

## *The Five Points of Calvinism*

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**Introduction:** Calvinism is a system of belief that has influenced most religious bodies.

- A. John Calvin (1509-1564) was a key figure in the Reformation.
  - 1. His followers developed into what we now know as the Presbyterian church.
  - 2. Calvin's teachings can be summarized into five tenants (often called "Calvin's TULIP"):
    - (1) Total Depravity; (2) Unconditional Election; (3) Limited Atonement; (4) Irresistible Grace; and (5) Perseverance of the Saints.
- B. As with all systems of men, there is a wrong approach towards the scriptures.
  - 1. Bible study is minimized by the false view of the Holy Spirit. Men often will attribute their false views of scripture to the Holy Spirit. He has it and you do not! So he does not have to prove anything.
  - 2. Systems of men will follow the approach of wresting difficult passages first and then wresting the easy to understand passages. **(2 Pt 3:15-17)**
  - 3. The contradictions of this system are many. Still many out of loyalty to men continue in these beliefs. **(Gal 1:10)**

### ***I. The Calvinistic View of God***

- A. There are several false views that they base on the sovereignty of God.
  - 1. To say God is sovereign is to say that He "exercises supreme, permanent authority." The scriptures bear this out. **(Rom 9:5; Mt 28:18)**
  - 2. God is all knowing. **(Rom 11:33)**
  - 3. With these two correct Bible points in view the Calvinist claims that God has predestined everything.
- B. Foreknowledge does not mean predestination. **(Rom 4:17)**
  - 1. While God has a knowledge of things before they happen, this does not mean he approves of them. **(Heb 1:8; Jas 1:13-17)**
  - 2. God may choose not to know some things. **(Jer 32:35)**
- C. The Calvinistic view of God changes His Character
  - 1. Can a God who never gave a man a chance send him to hell? Can God send a baby to hell? The God of the Calvinists can. Not the God of the Bible. **(Deut 32:4)**
  - 2. It is possible to preach another Jesus. **(2 Cor 11:3-4)**

### ***II. The five points of Calvinism***

- A. **Total depravity.**
  - 1. Calvin taught that we all have inherited sin from Adam and are therefore sinful in nature from birth so that we are completely inclined to do evil.
  - 2. One cannot do good even if he wants to because of his depraved nature which he inherited from Adam.
  - 3. Consider some common proof texts. **(Rom 5:12; Psa 51:5)**
    - a. How did sin spread? Was it inherited or did they commit sin?
    - b. How does the Bible define sin? **(1 Jn 3:4)**
    - c. Was David born a sinner or into a sinful world?
  - 4. How does this harmonize with other passages? **(Ezk 18:19-20)**
  - 5. Consider these questions:
    - (1) If man is totally depraved, how is it possible for him to get worse? **(2 Tim. 3:13)**
    - (2) How is it possible for an infant to be saved? Christ, however, taught that little children were the kind of people in the kingdom. **(Luke 18:15-16)**

- (3) Can sin really be transmitted from parent to child? We all suffer the consequences of Adam's sin, but not the guilt. (**Rom. 5:12**). I came from God sinless, but have departed from Him when I sinned. (**Eccl. 7:29; Ezek. 28:15**).
- (4) Does man have any choice in the matter? The Scriptures teach that we can choose whether we want to follow the "carnal mind" ruled by Satan, or the "spiritual mind" ruled by God. (**Rom. 8:5-14; Rom. 6:12-13**)

#### **B. Unconditional Election**

1. Since man is totally depraved and can't do good if he wants to, then God must step in.
2. So God has determined who is going to be saved and who is not and there is nothing anyone can do about it.
3. Man therefore is saved without any action being expected on his part whatsoever.
4. Consider several objections to this doctrine:
  - (1) This makes God a respecter of persons, unless He saves everyone. But the Bible tells us that this is not so. (**Acts 10:34-35**).
  - (2) This takes away the free will response of man to the will of God. (**Phil. 2:12; Acts 2:40; Acts 2:38; John 3:16; Mark 16:16; etc.**)
  - (3) If God has already determined who will be saved, why preach the gospel?
  - (4) This would also make the Judgment unnecessary. (**Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10**)

#### **C. Limited Atonement**

1. Since God determines beforehand who will be saved and who will be lost, then it follows that the atonement of Jesus Christ is only for the elect -- those that God has predetermined to be saved.
2. Christ did not die just for the elect. (**Heb. 2:9; John 3:16-21; 1 John 2:2; Rom. 5:18-19; 1 Tim. 2:5-6**).
3. Christ died for all, but all do not accept His atonement.

#### **D. Irresistible Grace**

1. It follows that since one is so depraved that one cannot do anything good, the only way that God can save one is to change that person. This is done by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
2. And since God has predetermined who is to be saved and who is not, then those determined to be saved cannot resist God's grace. They will be saved whether they want to be or not.
3. We are told that we can resist God's grace. (**cf. Acts 7:51; Heb. 10:28,29**).

#### **E. Perseverance Of The Saints**

1. Finally it follows that if God has determined beforehand who will be saved or not, the saved certainly will be preserved to the end. If God has determined to save them, they won't be lost no matter what.
2. We are told that we can fall away. (**Heb. 6:4-6**).
3. We can sin after receiving salvation and face judgment. (**Heb. 10:26-29**).
4. It is possible for us to return to our former state. (**2 Pet. 2:20-22**).

### **III. Helping to free others from Satan's snare**

- A. We need great patience to help other caught in this system. (**2 Tim 2:24-26**)
- B. Try to patiently study with your friends. Start with respect for the word of God. (**2 Tim 3:16-17**)
- C. In time they may come to see the love of God and be freed from this enslaving system.

**Conclusion:** If we do not help those in error, who will?

(Material adapted from Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.)