study, and accept the Bible for themselves, he did a great thing. With this he was rightly upholding the Scriptural concept of the priesthood of all believers.

A distinct evangelical church began to develop in Germany around the teaching of Martin Luther. Many German princes adopted Lutheranism as the state church for their region

and replaced Roman Catholicism. Soon the strife between Lutherans and Roman Catholics was very great, often breaking out into violence.

While Luther understood many important Bible truths, he still maintained some heretical Catholic doctrine. He did not understand the Bible truth of the independent church any better than the Roman Catholics did. Independent, Bible believing churches were persecuted by both Luther and all Catholic state churches. People were still not allowed the freedom to worship God in the way they chose. Lutheranism offered freedom from Catholicism, but not freedom from the state church. Independent preachers continued to be considered outlaws. All independent churches in Germany soon began to be called Anabaptist churches whether or not they were Baptistic (in agreement with the six Baptist distinctives) in their beliefs.

III. THE PEASANTS' REVOLT

Luther's original call to spiritual liberty and freedom from Catholicism met with a highly receptive audience in Germany. Many Germans took his ideas even farther – to their logical conclusions of economic freedom, complete religious liberty, and even political freedom. These freedoms are logical conclusions because the Scripture reveals that God has given to each man the freedom to choose his beliefs. If God leaves people free, what right does government have to enslave them? God allows each person to hear His message and decide whether or not to accept it. If people can be free about an issue as important as the Gospel, why should they not be free to make economic choices? If people can be free about such an important issue as the Bible, encouraged by God to study and read the Bible for themselves, what right does a state church have to tell them what to believe? There is a logical conclusion to all of those freedoms which comes from the preaching of the Gospel. This is why there was a direct relationship between the time of the nationwide revival of the Great Awakening and the establishment of the freest society known in the world at that time. The people were logically applying the principles of the Gospel.

This very application in Germany prompted many to seek the creation of a free nation. In 1524, German peasants revolted against the royal princes and rulers. Many thought that Luther would side with this "Peasants' Revolt." On the contrary, Luther denounced it and sided with the princes. The lack of a single leader widely respected throughout Germany, doomed the revolt to failure. By 1525, over 1000,000 peasants had been killed. The rest were treated much worse than they had been before. Although the Peasants' Revolt was the logical conclusion of this preaching of the Gospel, Luther had never carried his teaching that far. Someone once said that if the Peasants' Revolt had been successful, Luther would be remembered as the George Washington of Germany.

IV. THE PEACE OF AUGSBURG

From 1546 to 1555, there was so much fighting between Lutherans and Roman Catholics that Germany was in a virtual state of civil war. Finally, the Peace of Augsburg was reached. This agreement recognized the right of each German prince to decide whether

his region would be Catholic or Lutheran. Eventually an agreement was reached allowing the individual German citizen to decide for himself.

V. THE SPREAD OF LUTHERANISM

The Lutheran Church spread into the Scandinavian countries. Denmark officially adopted Lutheranism as its state church and Denmark's influences over Norway led to the adoption of a Lutheran state church in Norway. Many of the people of Scandinavia were disillusioned by the control of the Catholic Church. Additionally, the royal families found it in their interest to break with the Pope. This was because Lutheranism did not have one central headquarters to challenge them as the Catholic Church did. This allowed the local rulers, princes, or kings far more freedom. Lutheranism, as a result, was more readily received. This did not mean that the rulers trusted Christ as their Savior. For many, this was purely a political decision.

Soon there was a demand for change in Sweden. The Swedish king officially adopted Lutheranism and became an aggressive defender of Lutheranism as well as other Protestant movements throughout Europe. Eventually, Finland followed the rest of Scandinavia into the Lutheran fold.

VI. CALVINISM

Calvinism had its start during the period of the Reformation, as well, and continues to hold a critical importance today. As a theological movement, there is a great danger to Calvinism. While it has always been both a political movement as well as a doctrinal one, Calvinism's greatest influence, today, is in its theology. However, during this time of the Reformation, Calvinism held significant influence as a political movement.

Calvinism began in the mountains of Switzerland, which had long been the home of many independent churches. Prior to the introduction of Calvinism, several different groups rebelled against Roman Catholic control. Ulrich Zwingli began to represent those who were willing to defy Catholicism and fight for independence. Several battles were fought and eventually the regions of Switzerland (called canons) began to exercise more and more independence. As Zwingli helped form new governments, his followers established a new reformed state church. However, the new state church persecuted the independent churches ever more viciously than the Roman Catholics had. During one of the last battles with the Catholic armies, Zwingli was wounded and taken prisoner. He was then "drawn and quartered." This was a horrible death in which Zwingli's legs and arms were each tied to a separate horse and the four riders then road in opposing direction, literally pulling his body into four pieces. Such was the death of a professing Christian who had put other professing Christians to death.

A French Bible teacher named John Calvin became very influential in Switzerland. He eventually became the leader of Geneva. Calvin was a brilliant thinker and writer. He weaved the ideas of justification by faith, the predestination of some people to Heaven

and others to Hell, and the idea of Reformed state church into a harmonious system. Although his writings indicate the work of a brilliant man, this system was solely based on human logic, not a thoughtful study of Scripture. Calvin's two volume *Institutes of the Christian Religion* became one of the most influential works ever written. Unfortunately, Calvin did nothing to stop the persecution of independent churches and preachers; and, even participated in it. Some have defended Calvin by claiming he did not understand what the independents were trying to accomplish. However, Calvin was married to the widow of a Baptist preacher who had been killed under persecution. Surely, he had adequate exposure to the purpose and intents of the independent churches. Meanwhile, all over Europe, Calvin's writings and teachings influenced Reformation groups.

In France, the Calvinists became the most influential non-Catholic (Protestant) group. There they were called Huguenots and became an important part of political life. Sometimes they were persecuted, at other times they found favor with certain French kings. It was in this period and struggle that the Three Musketeers stories were based. The stories portray the Huguenots as horrible villains whom the Three Musketeers are fighting against. While the Three Musketeers are portrayed as the heroes, they were actually fighting against people who believed in salvation by faith rather than salvation by the Catholic Church.

In Holland, a strong Calvinist group developed, as well as a number of Baptist and Mennonite churches. The Arminian movement also developed in Holland. Soon, non-Catholics and independents were in the majority in Holland. For decades, the people of Holland fought Catholic armies (primarily from Spain) for their freedom. Eventually under the rule of William the Silent, his son Maurice, and his son William of Orange, they achieved independence. Even though the ruling family was Calvinist, the Dutch government did not persecute independent churches. Holland soon became the freest nation in Europe. Later, it was Holland's freedom which offered sanctuary to those Pilgrims who would eventually sail to Massachusetts and start the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Though Calvinist and Lutheran groups became very strong in eastern European nations, Roman Catholicism soon reclaimed full control of these countries. The political power of Roman Catholicism continues in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Belgium, and Luxembourg in spite of a great number who rejected the church. Calvinists led by John Knox, however, seized control of Scotland.

VII. THE LEGACY OF THE REFORMATION

The Reformation was incomplete because it did not emphasize religious liberty. There were, though, good results from this period of the Reformation. While the Enlightenment taught people to depend upon themselves; during the Reformation, many people learned to depend, instead, upon God. As the power and authority of the Roman Catholic Church weakened, there were many more opportunities which opened for the preaching of the Gospel. Recognition was given to the authority of the Scripture and the pure Word of

God. Literacy was increased as people developed the desire to read and understand the Bible for themselves. The Reformation also taught that there should be limits placed upon government.

The Reformation emphasized the authority of Scripture and the pure text of the Word of God. The leaders of the Reformation understood there were two different families of
The Reformation emphasized the authority of Scripture and the pure text of the Word of God. The leaders of the Reformation understood there were two different families of
manuscripts. They understood that one had been corrupted, they believed by the Catholic Church, and one was uncorrupted. As a result, the Reformers produced an Italian Bible, a French Bible, a Spanish Bible, and the King James Bible, operating on good principles of understanding the text and the transmission of the text. To this day, the Italian Bible produced during the Reformation period of time remains in use by Italian Bible believers. To this day, there is a French Bible produced during the Reformation being used by many French believers and trusted as the pure Word of God. There is a French equivalent of the Revised Standard Version that some use, but those who understand this issue are using a French Bible that was produced during this time frame. The Ostervald revision was developed by Calvin's cousin under the pen name of Olivetan. This revision continues to be used among those emphasizing the pure text of the Word of God. Soon independent churches were using translations of the Bible which had been produced ty the Reformers.

Literacy became a priority during the Reformation as people desired to read the Bible for themselves. This distinct characteristic of Bible believers was evident, as well, at the time of the founding of the United States. Records state that a remarkable 98% of the male population and 50% of the female population could read in the United States during that time. Such percentages, then, were absolutely unheard of anywhere else in the world. Although compulsory education would not be introduced in the United States until many years later, there was a tremendous emphasis on literacy in the colonies. This was a direct response to America's Great Awakening. The Great Awakening, like the Reformation, prompted people to learn to read the Word of God and equip their families in Scriptures, as well. Today in the United States, problems of illiteracy have grown to be much larger than people realize. Even many professing Christians, are no longer literate enough to read the Bible and study it for themselves. This need for literacy is one issue which has motivated the Christian school and homeschool movements. A growing Christian is doing two things, attending church and reading the Bible for himself.

The Reformation taught limits upon government as Catholic governments were overthrown and new governments were established. John Major, teacher of John Knox wrote:

> ". . . all civil authority is derived from the will of the community as a whole . . . A King is merely a delegate and an agent. If a king go out of bounds or misuse his power and prove incorrigible, he may rightfully be deposed, and even put to death. The deposition of a king should, indeed, be brought about only by lawful authority and not by mere violence. But it may always be rightfully affected by the estates of the realm."

During the Reformation people began to understand that there are limits on a king. A king's power is not absolute. The contrary doctrine to this is the divine right of kings. This was basically a belief that God chose the king and for this reason the king's will was considered to be God's will. Psalm 149:5-9 says,

> "*Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD."*

This teaching of limits to authority, naturally, appealed to the people. However, it was not so readily favored by the nobles; and thus, it became a subject of great debate.

George Buchanan, who was a tutor to James I and a friend of the Bible Translator, Beza, was widely accounted as the most learned man in Europe. Buchanan spoke concerning this topic, expressing the almost identical doctrine:

> "The king is a delegate and an agent and is responsible to the community . . . Whatever powers have been given to the king may rightfully, for a good cause, be taken from him and resumed by the people . . . The rights of the people are inalienable . . . A king who disregards the understanding on which he was created may be said to break an implied contract, becomes a tyrant, and forfeits all his rights."

Further:

> "It is clear that kings exist only for public purposes. They must, originally, have been established by an act of the people. Under the law of nature, no man may rightfully assume any authority over his fellows; but the people by giving authority to one of its own members could create a king."

While this concept comes directly from the Reformation, it later became especially important to the people of the United States. The founders of the United States, claiming that King George III did not represent America's interests, overthrew him, and began electing Presidents. The new system required that Presidents be given a limited term. Since rulers often forget that people put them in place, the United States determined to have Presidents who would be reminded every four years through the process of re-reelection. There is a direct line from the philosophy of the Reformation to the creation of the United States. The United States has gone on to influence much of the rest of the world in this same mindset.

VIII. REFORMATION - MUSIC, ART, AND LITERATURE

Some of the greatest classical music was developed during the Reformation as expressions of religious themes. Handel's Messiah, the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Hayden, and others provided enduring music to the glory of God. Martin Luther introduced congregational singing to his congregation, believing it was literally in accord with the Scripture. This is true. The commands in the Scripture are not just addressed to special musicians to sing (though there are examples of that); the commands in Scripture are for everyone to sing. Luther wrote songs such as *'A mighty fortress is Our God."* Today, we can hardly imagine not having congregational singing. Yet, it was popularized by Martin Luther during this time of Reformation.

Painters such as Rembrandt, also reflected Reformation Christianity.

Samuel Rutherford's *Lex Rex* reflected the Reformed doctrine of government. That doctrine declares, in recognition of the sin nature, that a system of checks and balances is necessary in government. Although the reading of *Lex Rex* is difficult to understand today, its writings parallel the United States' Declaration of Independence. All who enjoy the freedoms of the United States are indebted to the influence and impact of *Lex Rex* and the Christian principles it propagates. This is because the United States' doctrine of governing stems directly from those Christian principles.

STUDY PACK 8

ARMINIUS AND THE CALVINISTS
By Pastor John Reaves, Sr.,
Pastor Bible Baptist Church, Brandon, Manitoba

"Jacobus (James) Arminius

Jacobus Arminius was a Dutch man who was raised as a Calvinist in the Dutch Reformed Church. He was born in 1560 and died in 1609. This means that Arminius was four years old when John Calvin died. He went to Calvin's school in Geneva and was a thorough Calvinist.

During his ministry, someone asked him to write a paper defending the key doctrines of Calvinism. As a good pastor, teacher, and Calvinist, he agreed. He thoroughly studied this topic and came to the conclusion that there was a lot of Calvinist theology he didn't believe. Unable to write the paper, he made these statements:

He DID NOT believe:

- God was the author of sin.
- Saving grace was limited to a chosen few.
- Most of mankind had no hope or possibility of salvation.

I don't believe those things either. What a heinous thing to say that God is the author of sin! I also agree that anybody can be saved. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Whosoever," that was exactly what He meant.

He DID believe:

- Man's freedom of choice was decreed by God.
- Christ's death was sufficient for all but efficient for only believers. Man can resist God's grace.
- Predestination is God's decree to justify and adopt believers and endow them to eternal life.

This is exactly right! God decided that man would have a free will. Christ's death was enough to save the whole world – He died for all of man's sins, but He only saves those who believe. Predestination guarantees that all believers are going to Heaven!"

~~ Michael Floyd, *Six Points of Calvinism*, pp. 144-145 ~~

The above paragraph was inserted in the article by Dr. Stringer.

CALVINISTS

Calvin and his followers burned Anabaptists at the stake. They made laws against them; they mocked and lied about them, and yet we have Baptists calling themselves Calvinist. You might as well call yourself Romanist or Protestant.

O, I can hear it now, “Pastor Reaves must be an Arminianist; he must practice Arminianism.” Not on your life! I am not an Arminianist nor a Calvinist, I am a Baptist, and I can trace my roots back to the time of the Apostles, and to that first Baptist.

In this message I would like to speak of what Calvinism and Arminianism are, and to answer two questions pertaining to Calvinism and Arminianism. The first question will be, are Calvinism and Arminianism Baptist Doctrines? And the second, should Baptists be aligned with Calvinists?

WHERE DID THEY BEGIN?

Many believe that Calvinism began with John Calvin when he wrote, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1535, of which brought about the spread of Calvinism all over Western Europe. Many believe this book was the most influential work of the Protestant Reformation. And yet even in their own writings Calvin tells us, “It (Calvinism) might with equal justice be called ‘Augustinianism’.” After no other than St. Augustine, A Romanist priest, and no church father of mine.

The one who Arminianism was named after was Jacobus Arminius, born in Holland in 1560. By this time, the majority of the Protestants in the Netherlands were Calvinists.

Later in life:

> “Arminius went to Geneva, where he was greatly influenced by Beza. After Calvin’s death, Beza assumed Calvin’s mantle and took full leadership of the Academy of Geneva. It was Beza who developed the doctrine of predestination a step further than Calvin. Arminius came to doubt the whole doctrine of unconditional predestination and to ascribe to man a freedom which, however congenial to Melanchthon (a disciple of Martin Luther) had no place in pure Calvinism.
>
> “The essential dispute that Arminius had with Calvin was regarding the doctrine of predestination. He did not deny predestination altogether, but denied that predestination was unconditional. A bitter controversy sprang up between Arminius and his supralapsarian colleague at the University of Leyden, Franz Gomarus, who was later the leading spokesman for the Calvinists at the Synod of Dort. The conflict between the two men resulted in a schism affecting the whole church of Holland.”

WHAT DO THE CALVINISTS AND THE ARMINIANISTS BELIEVE?

In the Book, *The History of the Reformation*, 1720, by Gerard Brandt, states:

> “The difference between these two Professors consisted briefly in the following points, that Arminius was of the opinion, that God being a righteous judge, and at the same time a merciful Father, had from all eternity made this distinction between the fallen offspring of man, that those who should forsake their sins and put their trust in Christ, should be absolved from their evil actions and should enjoy everlasting life; but that the obdurate

and impenitent should be punished. Besides, that it was pleasing to God, that all men should forsake their sins, and having attained to the knowledge of the truth, continue steadfast in it, but that he compelled no man.

"On the other hand Gomarus maintained, that it was appointed by an Eternal Decree of God, who among mankind should be saved, and who should be damned. From whence resulted, that some men were drawn to righteousness, and being so drawn, were preserved from falling; but that God suffered all the rest to remain on the common corruption of human nature, and in their own iniquities.

"In consequence of these positions, Arminius charged Gomarus with making God the author of sin, and with hardening men in their rebellion, by infusing into their minds the notion of Fatal Necessity."

THE FIVE POINTS OF ARMINIANISM

Many are not aware, that the Arminians have five points of which are called Arminian Articles of Remonstrance and actually the five points of Calvinism were given to answer the Remonstrants in a document known as the Canon of Dort.

The five points of Arminianism are as follows:

1. God has decreed to save through Jesus Christ those of the fallen and sinful race who through the grace of the Holy Spirit believe in Him, but leaves in sin the incorrigible and unbelieving. (In other words predestination is said to be conditioned by God's foreknowledge of who would respond to the gospel.)

2. Christ died for all men (not just for the elect), but no one except the believer has remission of sin.

3. Man can neither of himself nor of his free will do anything truly good until he is born again of God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. (Though accused of such, Arminius and his followers were not Pelagians.)

4. All good deeds or movements in the regenerate must be ascribed to the grace of God but his grace is not irresistible.

5. Those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith have power given them through the assisting grace of the Holy Spirit to persevere in the faith, but it is possible for a believer to fall from grace.

THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

1. That fallen man was totally unable to save himself. (Total Depravity)

2. That God's electing purpose was not conditioned by anything in man. (Unconditional Election)

3. That Christ's atoning death was sufficient to save all men, but efficient only for the elect. (Limited Atonement)

4. That the gift of faith, sovereignly given by God's Holy Spirit, cannot be resisted by the elect. (Irresistible Grace)

5. That those who are regenerated and justified <u>will persevere in the faith</u> (Perseverance of the Saints)

CAN CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM BE BAPTIST DOCTRINE?

Again, taken out of the book entitled, *The History of the Reformation*, 1720, we read:

> "Though Gellius does not agree with us in every respect, (concerning Predestination) yet, Paul says, I Cor. 14:29, Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. And again, verse 32, The Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets.
>
> "To which rule I make no doubt, but all Ministers of Jesus Christ will readily submit themselves, since we are all of us men, and may err; that so we may give no occasion to schisms and divisions on this account, like our adversaries, (meaning the Anabaptists) who, being hurried on by the spirit of discord and quarrels, do daily and for small causes rend and separate themselves more and more from each other; and with unheard of tyranny, mutually deliver one another to Satan."

Notice it says Gellius, an Arminianist, "does not agree with us" (Calvinists), and on down in the paragraph it says, "like our (both) adversaries," (meaning the Anabaptists). They are the ones who practice separation and church discipline, I Cor. 5.

So really, what we just read was, that the Anabaptists were the adversaries of both. They were neither Arminianist nor Calvinist; they were Baptists.

Neither Calvinism and Arminianism, are Baptist doctrine, even Spurgeon says of Calvinism, "the old truths that Calvin preached, that Augustine preached, is the truth that I preach today, or else I would be false to my conscience and my God. I cannot shape truth; I know of no such thing as a paring off the rough edges of a doctrine. John Knox's gospel is my gospel. And the gospel which thundered through Scotland must thunder through England again." Simply, even Spurgeon said that what Calvin preached was from a Romanist priest, and that John Knox, a Protestant, a Scottish Presbyterian preached it.

Spurgeon on speaking of the term Calvinism said, "We only use the term 'Calvinism' for shortness. That doctrine which is called 'Calvinism' did not spring from Calvin; we believe that it sprang from the great founder of all truth. Perhaps Calvin himself derived it mainly from the writings of Augustine.

No, I don't believe Calvinism is a Baptist doctrine, and neither is Arminianism, even the Calvinists say that Arminianism goes back to Rome.

Gerald Brandt, a Calvinist, writes in *The History of the Reformation*, in 1790:

> "But it may be amiss, in order to illustrate matters, to trace this affair a little higher, and to show what the Primitive Christians and the first Reformers thought and taught concerning it, together with the rise of the disputes about it.
>
> "Tis well known to those who have studied the writings of the Ancients, that all the Greek Fathers, and among the Latins, all such as lived before St. Austin, were of opinion, that all those which God foresaw would lead good and godly lives, were ordained to eternal life, or, as others have it, which God foresaw would believe and persevere. From those writings likewise it appears, that the Primitive Christians ascribed free-will to men."

The Primitive Christians were not Calvinist, they were Baptist. Does believing that mankind has a choice make one an Arminianist? I think not, I don't believe we can fall from grace, according to John 10:27-29, this is impossible.

SHOULD BAPTISTS ALIGN THEMSELVES WITH CALVINISTS? OR SHOULD THEY SAY THEY ARE CALVINISTS?

Most Calvinists focus on predestination even though the word predestinate only appears twice and the word predestinate twice. Also the word foreknew once, and foreknow once. Any yet the Calvinists like to hold to John Calvin being a great learned scholar.

My problem is that you can't just pick and choose, you take all or nothing. Did you know what else John Calvin and other Calvinists believe? In section 9 of *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, by John Calvin, Calvin declares that those who despise the baptism of infants under the new covenant would have despised circumcision under the old, since they accomplish the same thing. He reminds us of the precious benefits of paedobaptism which, like circumcision, ratifies and confirms the promise given to the pious parent, declaring that the Lord will be a God, not only to him, but also to his seed, and that he is determined to exercise his goodness and grace, not only towards him, but towards his posterity even to a thousand generations.

He argues that the more promise of eternal life is insufficient for us: because of our weakness God has given Christian parents a sign, which will "Animate their minds to a stronger confidence, when they actually see the covenant of the Lord engraven on the bodies of their

children." Moreover, it assists the children who, when they come to years, will be stimulated thereby to worship; and it will warn them of the penalties of departing from their God.

STUDY PACK 9

WAS CALVIN A CALVINIST

". . .the false and erroneous doctrine of the Calvinists that Christ did not die for all men but only for the elect." ~~ the Lutheran document *Saxon Articles of 1592* ~~

"It was God who determined of His own will to provide salvation. He devised the plan and set the rules to satisfy His justice. It is folly for anyone to imagine that man can set the requirements for salvation and impose them upon God. It is no less obvious that God because He is God, has the prerogative of offering salvation to whomever He will."

~~ David Hunt ~~

Calvin wrote thousands of pages of theological materials including the famous *Institutes* (over 1,000 pages) and commentaries on every book of the Bible except Revelation. Occasionally one finds comments that seem inconsistent with the doctrines called Calvinism. For example, the oft quoted: "Since no man is excluded from calling upon God; the gate of salvation is open to all. There is nothing to hinder us from entering but our own unbelief!"

I. REFUTING CALVINISM

Many people have tried to refute Calvinism with statements from Calvin's commentaries which seem inconsistent with Calvinism.

For Example:

On
Isaiah 53:12 – "I approve of the ordinary reading, that He alone bore the punishment of many, because on Him was laid the guilt of the whole world. It is evident from other passages, and especially from the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that many sometimes denotes all."

On
Mark 14:24 – "The word many does not mean a part of the world only, but the whole human race." In other words, Christ's blood was shed for the whole human race.

On
Matthew 20:28 – "Many is used, not for a definite number, but for a large number, in that He sets Himself over against all others. And this is its meaning also in Rom. 5:15, where Paul is not talking of a part of mankind but of the whole human race.

On
John 1:29 – "And when he says the sin OF THE WORLD, He extends this favour indiscriminately to the whole human race. . .all men without exception are guilty of unrighteousness before God and need to be reconciled to Him. . .Now our duty is, to

embrace the benefit which is offered to all, that each of us may be convinced that there is nothing to hinder him from obtaining reconciliation in Christ, provided that he comes to him by …faith."

On
John 3:16 – "He has employed the universal term whosoever, both to invite all indiscriminately to partake of life, and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. . .He shows Himself to be reconciled to the whole world, when He invites all men without exception to the faith of Christ."

On
Romans 5:18 – "He makes this favor common to all, because it is propoundable to all, and not because it is in reality extended to all (i.e. in the experience); for though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and is offered through God's benignity indiscriminately to all, yet all do not receive Him."

On
II Corinthians 5:19 – "God 'shows Himself to be reconciled to the whole world' and Calvin goes on to say that 'whole world' means all men without exception.'"

On
Galatians 5:12 – "It is the will of God that we should seek the salvation of all men without exception, as Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world."

On
Colossians 1:15 – "This redemption was procured by the blood of Christ, for by the sacrifice of His death all the sins of the world have been expiated."

On
Hebrews 5:9 – "He (the writer of Hebrews) has inserted the universal term 'to all' to show that no one is excluded from this salvation who proves to be attentive and obedient to the Gospel of Christ."

II. CALVIN'S DOCTRINE

However, Calvin's doctrine is clear, Calvin's *Institute*s Vol. 2, Book III, Chap. 21 – heading "of the eternal election by which God has predestined some to salvation and others to damnation."

From this section of the *Institutes* "all are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation and accordingly, as each has been created for one or the other of these ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or to death."

Also in this section:

"We say then that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by His eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction."

III. HOW DO WE EXPLAIN SUCH CONTRADICTIONS?

A. Calvin was a brand new professing believer when he wrote his famous *Institutes*. He had been trained as a lawyer and a Roman Catholic priest. He never had any training as an evangelical preacher.

B. No one who writes thousands of pages of theological material is consistent all the time. Human nature is not consistent.

1. For example: You can prove from direct quotes that Harry Ironside was both free grace and Lordship salvation.

   You can prove from direct quotes that C. H. Spurgeon believed in both limited and unlimited atonement.

   You can prove from direct quotes both that C. H. Spurgeon was Critical Text and Received Text.

2. Calvin was particularly inconsistent. He wrote hundreds of pages about salvation by faith but at times seemed to teach that salvation was based on baptism or church membership.

3. It is easier to speculate on doctrine when writing a doctrines book. Verse by verse commentary forces you to face issues you can ignore in a doctrines book. His commentaries are better than his *Institutes*.

4. Calvin will often explain away his good comments in the next few paragraphs. Some of his best statements are taken out of context.

IV. CALVIN A CALVINIST?

Calvin was indeed a 5-point Calvinist. He was, as all men are, sometimes inconsistent.

Calvin's inconsistency is not needed to refute Calvinism. The Scripture refutes Calvinism.

King James I wrote: “If the devils wanted a device to make man hate God – this would be it.”

David Hunt wrote about Calvinism: “The entire history of mankind becomes a puppet show with God the puppeteer.”

STUDY PACK 10

JOHN CALVIN AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
By Cooper Abrams, Pastor Fellowship Baptist Church, Salt Lake City, Utah

". . .do not fail to rid the country of those zealous scoundrels who stir up the people to revolt against us. Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus the Spaniard." ~~ John Calvin ~~

Calvin wrote, "One should not be content with simply killing such people, but should burn them cruelly."

Calvinism is a system of theology that is associated with Protestant theologian John Calvin, a Frenchman, who later became a Swiss reformer (1509-1564). The term "Calvinism" refers to doctrines and practices that stemmed from his works. The tenets of modern Calvinism are based mainly on his classic work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which was published in its final edition in 1559. It would not be correct to state that John Calvin developed modern Calvinism; rather Calvinism is based on his work and has been expanded by his followers.

John Calvin was born in Noyon, a small town in Picardy, France in 1509. He was the youngest of four children, all boys. When Calvin was twelve years old, his father, Gerard Cauvin (Calvin) sent him to the University of Paris to study theology. It was his father's desire, since Calvin's childhood, that he would study theology and become a priest on the Roman Catholic Church.

At age twelve, around 1520 or 1521, Calvin began his education by attending the University of Paris. He received his licentiate in arts and his master's degree. However, between 1528 and 1533, his father directed him to abandon his theological studies, and young Calvin worked on a more profitable law degree in the schools of Bourges and Orleans. Subsequently, Calvin completed his studies and was licensed to practice law.

Calvin was raised as a devout Catholic, but it appears that he began to move toward Protestantism after reading Martin Luther's writings. There is no record of Calvin's actual conversion or his salvation, but he changed the direction of his studies from law back to theology in 1557. His conversion seems to have consisted of a slow transition to becoming a protestant sometime between 1529 or early1530. In Calvin's writings, he emphasizes his gradual transition over time from Catholicism toward Protestant Christianity rather than a single event of conversion. He states, "We're converted little by little to God and by stages." Clearly. Calvin did not accept conversion as an event in one's life in which one becomes a believer and is at that moment born again. Rather he descried his conversion as a gradual evolution towards God. This element in his life casts a shadow over Calvin's actual salvation. The true state of his heart cannot be known, but insight can be gleaned from his writings, and most importantly, from his actions in Geneva. However, it should be noted, that there is no example in the New Testament that would support his idea of a gradual process of salvation.

What is clear is that Calvin gradually moved from being a devout Roman Catholic to becoming a devoted Reformed Protestant. However, being converted to Protestantism is not the same thing as being truly converted and spiritually "born Again." The Protestant Reformation was a reforming of Roman Catholicism, but it did not cleanse it from all its errors. In reality, Protestantism retained much of the error of Roman Catholicism such as a universal church, pedro-baptism, sacraments, sprinkling as a mode of baptism, and the church as a means of salvation as seen in the practice of ex-communication. It also continued the idea of the state being under the control (in varying degrees) of the church, along with a state paid clergy. There was never in the Protestant Reformation a clear break from Catholicism. Like all cults and false religions, Protestantism was founded not solely on the Bible (Sola Scripture), but on the writings, opinions, ideas, and councils of churchmen as to what the Bible teaches or what they thought would be proper religion. Swiss Protestantism was founded by John Calvin and is the foundation of Presbyterianism; Martin Luther, founded Lutheranism; and Henry VIII founded Anglicanism when he broke England away from the Roman Catholic Church. This was the same error that Jesus condemned the religious leaders of Israel for committing. Israel too followed the writings of the rabbis in the Talmud, instead of the Torah (Old Testament). The modern Reformed movement is based on Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and many of the teachings of the *Institutes* are not biblical.

It is easily seen in the writings of John Calvin that he considered himself as having a special calling from God. He believed that throughout his life he was following with great dedication, God's will and was the faithful defender of truth. As the pastor of Geneva he saw his role as purging the city of immorality of all kinds. His method was to use the civil government as an arm of the church to establish correct and strict laws of behavior, but also as executing judgment and punishment of offenders.

A man's true character can be seen in what he does, and not necessarily by what he says. I Tim. 3:1-7 plainly states a man that God calls must be a man of character. Calvin is lauded as the greatest of Protestant theologians, and his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is praised as a great work and a foundation of Reformed Protestant theology. There can be no misunderstanding that Calvin had a great respect and biblical fear of God. However, the extremes and false conclusions of this theology can certainly be questioned and shown to be unbiblical.

Calvin based his theology almost solely on applying the Old Testament law, given to the Nation of Israel, to Christianity. He ignored the many passages in the New Testament and that plainly state that Christians, in this dispensation, are not under law. Paul stated, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6)

Paul further explained, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Romans 7:6) There can be no question that Calvin misunderstood that the law was given as their constitution and represented both spiritual and civil law to the nation of Israel. God never intended the law to apply literally to Christians. The principles behind the laws apply to all ages, and in our age, the principles are kept willingly by born again believers, not out of compulsion, but out of a love of God. His word, and righteousness. John Calvin had those whom he thought

were witches burned at the stake. However, Christians apply the principle behind God telling Israel not to allow a witch to live, by having nothing to do with witchcraft or any thing associated with the occult. (See Ex. 22.18) The law in Exodus 22:18 was a civil law given to the Nation of Israel to protect its people from the occult. Paul made it clear that Christians are not to follow the letter of the law saying, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Rom. 7:6) The Apostle further explained, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (Rom 6:22) Speaking of the freedom from the yoke of bondage of the law that the believer has in Christ, Paul wrote, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5:1) This doctrinal truth escaped Calvin's reasoning and he incorrectly and relentlessly applied the civil law of Israel to the citizens of Geneva.

It is helpful in understanding Calvin's actions, that as the senior minister of Geneva, it was his obsession to purify the citizens of the city from all immoral behavior. He thought that applying the law of Moses was the solution to the problem of sinful behavior. However, in looking at the actions of John Calvin, it can be plainly seen that his theology, was based on Augustinian thought, and was administered in a tyrannical, vindictive, cruel, and unloving way. It is difficult to find in the many hundreds of books written about John Calvin many instances of him being a loving, kind, merciful, or caring man or pastor. He ruled and lorded over his congregation and using the civil authorities brought swift judgment on dissenters, even unto death.

In 1538, Calvin was forced to leave Geneva because of his unpopular views. Later in 1541, he was invited back. He was at first reluctant to return because of the opposition he had faced. What changed his mind was that those governing the city offered him lucrative benefits and position if he would return. The city was in turmoil, and they offered Calvin great power that he could exercise in his new office as the minister to Geneva. Their aim was to restore order to the troubled city. This power would allow him to, ". . .establish discipline and control behavior throughout the city." Calvin drafted ecclesiastical ordinances that created the constitution for the Reformed Church of the city-state of Geneva. The Consistory, one of the three governing bodies of the city, has the jurisdiction over the enforcement of Calvin's laws. Calvin set about in earnest to remolding Geneva into a "City of God." Harkness states, "It was the duty of the State, Calvin thought, to use its powers – if need be, its sword-bearing arm – to enforce moral living and sound doctrine." According to Harkness, "Before his death Calvin became virtually the civil as well as the ecclesiastical dictator of Geneva." Calvin's grave error was in thinking that by applying civil law, he could change the moral condition of the citizens of Geneva. Like every attempt to legislate morality, it miserably failed. If he had truly been a man of God, he would have sought to bring spiritual revival to the city by preaching the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only way to change the sinner's nature and life. When the sinner repents of his sins, God changes his nature, and he becomes a moral and spiritual person. Calvin could not have understood II Cor. 5:17, which says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new," and taken the misguided course he pursued.

The truth of the character of Calvin can be seen in the heretic Michael Servetus and others who were accused of violating his laws. Servetus was a scholarly theologian, and a renowned

physician. He was condemned as a heretic by both the Roman Church as well as the Protestants for his rejection of the Trinity and infant baptism. In 1531, Servetus published a book titled *Errors of the Trinity* in which he referred to those who believed in the Trinity as believing in three Gods. He and Calvin corresponded for some time, but Servetus would not accept Calvin's teachings on the Trinity. Calvin, having failed to convert Servetus, became vindictive and saw him as his devoted enemy. On February 13, 1546, Calvin wrote to his friend Farel, "If he (Servetus) comes (to Geneva) I shall never let him go out alive if my authority has weight."

For seven years Calvin sought to capture and try Servetus. When Servetus made the mistake of returning to Geneva and attending one of Calvin's services he was recognized and arrested and put on trial. Calvin wrote that he hoped the verdict in Servetus' trial would be the death penalty.

Calvin got his wish and Servetus was convicted of two of the 38 charges brought against him. He was sentenced to be burned at the stake along with his books, and on October 27, 1553, his sentence was carried out. Outside of Geneva, he was taken to a hill and Nigg records that "A wreath strewn with sulfur was placed on his head. When the faggots were ignited, a piercing cry of horror broke from him. 'Mercy, mercy!' he cried. For more than half an hour the horrible agony continued, for the pyre had been made of half-green wood, which burned slowly. 'Jesus, Son of the eternal God, have mercy on me,' the tormented man cried from the midst of the flames. . ." It should be noted that Servetus was not a citizen of Geneva, but was only visiting the city. Thus, the misdirected piety of John Calvin claimed but another victim.

Nigg said of Calvin, "He (Calvin) did not have the faculty for entering into another person's ideas. Rather, he tended to decide arbitrarily that such ideas were diabolically inspired. . .no amount of human or historical broad-mindedness can bring us to excuse Calvin's actions." This should cause any logical and honest person to question how could this spiritually unsound man be the founder of Protestant Reformed theology. How could Reformed Theology hold him in such high esteem?

Calvin, who had denounced Roman Catholicism for its false beliefs and practices, was giving French refugees asylum from the Inquisition in Geneva. He himself had also been condemned to be burned at the state absentia, was now conducting his own Reformed Inquisition in Switzerland.

In February 1545, a man named "Freckles" Dunant was accused of applying plague venom to the removed foot of a man who was hanged. He was tortured to death in an attempt to make him confess. He died under the torture but would not admit to the crime of spreading the plague. His body was then dragged to the middle of town and burned. This demonstrates the utter lack of compassion or any legal recourse to those who were accused under John Calvin's law. Clearly, Calvin approved and condoned such horrible acts.

On March 7, 1545, two women were executed by burning at the stake of the crime of spreading the plague. Cottret wrote that ". . .Calvin humanely interceded the same day to keep the prisoners from being forced to languish in prison. The Council followed this happy directive and urged the executioner henceforth to "be more diligent in cutting off the hands of malefactors." Calvin's actions are a testimony to his lack of character and warped sense of compassion.

The executions continued unabated and those who refused to confess were tortured skillfully in a way that would avoid killing them using a strappado. The strappado is a form of torture in which the victim is hung in the air by the wrist with their arms tied behind their back. During this time, two people who were accused sorcerers were decapitated. It was said they composed a plaster of grease and other villainous things that caused people to die. A number of the victims committed suicide to end their torture. One woman who was handcuffed to keep her from taking her life threw herself out a window to escape the torture. John Calvin not only condoned, but approved of this hideous superstitious torment. Clearly Calvin was ruled by an irrational superstition that has its roots in paganism.

The last execution associated with the plague was on May 16, 1545, in which a total of seven men and 24 women were executed. A letter from Calvin attests to 15 of these women being burned at the stake. Calvin's only concern was that the plague had not come to his house.

During this period, a total of 37 people were condemned for spreading the plague. The majority had made confessions, which is not surprising considering the terrible tortures they were made to endure. Calvin also had 34 women burned at the stake after accusing them of being witches who caused a plague that had swept through Geneva in 1545.

In 1568, the plague returned, and Calvin wrote that 15 women had already been burned and men were punished more rigorously. Calvin's only concern in all this was that his house had been spared from the plague. On June 23, 1547, several women were accused of dancing, which John Calvin forbade. Francoise Favre was the wife of his close friend Ami Perrin who had brought him to Geneva. However, she fell in disfavor with the court because the year earlier she had refused to testify against several of her friends before the Consistory. She again refused to testify and stood up against Calvin. She was thus imprisoned for her actions of defying the Consistory and Calvin.

Under Calvin, Anabaptists were cruelly persecuted. He saw them as his adversaries, mainly because they rejected infant baptism and his unbiblical beliefs and practices. Cottret records, "Several Anabaptists from the Netherlands were in fact found in Geneva at this time. Among these were Herma de Gerbihan and Benoit d'Anglen, banished during the winder of 1537 with some of their disciples."

A man named Jacques Gret, who was a confessed atheist, was accused of writing a poster against Calvin accusing him of hypocrisy and hanging it on his pulpit. He was arrested and tortured until he admitted to his crime. He was then executed by beheading on July 26, 1547 because he spoke out against the tyrant of Geneva, John Calvin.

This and many other atrocities were conducted under the direction of John Calvin and clearly show that man was a religious fanatic, a criminal, and a murderer. What makes actions so vile is that he committed these heinous atrocities in the name of Almighty God and under the banner of upholding the truth! These people were not condemned for viable crimes, but because of superstitions, speaking their opinions, or holding beliefs that John Calvin disagreed with. Judging him by his deeds and his warped sense of Christianity, reveals that Calvin was

completely devoid of human kindness, and mercy. He certainly had no hint of having the love of Christ in his heart showing no love for his fellow man.

STUDY PACK 11

A CALVINISTIC EXPLANATION OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

King James I of England wrote this concerning the doctrine of predestination, "This doctrine is so horrible, that I am persuaded, if there were a council of unclean spirits assembled in hell, and their prince the devil were to put the question either to all of them in general, or to each in particular, to learn their opinion about the most likely means of stirring up hatred of men against God their Maker; nothing could be invented by them that would be more efficacious for this purpose, or that could put a greater affront upon God's love for mankind, than that infamous decree of the late Synod, and the decision of that detestable formulary, by which the far greater part of the human race are condemned to hell for no other reason, *than the mere will of God, without any regard to sin*; the necessity of sinning, as well as that of being damned, being fastened on them by that great nail of the decree before-mentioned."

FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE?

The following sermon was preached at Faith Reformed Baptist Church in Scarborough, Ontario, on Sunday, September 27th, 1998 by Pastor Brian Robinson.

> "Today I am going to address a question that is rarely addressed in evangelical circles today. The question is this: 'For Whom Did Christ Die?' I am aware that for many this question is disconcerting, and they feel it should not be raised at all. For them it is too controversial and anything that smacks of controversy is to be avoided at all costs – sometimes tragically, at the cost of the Truth itself.
>
> For others, the question is irrelevant. They will wonder why I should bother to waste time on a question where the answer is so nakedly obvious. Surely, they would say, Christ died for all, that is, for everyone in the whole world. That He offered Himself as a propitiation or propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole human race (I John 2:2). He received in His own body, on the tree, the wrath of God for every individual without distinction and without exception. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ died and rose again as much for Judas, the betrayer, as He did for Peter, the Apostle. He bore the sins and the punishment for sins as effectually for those who go to Hell and are punished for all eternity as for those destined for Heaven.
>
> In short, Jesus' death on the cross was for all souls without exception. He, we are told, died for all! So why waste valuable church time, in a world of perishing sinners, with an archaic question and useless speculation, such as, 'For Whom Did Christ Die?' What we need to do is to get out into the world and plead with sinners to repent and tell them how God so loved them that He sent His Son to die for them.
>
> Well, on the surface it does seem that those who believe that Christ died for all seem to have all the cards dealt in their favour. After all, doesn't the Apostle Paul not say, 'Christ died for you?' Further, in this day of common man and democracy, it would appear again

on the surface of things, to be rather parsimonious, if not miserly, to speak of an atonement limited to a few, chosen at that!

I can imagine someone saying, 'I know where you are going. You are one of those 'hyper' fellows who do a disservice to man and rob Christ of His glory by claiming that Christ did not die for all men but he 'elect' only. The late Dr. John R. Rice warned me about fellows like you in his paper, *The Sword of the Lord* (and here I quote the good Doctor.) 'But this,' he writes, of us Calvinists, Augustinianists, Paulinists, or whatever you wish to call us, 'but this is human philosophy and not Bible teaching. And that I think we can show to honest and open hearts.'

Ah, yes, we are all honest men are we not? Pride, passion, and prejudice are never to be found in ourselves but always noticeable in others, especially if they disagree with us. Well, we thank Dr. Rice for the warning. The Berean spirit is not always as evident amongst us as we would like to believe it is. Nevertheless, whatever the case concerning our hearts, Scripture is the final arbitrator in these matters, and it is to be Scriptures we must go!

The question then that we pose to the Word of God is this: 'Tell us! For whom did Christ die?' For some, as I have already mentioned, Christ died for all, meaning everyone without distinction or qualification. Dr. Rice, of course, is of that persuasion and he quotes from I Tim. 2:5, 6, 'The man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all. . .' That certainly seems clear enough and beyond refutation. Jesus, on the cross, paid a ransom price for sinners. Not some sinners, not elect sinners (it would seem) but 'all sinners.' Sinners who will go to Hell as well as sinners who will go to Heaven. All sinners without exception, all sinners without qualification.

But you and I are of the Berean spirit. We want to closely examine the text that Dr. Rice has drawn our attention to. Indeed, I have a few questions or two, myself that I would like to ask the text. First, what is a ransom? The dictionary tells me that a ransom is a sum of money paid to set a captive free. Now, I have a question for Dr. Rice, and that is, if Christ paid a ransom price for all (that is, by his definition, whole human race) then why isn't the whole human race set free?

'Ah, well,' you respond, 'you are one of those dense fellows, thick fellows, who can't see the forest for the trees. You see the problem is with the captives. It is their fault that they remain in captivity. Because, you understand, they refused the free offer of the Gospel when it was offered to them. They turned down the ransom price, but to those who believe, it becomes effective. It has saving value.'

'Ah!' I reply, 'dense I may be, but as I see it you just limited the atonement. Correct me if I am wrong but you just made the cross work of our Lord null and void unless man does something to make it work. You see, either God limits the atonement or man limits it. Either God limits the atonement making it effectual for all whom it was designed for, or man limits it by extending it to all mankind, but effectual to no one in particular and clearly ineffectual to the thousands that now reside in Hell.

Further, you have insulted Christ. He purposed, in His heart, to die for all without exception and to ransom all; but in fact He died unsure that His death had secured the salvation of any one person let alone the whole human race. His ransom was effectual for no one, and no one was set free by it. Because the success or failure of His sacrificial death is not in His hands but entirely up to sinners and what sinners intend and purpose to do with it.

Therefore, He ought not to have cried out on the cross, 'It is finished!' but rather, 'It has just begun.' His cross-work from this point of view, was not a glorious triumph over all His enemies and ours included; not an exclamation mark (!) but a question mark (?). The whole enterprise, the suffering, the agony, and the pain failed to accomplish what it set out to do. Tragically, Christ's cross work becomes doubtful at worst, hopeful at best. It depends entirely on the good will and decision making of sinful men and women when confronted with the claims of the cross. I have to say this: it makes Christ look pathetic and brings the whole of His passion under a cloud. The real movers and shakers are Adam's fallen race, and we know how much goodwill they have for God and for His Son, which is nil, none, nix and not at all.

Further, there is this thing about the ransom for all without exception or qualification. A ransom, as you know, is not paid to the captive; he has nothing to do with the negotiations; nor does anyone consult the captive as to the ransom price. The whole transaction is between the one willing to pay the ransom price and the one who holds the captive prisoner. Now, Jesus paid the ransom price, we are told, for all. That much is clear. But to whom was the ransom price paid? It was paid to God, being as the captive was held prisoner by a broken law. But once the ransom was paid, the prisoner is set free. Whether the ransom is accepted or rejected by the captive has nothing to do with the transaction.

It was God who demanded a ransom be paid. Rightly so, as His justice and holiness had been violated. It was the Son who paid the ransom price. The price being His life for ours; His blood a substitute for our sin. It was God who accepted the ransom price without qualification, conditions, codicils, or the yeas or nays of sin-laden captives in bondage to sin and Satan.

My point is simple. Was a ransom price paid? The answer can only be yes! Was it sufficient to set the captives free without anything added to the value? The answer is Yes! The proof being that on the third day Jesus rose from the dead. God has accepted His sacrificial death on the Cross and was fully satisfied. Do the captives contribute anything to the ransom price? The answer is absolutely not! It is not for them to accept or reject. For when Christ died on the Cross for those for whom He shed His blood He obtained their eternal release. Time, of course, would make it so but the outcome was never in doubt, not then and not now. Christ will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

This brings me to my final point in this regard. A point that shows that Dr. Rice did not have an open and honest heart – the kind of heart that he insisted his opponents have. Because the 'all' in I Tim. 2:5, 6, does not refer to the whole human race as Dr. Rice ought to have known.

Keep in mind that 'all' or 'everyone' in the Bible doesn't necessarily mean 'all' or 'everyone.' Confused? Well, this is true in ordinary language as well as in the Bible. Let's suppose that I go to a baseball game. I come home to tell my wife that 'everyone' was wearing the team colours. Do I mean 'everyone' as in every last soul or 'everyone' as in the majority, or a great number? Would you hand me if two were wearing the colours of the other team? Of course not!

In Matt. 3:5 the writer says, 'people went out from all Judea' to be baptized of John. Does that mean every single person in Judea? Or does it mean a representative number? I suggest the latter.

And the same is true in I Tim. 2:5, 6. First, we need to look at the context. Paul is asking that prayers should be made for everyone. We read, for example, 'for Kings and all those in authority.' Why did Paul add that? Why wasn't Paul content to just leave it at 'everyone'? Wouldn't that include 'Kings' and 'those in authority'?

Well, here is the background. The early church was being persecuted by just these 'Kings' and 'authorities. Most of the believers in the early church came from the poorer classes, even the slave classes. Resentment may have built up on the early church against their persecutors. The rich and the 'uppity-ups' who used state mechanisms to rob them and put them in prison. So the brethren had stopped praying for them.

Or a more likely scenario is that so few of them seemed to repent and come to Christ. You know how it is with the rich and the self-sufficient. Had not Paul himself said, 'not many wise; not many noble' but the point is that he didn't say, 'not any wise; not any noble!'

No, Paul says, pray for them because God wants 'all men to be saved': that is all ranks of men, all classes of men. Not just the slave and the poor but the rich too; the powerful; the uppity-ups as well as those without rank and privilege. So pray for them. It is not that God wants all to be saved as in all without exception, but rather, all, as in all classes and ranks of men.

God is not a frustrated Deity. He is not standing helpless, on the sidelines, wringing worried hands. Wondering whether He will have a people or not. No, God desires representatives from all classes of society and He will have representatives from every stratum of human society. So when you pray don't forget the rich and the powerful.

In like manner and in the context of the whole, Paul mentions that Christ gave His life ‘a ransom for all.’ Clearly, in the context of Paul’s discussion, the ransom is not meant for all without exception or qualification but rather ’all’ classes of men. Christ died for those that belonged to the lower strata of society, but Paul says don’t forget He also died to rescue some from the upper crust as well. Rich and poor, weak and powerful, wise and not so wise, our Lord and Saviour paid a ransom price.”

STUDY PACK 12

CAN YOU BE A CONSISTENT BAPTIST AND A CONSISTENT CALVINIST AT THE SAME TIME?

"We are the Lord's elect few,
Let all the rest be damned;
There's room enough in hell for you,
We won't have heaven crammed."
~~ Particular Baptist Hymn ~~

"He freely offered himself as a substitute to suffer and die on behalf of all men. Thus He became a perfect savior by whom all who will may be saved."
~~ John Clarke, 1638 ~~

Reformed Theologian Herman Hanko, "A Baptist is only inconsistently a Calvinist."

I. THE QUESTION IS NOT CAN A BAPTIST CALL HIMSELF A CALVINIST OR CAN A CALVINIST CALL HIMSELF A BAPTIST.

THE QUESTION IS CAN YOU BE A CONSISTENT BAPTIST AND A CONSISTENT CALVINIST AT THE SAME TIME.

II. BAPTISTS WHO ESPOUSED THE DOCTRINES OF CALVINISM

Isaac Backus (1724-1806)
Adoniram Judson (1788-1850)
John A. Broadus (1827-1895)
John Bunyan (1628-1688)
B. H. Carroll (1843-1914)
J. M. Pendleton (1811-1891)
Andrew Fuller (1754-1815)
Richard Furman (1755-1825)
John Clarke (1609-1676)
Francis Wayland (1796-1865)
Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)
and many others

These men are heroes of mine! They made great contributions to the Baptist cause and the cause of Christ in general.

However, the great contributions of these men did not come because they held the doctrines of Calvin but because they operated inconsistently with them.

William Carey's famous sermon on missions (1792) was considered by most Calvinists as an attack on their doctrine. The dedication to world missions of Andrew Fuller and Adoniram Judson was opposed by most Baptists who called themselves Calvinists.

III. WHAT IS A BAPTIST?

A Baptist is someone who believes the Baptist distinctives.

1. The Bible as sole authority for faith and practice.

2. Independent, autonomous churches.

3. Regenerated church membership.

4. Baptism by immersion of believers only, and the Lord's Supper as two ordinances of the church.

5. Priesthood of all believers and soul liberty

6. Separation of church and state.

IV. WHAT IS A CALVINIST?

A Calvinist is someone who believes in the famous TULIP theology.

T – Total Depravity

U – Unconditional Election

L – Limited Atonement

I – Irresistible Grace

P – Perseverance of the Saints

V. SOLE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

The Baptist doctrine of the sole authority of Scripture limits the influence of any theologian, any doctrinal book, or any creed. It is not written of any consistent Baptist that they declared, "I am of Calvin, or I am of Arminius." A consistent Baptist has no such human authorities.

No theology named after a man is consistent with the doctrine of sole authority.

VI. FINAL AUTHORITY

Calvinists often use the term Final Authority to describe their belief in Scripture. They have other authorities like their church system and Calvin himself. Calvinists need Calvin's exposition of Scripture. You would think Christ died for everyone without it.

VII. THE PARTICULAR AND GENERAL BAPTISTS CONTROVERSY

Strong controversy over Calvinism developed among English Baptists in the 16th and 17th centuries in England. Baptists began to identify themselves with a modifier in their church name. Calvinistic Baptists began to call themselves Particular Baptists. Arminian Baptists called themselves General Baptists. There was a third theological persuasion among Baptists. They are rarely mentioned when this episode is discussed but they were probably the largest group. They called themselves Regular Baptists. They considered both Calvinism and Arminianism a deviation from Baptist principle. They did not accept either Calvinism or Arminianism as Biblical doctrines but as the teaching of men.

VIII. PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS

In the early 1900's Calvinism began to infiltrate the Regular Baptist movement. Regular Baptists claimed that Calvinists had no right to that term. The matter ended up in court and the court ruled that the name Regular Baptist historically implied a rejection of Calvinism. The group that wanted to call themselves Regular Baptists took the name Primitive Baptists.

STUDY PACK 13

THE NEW CALVINISM

(…also known as The Young, and
Restless and Reformed Movement)

"At the time of writing his *Institutes* Calvin, far from being an apostle like Paul, was a brand-new convert to the faith who had scarcely begun to walk with the Lord."

~~ David Hunt ~~

I. DESCRIPTION

The New Calvinism is a combination of traditional Calvinism, a charismatic view of the apostolic gifts and the cultural perspective of the majority of millennials. It claims historical roots while seeking to be "politically" and "theologically" correct.

The March 12, 2009 issue of *Time Magazine* called the New Calvinism one of the ten ideas changing the world.

It described the New Calvinism this way:

> "If you really want to follow the development of conservative Christianity, track its musical hits. In the early 1900's you might have heard "The Old Rugged Cross," a celebration of the atonement. By the 1980's you could have shared the Jesus-is-my-buddy intimacy of "Shine, Jesus, Shine." And today, more and more top songs feature a God who is very big, while we are. . .well, hark the David Crowder Band: "I am full of earth/You are heaven's worth/I am stained with dirt/Prone to depravity."
>
> Calvinism is back, and not just musically. John Calvin's 16th century reply to medieval Catholicism's buy-your-way-out-of purgatory excesses is Evangelicalism's latest success story, complete with an utterly sovereign and micromanaging deity, sinful and puny humanity, and the combination's logical consequence, predestination: the belief that before time's dawn, God decided whom he would save (or not), unaffected by any subsequent human action or decision.
>
> Calvinism, cousin to the Reformation's other pillar, Lutheranism, is a bit less dour than its critics claim: it offers a rock-steady deity who orchestrates absolutely everything, including illness (or home foreclosure!), by a logic we may not understand but don't have to second-guess. Our satisfaction – and our purpose – is fulfilled simply by "glorifying" him. In the 1700's, Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards invested Calvinism with a rapturous near mysticism. Yet it was soon overtaken in the U.S. by movements like Methodism that were more impressed with human will. Calvinist-descended liberal bodies like the

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) discovered other emphases, while Evangelicalism's loss of appetite for rigid doctrine – and the triumph of the friendly, fuzzy Jesus – seemed to relegate hard-core Reformed preaching (Reformed operates as a loose synonym for Calvinist) to a few crotchety Southern churches.

No more. Neo-Calvinist ministers and authors don't operate quite on a Rick Warren scale. But notes Ted Olsen, a managing editor at *Christianity Today*, 'everyone knows where the energy and the passion are in the Evangelical world' – with the pioneering New-Calvinist John Piper of Minneapolis, Seattle's pugnacious Mark Driscoll and Albert Mohler, head of the Southern Seminary of the huge Southern Baptist Convention. The Calvinist-flavored ESV Study Bible sold out its first printing, and Reformed blogs like Between Two Worlds are among cyber-Christendom's hottest links.

Like Calvinists, more moderate Evangelicals are exploring cures for the movement's doctrinal drift, but can't offer the same blanket assurance. 'A lot of young people grew up in a culture of brokenness, divorce, drugs or sexual temptation,' says Collin Hansen, author of *Young, Restless, Reformed: A Journalist's Journey with the New Calvinists*. 'They have plenty of friends: what they need is a God,' Mohler says, 'The moment someone begins to define God's (being or actions) biblically, that person is drawn to conclusions that are traditionally classified as Calvinist.' Of course, that presumption of inevitability has drawn accusations of arrogance and divisiveness since Calvin's time. Indeed, some of today's enthusiasts imply that non-Calvinists may actually not be Christians. Skirmishes among the Southern Baptists (who have a competing non-Calvinist camp) and online "flame wars" bode badly."

~~ David Van Biema, *Time*, March 12, 2009 ~~

II. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OLD AND NEW CALVINISTS

A. Prominent New Calvinist, Mark Driscoll, describes the differences between the Old Calvinism and the New Calvinism this way.

1. "New Calvinism is missional and seeks to create and redeem culture.

2. New Calvinism is flooding into cities.

3. Old Calvinism was generally cessationist (i.e. believing the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as tongues and prophecy had ceased). New Calvinism is generally continuationist with regard to spiritual gifts.

4. New Calvinism is open to dialogue with other Christian positions."

~~ Mark Driscoll, *A Call to Resurgence* ~~

B. Dress.

New Calvinist preachers are more often found in skinny jeans and sport shirts than suits.

C. Ordination of Women.

Almost unheard of among Old Calvinists – common among New Calvinists. This is accepted by the millennials.

D. Music.

Virtually anything goes among New Calvinists. Rap and "heavy metal" are commonplace approaches to Christian music.

E. New Calvinists are most likely to believe in concept inspiration than verbal inspiration.

F. Contemporary worship, a total lack of dress standards, social training, acceptance of tobacco, and Roman Catholic mysticism are all a normal part of new Calvinism. Marijuana use is gaining acceptance as it is legalized.

G. Unlike the Old Calvinism, the New Calvinism is more influenced by American cultural norms, pop-psychology, and American neo-evangelicals than European theologians of the past.

III. PROMINENT NEW CALVINISTS

John Piper – known for his books and Bible conferences.

Mark Driscoll – until recently the pastor of Mars Hill Church in Seattle. His sermons are the most downloaded in the history of the internet.

Tim Keller – pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He is a champion of the idea that only contemporary worship can reach the inner city.

Albert Mohler – present of Southern Seminary, largest Southern Baptist Convention seminary.

Mark Dever – pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.

The Gospel Coalition Council is an organization for the promotion of New Calvinist ideas.

IV. CULTURAL RELEVANCE

The New Calvinist movement has been strong on emphasizing relevance to the modern culture. Thus they support female ordination, rock music and immodest dress. Their leaders have been torn over issues like the approval of homosexuality and abortion. Several prominent New Calvinist leaders oppose homosexuality and abortion.

However, New Calvinism is based upon appealing to millennials and the majority of millennials approve abortion and homosexuality. These positions are gaining acceptance among the New Calvinist movement.

V. AGGRESSIVENESS

The New Calvinist holds an aggressive attitude towards proselytizing from other evangelical churches that would be thought of as unseemly by Calvinists of old. Their aggressiveness matches that of the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons.

VI. BIBLICAL ANALYSIS

A. The New Calvinists misunderstand the definition and scope of the Gospel. They have kept the worst of Calvinism while rejecting the contributions that Calvinists sometimes make.

The Gospel is not limited as both the Old Calvinists and New Calvinists claim: I John 2:2; Acts 17:30; II Peter 3:9.

B. Separation from the world.

Christians may have legitimate debates about what separation from the world involves but the New Calvinists invalidate the concept completely. New Calvinism affirms that concept of worldliness. New Calvinism teaches the infiltration of the world rather than separation from the world; I John 2:15-17; I Cor. 8:9-13.

C. Charismatic Gifts

The New Calvinists embrace the idea that the charismatic gifts are still in existence, but they rarely refer to this or try to practice it in their church services. They do not want to lose influence with millions of charismatics. This goes beyond the way the neo-evangelicals accept charismatics: I Cor. 13:10.

VII. SHEEP STEALING

The aggressiveness of the New Calvinists makes them a special challenge for independent Baptist pastors. They will target your people. Their savvy use of social media makes them especially effective in reaching millennials.

VIII. THE NEW CALVINISM IS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL THEOLOGICAL FADS OF THE MOMENT

Bible believers should refrain from the fad of the moment but hold to the sole authority of Scripture: I Thess. 5:21.

STUDY PACK 14

THE FRUITS OF CALVINISM
By Dr. Ron Comfort Evangelist, Founder and Chancellor, of Ambassador Baptist College

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." ~~ Colossians 2:8 ~~

The problem in Colossae was different than the problem in Galatia. In Galatia, there was a group of Judeaizers coming in and trying to get the Christians to go back under the law. Paul said in Galatians 3:3, *"…Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect through the works of the flesh?"* Galatians 5:1, *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."* In Colossae, it evidently was a man, not a group. According to Colossians 2:8, the word "man" is singular, so it was *somebody* who was creeping in and trying to sow a perverted gospel known as Gnosticism. In the Greek, you will find that the word "gnostic" means knowing. This was a warning about somebody coming in and teaching <u>something new and superior in the tradition of men</u>. It set up opposition between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God. Here is what the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says about Gnosticism: "Gnosticism is Christianity perverted by a learning and speculation. The <u>intellectual pride of the Gnostics</u> refined away the gospel into a philosophy making salvation exclusive and not universal. They lived under the conviction that they possessed a mysterious knowledge that could only be understood by them." Now I wonder, does that sound like something that is prevalent in our land today? I am preaching this morning on the <u>Fruits of Calvinism</u>.

When I was a college student, I was naïve enough to think that everybody was either an Arminian or a Calvinist, and the determining factor was whether or not they accepted the security of the believer. When somebody would come to you and say, "Are you a Calvinist?", if you believed in the security of the believer, you would say, "Yes, I'm a Calvinist." Later on as I got to studying more about Calvinism, I realized that there was more involved in Calvinism than the security of the believer. Really, security of the believer was not even involved in Calvinism. Then I was told about the five tenets of Calvinism, the TULIP, I was still naïve enough to think that you could be a "one-pointer, or a "two-pointer." However, if you study the tenets of Calvinism, I do not believe that there are very many of us who would subscribe to any particular one of these five. Last Christmas, when one of our students was home in his local church, he asked a young lady who goes to another Christian college what she had learned her first semester. She said, "I learned T-U-L-I-P," and gave him the meaning of those five tenets.

I want to summarize the TULIP for you. First of all there is *T*, which is *Total Depravity*. Most of us would say we believe in *total depravity,* Jeremiah 17:9: *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* Romans 3:10-12: *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that*

doeth good, no, not one." When the Calvinist says he believes in *total depravity*, he believes in far more than what I have just stated. He means he believes in *Total Inability*. That necessitates that regeneration must precede faith. That is an astounding thing! Englesma acknowledges, "Deny this doctrine, and the whole of Calvinism is demolished." He is saying that if you do not believe what the Calvinist believes about *total depravity*, then you do not believe any of the tenets of Calvinism. That is true; I don't. C. H. Spurgeon, the hero of Calvinism, said this: "If I am to preach faith in Christ to a man who is regenerated, then. . . it is unnecessary and ridiculous for me to preach Christ to him…" They make the analogy, Ephesians 2:1: *"And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;"* and they say that *dead* means "total inability." In other words, if a man is spiritually dead, he is unable to accept Christ. However, if you follow that analogy to its logical conclusion, then you would have to say that a dead man cannot receive, nor can he reject. He cannot sin. Their analogy falls apart if you follow it to its logical conclusion.

Then you have the *U*, which is *Unconditional Election*. That simply is that some people are elected to go to heaven, and some people are elected to go to hell. Loraine Boettner said that the early Christian leaders would have rejected Calvin's view of predestination, and that this cardinal truth of Christianity was first clearly seen by Augustine, who by the way was the founder of the Roman Catholic Church. Calvin quotes Augustine four hundred times in his *Institutes*. If I were to ask you how old John Calvin was when he wrote his institutes, most of you would think he was in his 50s or 60s. Ironically, he was 26 years of age. They said of Calvin that he never had an original thought and everything he put in his institutes he derived from Augustine and carried with him much of the baggage of the Roman Catholic Church - baptismal regeneration, infant baptism, etc. Calvin held infant baptism to be of such value that it transformed an infant into one of God's elect. *So there you have U, Unconditional Election.*

Then you have *L*, which is *Limited Atonement.* That simply means that Jesus died only for the elect.

Then you have *I*, which is *Irresistible Grace*. How can "grace" be irresistible? Anything imposed upon someone by a grace that is "irresistible" is not a gift received. If something is imposed upon you, without your desire to have it, I ask you, is that grace? That is a fallacious definition of grace to me: irresistibly imposed. You have the *U, L, I*. All three of those tenets would say that God is partial. James 3:17: "*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."* Acts 10:34, Peter said, "*I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."* Peter said in I Peter 1:17: "*And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work."*… So there you have *I*.

Number five is *P* which is *perseverance of the saints*. John Piper, who, by the way, claims to be a seven-point Calvinist said, "No Christian can be sure that he is a true believer. Hence, there is an ongoing need to be dedicated to the Lord and to deny ourselves so that we might make it." Is that grace? The Calvinist says that he talks about the doctrines of grace. However, as we get into the message, we are going to see that it is grace plus works.

I want to call to your attention four truths I believe that are *Fruits of Calvinism*. Calvinism *incriminates the nature of God*. Calvinists talk about the Sovereignty of God. When they talk about the Sovereignty of God, they do not mean by that what we mean. They mean that God is the author of sin. I believe that *incriminates His holiness*. R. C. Sproul said, "God desired for man to fall into sin. I am not accusing God of sinning. I'm suggesting that God created sin." I say that's blasphemy. Palmer believes that God has ordained everything even sin.

Deuteronomy 32:4: "*He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."* Job 34:10 "*Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.* Habakkuk 1:13: "*…thou canst not look on iniquity."* I John 1:5: "*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."* James 1:13: "*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."*

I am so glad my life is in the hands of a God who cannot sin. When God Almighty makes His first mistake, He will cease to be God. Not only does Calvinism *incriminate His holiness,* but number two, it *incriminates His love.* Interestingly, in the almost 1,300 pages of Calvin's *Institutes*, not one time does he expound of the love of God.

While I was preaching in Wisconsin, a young man came to me and said, "Brother Comfort, do you preach that God hates sin and loves the sinner?" I said, "I certainly do." He said, "Oh no, no, let me show you in the book of Psalms that God hates the sinner."

Can you imagine even saying that? I said, "Do you know what you have done? You have violated a principle of Bible interpretation. In the Bible, terms of emotion are terms of comparison. 'Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated.'" He said, "Well, every time you find the love of God in the Bible, it's always in the past tense. It's never in the present tense saying, 'God presently loves man.'" I said, "You know what? For forty-two years I've been preaching in evangelism that God loves the sinner, and I've seen thousands of them converted, so, I think I'll just keep preaching that God loves the sinner and hates the sin."

Luke 19:10: "*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."* John 3:16-17: "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."* Rom. 5:6-8: "*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* II Cor. 5:14-15: "*For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again"*. II Cor.5:21: "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* I Tim. 1:15: "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."* I Tim. 2:4-6: "*Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between*

God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Heb. 2:9: Jesus tasted death for every man. II Pet. 3:9: "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;

To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

Hallelujah for His love! It not only *incriminates His holiness, His love,* but it *incriminates His grace*. Calvin held that infant baptism transformed an infant into one of God's elect. R. C. Sproul says, "Infants can be born again. Although the faith they exercise can not be as visible as that of adults." Everyone in Geneva had to be baptized and partake of the Lord's supper. I ask you, is that grace? Not on your life! Fifteen women were burned at the stake in Geneva. In Geneva, coercion even by force was an integral part of the system. In 1558-59, there were 414 prosecutions for moral offences. Between 1542 and 1564, there were seventy-six banishments and fifty-eight executions while the population of Geneva was less than 20,000. Jerome Bolsec disagreed with Calvin on predestination. He was arrested, banished from Geneva, and warned that if he ever returned, he would be flogged. Is that grace?

Here's what Armstrong says: "Perseverance is a necessary attribute of justification." "God justifies, but man must have faith and obey." Piper says, "We must also own up to the fact that our final salvation is made contingent upon the subsequent obedience which comes by faith." And I say what they are doing is mingling grace and works. Romans 11:6, *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."* So here's what you've got to conclude: it's either all of grace, or all of works. You cannot mingle the two. "'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home."

Now the Calvinist's arch enemy, Jacob Arminius, said this when he way dying: "A believer can depart out of this life to appear before the throne of grace without any anxious fear." Ladies and gentlemen, he knew a little bit about the grace of God. I think I'm just going to keep preaching that God is grace. Psalm 116:5, *"Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful."* Psalm 145:8, *"The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy."* John 1:16-17, *"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."* Romans 3:24, *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."* Romans 5:20, *"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."* Titus 2:11 *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."*

I can preach the gospel downtown today and hunt up a drug addict, a prostitute, or a homosexual, and say, "Jesus had you in mind when He died on Calvary's Cross." Thank God for His grace!

So number 1, Calvinism *incriminates the nature of God*. Number 2, it *instigates bitterness and division*. William MacDonald said this: "It is the practice of many Calvinists to press their views relentlessly upon others, even if it leads to church division. This theological system becomes the main emphasis of their conversation, their preaching, their prayers, and their ministries."

Let me encourage you, don't be naïve enough to think that you can put a Calvinist in leadership in your church and say, 'Don't talk about Calvinism." That is like telling Michael Jordan not to talk about basketball. That is like telling Bill Gates not to talk about money. It just consumes their very being. They have no concept that they are hurting the cause of Christ and dividing the body of Christ. Calvinists are not builders; they are destroyers.

In forty-two years of ministry, I have been in thousands of churches. I have never been in one that was built on Calvinism. I have been in many that have been divided by Calvinism, but never one that was built on Calvinism. I told my wife that the only thing that is attractive to me about Calvinism is that if I were a Calvinist, I would never have to go through a building program.

Let me talk to you from my heart and let you know what Calvinism did to this institution. Ambassador Baptist College came within one year of being totally ruined. About 1993, we began to have a little impetus of Calvinism start, and it kept growing until 1997. I'm going to be honest with you. I came to the place, and my wife knows this, when I dreaded to come in the doors of Ambassador Baptist College. There was such oppression, tension, and division in this school because of Calvinism. During those years, I was on the phone trying to get somebody to be my successor. If Mickey Mouse would have said that he would have succeeded me, I would have thought about it because of what Calvinism was doing to this institution. For three years, I would get up in the pulpit to preach, and this group of Calvinists would tear me apart. I remember preaching right before we left the other property in December before the kids went home. That day the Calvinists were up in arms. Brother Surrett came to me after I preached in December 1996, and said, "I think you're going to get some feedback from that message." It was like that constantly.

From day one, I have said that no student nor faculty member can criticize a chapel speaker. Why do I say that? When I was in college, I would go to chapel and God would deal with my heart. Then I would go to the classroom, and some professor would snatch away the good seed of the Word of God. I made up my mind that was not going to be characteristic of Ambassador. Dwight Smith and Alton Beal can tell you that day after day the chapel speaker was dissected in the classroom. I have had married men tell me that when they would come home from work, some of these Calvinist married students would come to their door and say, "What did you think about the chapel message today?"

They had some signals. Whenever that speaker said something they did not agree with, they would close their Bible and put it on the floor beside them. That was the sign that the chapel speaker was not worthy to listen to. Dwight Smith told me he had been challenged by a message by Brent Snook on revival. After chapel was over, he went to the restroom, in which there was a professor, and said, "God spoke to my heart about revival." The professor said, "Young man, don't you know that's the kind of preaching that is wrong with fundamentalism?"

Week after week, I had students sit in my office and try to make my calling illegitimate. They would tell me time after time there was no Scriptural validation for an evangelist. Didn't they know that an evangelist started this school? Didn't they know that in two years, an evangelist raised 400,000 dollars and got his friends to become his enemies to start this school? They tried to invalidate my ministry and make it illegitimate. I had young men sit in my office and say, "This stuff about revival is garbage." We were in that atmosphere day after day after day.

Finally, the thing came to a head. Many times you will make a decision in the will of God, and you will wonder "Is this really in the will of God?" And you'll make the decision because you believe it's right. Then years later, you'll look back and say, "Boy, that was of God. No question about it. That was of God."

In the summer of 1997, I said we were not going to let the Calvinist crowd come back. We included in our statement of faith two statements concerning Calvinism. One pertained to irresistible grace and the other to limited atonement. When we sent that out in July1997 we lost thirty students who would not sign that statement. In 1997, thirty dormitory students made up a large amount of the budget of this school. Though it was an expensive surgery, it was the most wonderful thing that has ever been done in the history of this school. If we had not done that, I am convinced that this school would not be in existence right now.

I Corinthians 3:3, *"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"* Where there is division, there is carnality. Proverbs 6:16, *"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him. . ."* What is the first one? *A proud look.* Verse 19, *"And he that soweth discord among brethren."* Proverbs 6:14, *"Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord."* Proverbs 16:28, *"A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends."*

Here is my advice to you, young man, if you are an assistant in a local church. God did not call you to determine the direction for that local church, but rather, <u>He called the pastor</u>. If you are in a local church, and there is a philosophical or doctrinal disagreement that makes it so you cannot stay there, graciously go to the pastor and thank him. I have not had one thank-you note from a Calvinist in my entire ministry. I remember so vividly what Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., said: "When the flower of gratitude dies on the altar of a man's heart, he is well-nigh hopeless." So you go to that pastor and say, "Thank you for giving me a place to serve, but I believe it's come to the place where I need to leave. I'm not going to stay around and sow discord. I'm not going to try to get a following or go across town to start a church. I'm going to leave town so I will not be a cause of division in this local church."

Calvinism *incriminates the nature of God.* It *instigates bitterness and division.* Number three, *it initiates confusion.* To some of the Calvinist's statements, I have to scratch my head and say, "Am I understanding what he's saying?" Gerstner said, "It is your decision to choose or reject Christ. But it is not of your own free will." Sproul said this, (remember that Sproul said that regeneration preceded faith): "Once Luther grasped the teaching of Paul in Romans, he was reborn." What is the teaching of Paul in Romans, Justification by faith! I thought he was regenerated before he found out Paul's teaching in the book of Romans. It's a contradiction. Bob Wilkin of Grace Evangelical Society, who was at the Sproul's Ligonier National Conference in June, 2000, said: "I feel such a burden for these people, their theology makes assurance impossible," The lack of assurance permeated the whole conference. Sproul said, "Awhile back, I had one of those moments of acute self-awareness, and suddenly, the question hit me, 'R.C., what if you are not one of the redeemed?' My sins came pouring into my mind, and the more I looked at myself, the worse I felt. I thought, 'Maybe it's really true. Maybe I'm not saved after all.' Wouldn't it be terrible to have to live under that continuous cloud of doubt?

> Isaiah 26:3, *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."*

II Timothy 1:7, *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."* Doubts confronted nearly all the Puritan divines. Congdon says, "Absolute assurance of salvation is impossible for Classical Calvinism." Calvin said, "For there is scarcely a mind in which the thought does not sometimes arise, 'Whence your salvation but from the election of God! But what proof have you of your election?'" When once this thought has taken possession of any individual, it keeps him perpetually miserable, subjects him to dire torment, or throws him into a state of complete stupor. I want to ask you, where did we lose the principle that we're saved by simple child-like faith!

Matthew 18:3, *"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."* No man in the distress of his soul went into a motel room and opened a Gideon Bible trying to find an answer for his destitution and came out a Calvinist. I will just keep preaching that it is by simple trust in Jesus Christ. John 1:12,*"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of Cod, even to them that believe on his name."* John 3:15, *"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."* John 3:18, *"He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name if the only begotten Son of Cod."* John 5:24, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."* John 6:35, *"I am the Bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."* John 7:37-38, *"In that last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* John 11:25, *"I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."* John 12:46, *"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."*

Number one: Calvinism *incriminates the nature of God*. Number two: it *instigates bitterness and division*. Number three: it *initiates confusion*. Number four, it *invalidates the Great Commission*. Vance, the Sovereign Grace Baptist leader, admits this: "We do not win many souls. A few of our kind of churches win a soul now and then, but most of us do very, very little of this... Our preachers are not soul-winning men. We do not have soul-winning members. We almost never give instructions on why and how to win souls. We do not really work at soul-winning in our churches."

Anything that takes away your zeal for souls is not Bible. We had one of our graduates, who graduated with a 4.0 GPA, but became swayed by the intellectualism of Calvinism, come to Brother Camp and say, "You know, when I first came to Ambassador, I was down on the strip trying to win people to Christ that really couldn't be saved anyway." You cannot make me believe that that attitude is found in the Word of God.

Calvinism invalidates the Great Commission and the commands of Christ. Matthew 28:19, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name if the Father, and of the Son, and if the Holy Ghost."* Mark 13:10, *"And the gospel must first be published among all nations."* Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Luke 24:47, *"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* Acts 1:8, *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

Not only does it *invalidate the commands of Christ*, but also it *invalidates the constant invitation*. Isaiah 1:18, *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."* Matthew 11:28-29, *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls:"* John 4:13-14, *"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."* John 4:35, *"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."*

It *invalidates the compassion of Christ*. Matthew 9:36-38, *"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."* Why in the *world* does God command us to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers if they are going to get saved without any human instrumentality it invalidates the compassion of Christ. He wept over Jerusalem. Matthew 23:37-38, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"* He didn't say, "Ye could not." He said, "Ye would not."

I want to summarize my message. Some of you think that Calvinism only entails those five tenets. However, the tentacles of Calvinism are far reaching, and it will affect everything this school has taught you. If you leave this school a five-point Calvinist, you will hate this school. You will hate everything you have been taught. You will do a 180-degree about-face. Calvinism will affect you dispensationally. It will affect your eschatology. We have one of our graduates now who is a Calvinist, who said that Jesus came in 70 A.D. It will affect your view of the preservation of Scripture. I don't know of any Calvinist today who holds the position that we do on the text. Many of them did while they were here, but many of them no longer hold that view on the text. It will affect your view of personal separation. You leave this school as a Calvinist, and you will mock our standards when you leave here. It will affect your view of the will of God. That's why we have *Decision Making in the Will of God* by Friesen years ago, and Friesen implied that there is no perfect will of God. In other words, there are many women that you could marry and still be in the will of God. There are many things that you could do and still be in the will of God. If I were a Calvinist, why in the world would I do what I have done in starting this school? You know what I'd do I'd get a job that paid well and make a lot of money and accrue a lot of material possessions and I would live it up. That's the end result of Calvinism.

Calvinism will affect your view of personal holiness. Many, many Calvinists now are social drinkers that will progress even farther. And I could go on and on talking about things that are affected by the tenets of Calvinism. But here's the bottom line: go back to what Mike Bates preached on last week from Galatians 5, and I want you to notice two things. The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:19-21, *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness… "* Now the first four have to do with immorality. I'm not accusing the Calvinist of immorality. You remember what Mike Bates said about the works of the flesh? He said they're all not manifest in everybody, but some are manifest in all unsaved people.

Now the next group, I think you can find some application. The works of the flesh "idolatry," John Calvin is their idol; *"witchcraft, hatred."* If you get in a group with former students who are Calvinists, Ron Comfort is the topic of their conversation, and there is vitriolic hatred for Ron Comfort. "Variance" that means divisions. *"Emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies."* Those are the works of the flesh. Go to verses 22. and 23. *"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law."* If a person manifests those things in verses 19-20, he is walking according to the flesh. If he manifests in verse 23, the fruit of the Spirit, he is walking in the Spirit. All you have to do is examine the lives of these who propound this system about which I preached this morning, and you can tell pretty easily if they are walking in the flesh or if they are walking in the Spirit. Let me close by saying this, young people, you be kind, be gracious, be loving. There is not a former student that is a Calvinist now that would come in that door, and said, "Brother Comfort, I love you," that I would not wrap my arms around his neck, and I would say, "Thank God! Thank God you said that!" There is not one of them I wish ill against. So, don't go out of here with a bitterness <u>against the Calvinist</u>. You can have bitterness against that system, but don't you dare have bitterness <u>against a person</u>.

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