

REMINDER

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THE DANGEROUS TEACHINGS OF CALVINISM

One of the more prevailing problems facing Baptists today is the advance of Calvinism in our churches. Often recognizable by such terms a “Reformed” and “Sovereign”, these pastors and churches can also be identified by their excessive emphasis on “the doctrine of grace.”

Now, while the Bible doctrine of grace is, indeed, a truly marvelous truth, what Calvinism means by “grace” is not what the Bible actually teaches on the subject. So, in an effort to make sure our people are not lured into this false theology, here is a simplified explanation of what Calvinism is, followed by a brief refutation of each it’s main points from the Bible.

- Pastor Todd W. White

ORIGIN OF CALVINISM -

Calvinism is a theology that was developed by John Calvin in the sixteenth century. He presented this theology in his Institutes of Christian Religion, which subsequently became the cornerstone of Presbyterian and Reformed theology. It is also called **TULIP** theology. Calvin himself did not use the term TULIP to describe his theology, but it is an accurate, though simplified, representation of his views, and every standard point of TULIP theology can be found in Calvin’s Institutes.



John Calvin
(1509-1564)

A SUMMARY OF TULIP THEOLOGY -

Total Depravity: This point of Calvinism teaches that man is totally corrupt and dead in his sin so that he cannot even respond to the Gospel unless God sovereignly enables him, ***which only happens if he is one of the elect***. The Calvinist doctrine of Total Depravity does not mean merely that the sinner has no righteousness of his own or that his heart is depraved. It means also that his will is in bondage to sin in such a fashion that he is unable to believe the Gospel. Further, it means that he must therefore be born again ***before*** he can believe.

But what does the Bible really teach?

The chief passage on the New Birth in the Bible is found in the Gospel of John, Chapter 3. In verses 1-8, Jesus teaches Nicodemus that he must be born again or he cannot see the kingdom of God. In verse 9, Nicodemus asks Jesus how this can be. In verses 10-21, Jesus answers this question and explains how a man is born again, and the answer is that he is born again ***by believing*** (John 3:14-16)! **This is exactly what the Calvinist says the sinner cannot do.** How can a dead man believe, he reasons? Well, if we are going to take the “dead man” analogy literally, a dead man can’t sin either. When the Bible says the sinner is dead in trespasses and sins it means that he is separated from God’s divine life because of sin. To take this analogy beyond the actual teaching of the Bible and to give it other meanings, such as to reason that since the sinner is dead in trespasses and sins he must not be able to believe, is to move from truth to heresy.

Further, the Bible teaches, rather, that God enables men to respond, giving them light (see John 1:9), drawing them (see John 12:32), convicting them (see John 16:8), calling them through the gospel (Mark 16:15-16; II Thess. 2:14), and commanding them to repent (Acts 17:30) and believe on Christ (Acts 16:31).

(continued on next page)

Unconditional Election: This point of Calvinism teaches that God unconditionally and “sovereignly” elects who will be saved and this election has nothing to do with anything the sinner does, including exercising faith in the Gospel. John Calvin expressed the doctrine of unconditional election in these words:

“Predestination we call the decree of God, by which He has determined in Himself, what He would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny: but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others” (Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book III, chap. 21).

But what does the Bible really teach?

Calvin totally missed the biblical Doctrine of Imputation, found in Romans Chapters 4-6 and II Corinthians 5:21, which teach -

A. That when Adam sinned, sin was imputed (put to the account of) the entire human race (Romans 5:12, 15, 17, & 19).

B. That when Christ died on the Cross, the sin of ALL mankind was imputed to Christ’s account - *“And he (Jesus Christ) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”* (I John 2:2).

C. That when a person receives Christ as Saviour, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed-put to the account of-that person - *“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”* (II Corinthians 5:21).

The main point of the Doctrine of Imputation is that Christ died to pay the sin debt of ALL mankind, NOT just those that He knew were going to be saved. Calvinists don’t like to talk about the Doctrine of Imputation.

Limited Atonement: Calvinism teaches that the death of Christ was *only* for those God has sovereignly elected.

Calvin denounced the universal offer of the Gospel. *“When it appears that when the doctrine of salvation is offered to all for their effectual benefit, it is a corrupt prostitution of that which is declared to be reserved particularly for the children of the church”* (Institutes, Book III, chap. 22).

But what does the Bible really teach?

The Doctrine of Imputation refutes the idea of Limited Atonement, also, as does the following verse from the pen of the Apostle Peter -

“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” (II Peter 3:9).

Irresistible Grace: Calvinism also teaches that God’s call to the elect is effectual *and cannot be resisted*. The dead sinner is sovereignly regenerated and granted the “gift of faith.”

The idea here is that God graciously softens the hearts of the elect (those whom He has chosen to be saved), and he bends them to believe; but the non-elect He leaves, in His judgment, to their own perversity and hardness. Those not “elected” may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved.

But what does the Bible really teach?

The Bible teaches that men are blinded because of their own unbelief and they are lost because they reject the Gospel. It is God’s sovereign will to save every sinner (I Timothy 2:3-4; II Peter 3:9), but sinners *can* resist Him.

Paul says - *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”* (II Corinthians 4:3-4).

Perseverance of the Saints: This final letter of the TULIP explanation of Calvinism covers the idea that those who are sovereignly elected and regenerated will continue in the faith.

“Those whom God hath accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall through neglect and temptation, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the Church, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (Abstract of Principles, 1858). In other words, once a person is saved, they’re permanently saved. This is the only point of the TULIP explanation of the basic tenets of Calvinism that is actually correct.



Arminius

Those who rejected this point shortly after Calvin’s death were followers of a man named James Arminius. He taught that it was possible for a person to become lost again after having been saved. This position is known as Arminian Theology, or *Arminianism*. Today, most professedly Christian churches believe it is possible to be lost again after having been saved.

Though most Baptists are not Arminians, some, such as the Free-Will Baptists, are.

Calvinism is rapidly on the rise again in various Baptist circles, including the Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist Bible Fellowship churches, and others, and is growing in evangelical churches, as well. It nearly killed the evangelistic zeal of the Baptist churches of England in the 18th century, and will do so here, too, if left unchecked. Christ died for the sins of ALL mankind - not just those He knew would get saved! - tww

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

by Evangelist David W. Cloud

☛ **A WARNING ABOUT VISION FORUM** - Another avenue

The VISION FORUM, Inc.



whereby Calvinism is entering in to fundamental and conservative Baptist churches and homes is **Vision Forum**. This organization has a worthy goal of building godly families and exhorting

fathers to take the headship of their homes, and many of their materials are helpful.

But Vision Forum is founded upon and permeated with Reformed Calvinistic theology. Its statement of faith includes the following: ***“All who were chosen in Christ from eternity past are born again by the Holy Spirit, respond from their new hearts with repentance and faith in Jesus, are justified on the basis of the shed blood of Christ, become children of God, and are indwelt, sanctified, and sealed by the Holy Spirit until they are glorified at Christ’s return.”***

Vision Forum books include the following: [John Calvin: Man of the Millennium](#), [The Story of the English Puritans](#), [The World’s Greatest Reformation History Library](#), [The Geneva Bible Calvin Legacy Edition](#), [Children’s Stories of the Reformation](#), [Stories of the Covenanters in Scotland](#), [Reformation Heroes](#), [Famous Women of the Reformed Church](#), [Puritan Fathers Classics Library](#), and [Gill’s Body of Doctrinal Divinity](#) (hyper, hyper Calvinism). They even sell a statue of John Calvin.

Vision Forum is not dispensational and rejects the imminent, pre-tribulational return of Jesus Christ. They have no emphasis upon preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth. This is not even mentioned in their mission statement, though it is THE thing that Jesus Christ emphasized after He rose from the dead (see Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) and is THE emphasis of the book of Acts.

Pastor’s Note: After reading this from Bro. Cloud, I have decided that, though some of the materials they offer may be helpful, not to recommend them. True, some of their articles, especially those about music in the church and life of the Christian, are very good, but, in light of this new information about the Calvinistic streak found in their writings, materials, and beliefs, I cannot and will not recommend them any further.

-TWW

☛ **BAPTISTS ADOPTING ADVENT AND LENT** - “Baptists Turning to the Observation of Lent” is the title of an Associated Baptist Press report for February 26. The article says:

“Though traditionally viewed as a Catholic rite, increasing numbers of Baptists are discovering the discipline of Lent. Belmont University, until recently affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, marked Feb. 25 with an Ash Wednesday service co-officiated by a Catholic bishop. ... That began to break down in recent decades as more Baptist (and other Protestant) churches began observing the season of Advent.

Some of those congregations also began to incorporate other parts of the liturgical calendar into their worship planning.

“Bo Prosser, coordinator for congregational life with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, said he sees interest in Lent growing in Baptist churches every year.

“Passport, Inc., a student-ministry organization and partner of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, produces a web-based Lenten devotional called d365.org. The Baptist Center for Ethics, another CBF partner, sells an online group study for Lent in PDF format that was produced in partnership with the Baptist World Alliance.”

CONCLUDING NOTE FROM BRO. CLOUD: Lent and Advent are Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox sacramental practices that have no biblical authority. For Baptists to adopt these things is further evidence of the encroachment of the ecumenical movement, the blending of doctrinal distinctives, and the unifying of the denominations.

Doubtless one of the impetuses for the adoption of Advent and Lent among Baptists is the spread of contemplative mysticism through the influence of men like Richard Foster and Dallas Willard. Contemplative practices such as centering prayer, visualization prayer, lectio divina, the Jesus prayer, and breath prayers are adapted from the darkness of Catholic monasticism.

“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).

☛ **VIRGINIA BANNING PRAYERS IN JESUS’ NAME** - On February 23, a Virginia Senate committee killed legislation that would have restored the rights of state police chaplains to pray in Jesus’ name at public events (*Christian Post*, Feb. 24, 2009).

The measure would have reversed the sorry policy of State Police Col. Steven Flaherty that forbids state troopers to pray in Jesus’ name. The misnamed American Civil Liberties Union threatened a lawsuit if the legislation had been enacted. The city of Fredericksburg, Virginia, also bans such prayers, and the ban was upheld by a federal appeals court.

Six chaplains resigned last year over the police chaplaincy censorship. In 2006, James Klingenschmitt was court-martialed and fired by the U.S. Navy for praying publicly in uniform in Jesus’ name outside a chapel. Though Congress sided with him and rebuked the Navy, he has yet to be reinstated.

Christian young people who are thinking about joining the military should understand that it has changed dramatically in recent times toward liberal “political correctness” and will doubtless change even more dramatically under the new commander-in-chief. ■

DON’T FORGET!

**OUR REVIVAL WITH MALCOM
ELLIS IS APRIL 8-12!**



NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Brian Crawford
 Cradle Roll 2: Charity Crawford
 Floater: Justin Geroux

6:00 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Janet Bridges
 Cradle Roll 2: Bertha Segebarth
 Floater: Kelsey Moreno

Wed. Eve. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Shirley White
 Cradle Roll 2: Seth White
 Floater: LeAnna White

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of March 1, 2009

Sunday School ----- 26
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 39
 Evening Service ----- 27
 Wed. Eve. Service, 03/01/09 ----- 28

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of March 1, 2009

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,438.00
 Love Off'g, Malcome Ellis (we're saving up) ----- \$ 145.00
 New Hymnals Fund ----- \$ 10.00
Total Received for Week of 03/01/09: \$ 1,593.00

**Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed
 to operate the church
 EACH WEEK,
 as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00**

FUND DRIVE REPORTS

NEW HYMNAL FUND

Offerings Received To Date: \$ 1,180.00

NEW PIANO FUND

Offerings Received To Date: \$ 560.00

PARSONAGE RENOVATION FUND

Total Received, To Date: \$ 304.00

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**DON'T FORGET TO GO TO OUR WEBSITE &
 STUDY THE BIBLE THROUGH OUR MEDIA
 MINISTRY!**

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. **Admit that you are a sinner.**
2. **Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.**
3. **Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.**
4. **You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).**
5. **By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.**



**Please Remember To
 Be Faithful to Give!**

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today - OK?** Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
 Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter
 Larry Mathews, Caryn Quinnely, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford,
 Jeannie Knight, Nathaniel & Rebekah White ----- Outreach
 Jamie Davis ----- Sound Technician