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Calvinism Or Arminianism?

Calvinism Pt. 1

One of the Biblical doctrines that has divided the church since the 16th century is the doctrine of salvation under the two camps of Calvinism and Arminianism.

The entire system of Calvinism did not have its origin with John Calvin, but with Augustine from the Catholic Church.

1. The reformers were ex-Catholics and brought with them the Augustinian idea of salvation of the elite and eternal security under the teachings of Calvin, as a Catholic is guaranteed heaven by trust in the Catholic Church and their last rites by a priest.
2. Laurence M. Vance in his book The Other Side of Calvinism, documents that John Calvin did not originate the doctrines that bears his name and quotes many well known Calvinists to this effect, such as Kenneth G. Talbot and W. Gary Crampton, etc.
3. B. B. Warfield declared, "The system of doctrine taught by Calvin is just the Augustinianism common to the whole body of the Reformers. (Hunt:45)
4. Reform theologian Herman Hanko said, "Our fathers at Dordrecht knew well that these truths set forth in the Canons could not only be traced back to the Calvin Reformation; They could be traced

back to the theology of St Augustine...For it was Augustine who had originally defined these truths." (Hunt:84-85)

5. Listen to Calvin's own words, "Augustine is so wholly with me, that if I wished to write a confession of my faith, I could do so with all fullness and satisfaction to myself out of his writings." (Vance:38)

At a National Synod the Church was convened in Dort in 1618-19, nine years after the death of Arminius, to examine the teachings of James or Jacobus Arminius, which at that time the five points of Calvinism associated with John Calvin were stated.

1. Regarding this council John Wesley said Dort was as impartial as the Council of Trent.
* Don't overlook the church for injustices, the history of the church is an embarrassment!
2. Arminius was charged with so many false doctrines, from **Socinianism**, the denial of predestination, of the true nature of the Atonement and the Trinity, to **Pelagianism**, the denial that Adam's sin affected his posterity, an undue emphasis on free will, salvation by grace plus works, and the possibility of sinless perfection.
3. Arminius was a devout follower of Christ, who suffered much for his faith, even having his entire family murdered while he was in the University of Marburg in Germany, when Spanish Catholic troops massacred the population of his hometown of Oudewater in Holland.

In spite of all this, many in our day including Calvinist repeat these and many more false accusations about Arminius and anyone who does not agree with Calvinism and its five point of TULIP and labeled them an Arminian, but that is not necessarily so.

1. A.W. Tozer stated, “Both of these men were wrong in what they denied and right in what they affirmed”, in other words extremes.

* Any text to an extreme ends up in heresy!

2. Philip F. Congdon writes that, “A tulip is a beautiful flower, but bad theology”. (Hunt:88)

Dave Hunt in his book “What Love Is This” Calvin applied his legal training (Law) and natural brilliance to the development of a system of Christianity based upon an extreme view of God’s sovereignty, which by the sheer force of its logic would compel kings and all mankind to conform all affairs to righteousness. Indeed, in partnership with the church, kings and other civil rulers would enforce Calvinistic Christianity. (Hunt:61)

* Calvin tried this in Geneva!

Zane C. Hodges writes regarding the five points of Calvinism, known by the acronym TULIP, “None of these ideas has any right to be called normative Protestant theology. None has ever been held by a wide cross-section of Christendom. Most important none of them is biblical....all of them lie

outside the proper parameters of Christian orthodoxy”. (Hunt:80)

1. To teach that God predestined some by His Eternl Decree to heaven and the remainder of people to hell, is a terrible blasphemous charge to the holiness, justice and love of God!

* It is an illogical conclusion out of a rational deduction, with not one Scripture.

2. Human logic and rationalism is mixed with partial Biblical truth.

* Now our faith is reasonable, but it is not based on reason alone!

The late Pastor Chuck Smith, founder and leader of Calvary Chapel believed and taught for 48 years, from December of 1965 till October of 2013 the balance of middle ground between Calvinism and Arminianism, in view of the fact that both predestination and free-will are presented throughout the Scriptures, as part of the whole council of God, complements not contradictions.

* This being one of the distinctives of that Calvary Chapel on salvation!

1. “We neither are Five-Point Calvinists nor are we Arminian. We do believe in the security of the believer. We don’t believe that you can lose your salvation because you lost your temper or told a lie and, as a result, need to go forward next Sunday night to repent and get resaved. We believe in the security of the believer, but we also believe in the “perseverance of the saints.” We don’t believe that because you are a saint you will necessarily

persevere—but that you need to persevere because you are a saint. Jesus said, “If you continue in My word, then you are My disciples indeed.” Jn. 8:31

2. Then he quotes Jesus again, “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. Jn. 15:6-7 (Calvary Distinctives;115)

3. After his death some Calvary Chapels are moving away from this salvation distinctive, to a Calvinist position! Yet, in the Pastors Conference of 2003, Pastor Chuck asked the closet Calvinist to leave and change their name.

The exercise of our free-will is not works for salvation, but rather the enabling of God for salvation. Any attempt to teach either predestination or free-will at the expense of the other will be unbalanced and extreme, ending up in spiritual error, the sovereignty of God and human responsibility are both taught Scripture.

* The expression “holding I am held” describes this beautiful balance that is known to its full end only by God, as we abide in Christ confidently and courageously, knowing Jesus is able to present us faultless before the throne of God! Jude 24

So we want to look at the doctrine of salvation from three perspectives or camps:

- I.** Calvinism: The teaching of man.
- II.** Arminianism: The teaching of man.
- III.** Biblicism: The teaching of Scripture.

I. Calvinism: The teaching of man.

- A.** The doctrine of Calvinism is related to the French reformer John Calvin.
 - 1.** John Calvin lived from 1509-1564 and was the second generation of Reformers, one generation younger than Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon and Bucer, who he depended greatly on, in particular Bucer for the doctrine of predestination, acknowledging, “I have particularly copied Bucer, that man of holy memory, outstanding doctor in the church of God.” (Vance:103)
 - 2.** The failure of Calvin and many of the Reformers was to seek a Reformation of the Catholic Church, instead of a completely rejection of her.
 - 3.** Calvinism some times is known as Reform theology to distinguish it from Lutheran or Anabaptist theology.
 - 4.** Calvinism is founded upon John Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion.
 - 5.** Puritans and Presbyterians were influenced by Calvin.
 - 6.** The teaching of Calvinism is sometimes described as five point Calvinism.

- a. The interesting thing is that Calvin's teaching is presented by those of Reformed theology in different ways, as being two, three, four or five point Calvinist.
- b. This is the result of Calvin's followers who have carried his teachings out to their logical conclusions, rather than their Biblical balance.
- c. The heart of Calvinistic theology is the sovereign Eternal Decrees of God, all that happens is because God has decreed them.

B. The Teaching of five point Calvinism is best known for it's acrostic TULIP.

- 1. Total depravity, which is the belief that man is dead in trespasses and sins and unable in any way to save himself.
 - * Calvinist define this to say that man can not even desire a relationship with God or respond, unless God regenerates him first before salvation can take place, contrary to Scripture, faith comes first, then regeneration!
Rom. 10:17; Eph. 2:8-9
- 2. Unconditional election by the Eternal decree of God, which declares that God in eternity past chose or elected certain people to obtain salvation.

- * Some Calvinist carry this still further and teach "double election" or "reprobation" that God elected some to go to heaven and others to go to hell, which is totally unbiblical.
- 3. Limited atonement, which teaches that Jesus did not die for the sins of the entire world, but rather that He died only for those He elected to go to heaven, which clearly contradicts Scripture. Jn. 3:16
 - * Some Calvinist attempt to explain it with semantics that Jesus died for all, but does not pray for all and that His death theoretically could save everyone, but is effective only for the elect, substituting the word "elect" for "whosoever and world", altering the text!
- 4. Irresistible grace is the belief that God will draw to Himself only those whom He has elected regardless of their rebellion against Him, man has no free-will, therefore the only free-will allowed to the non-elect is to say no to the offer of salvation.
 - * A clear violation of free-will and human responsibility, this along with "Unconditional election" has led some hyper-Calvinist to teach that evangelism is not even to be done because those who are elected and

predestined can not resist God and they will be saved regardless what is done, this is Philosophical Greek determinism.

5. Perseverance of the saints, or eternal security, is the teaching that says that a true believer born again of the Spirit cannot walk away from his salvation, ignoring all the warning and exhortations to the believer to continue abide and to turn back to God.
 - a. So the only other option to explain a person going back into sin is that they were never born again, which by the way is one possibility, but not the only one. 1Jn. 2:19
 - * There are three groups in First John, the believer being warned, the believes being deceived and the deceivers, the Gnostics!
 - b. As a parent do you warn your child hypothetically, void of real danger?
6. Laurence M. Vance in his book The Other Side of Calvinism declared, "The basic error of Calvinism is confounding election and predestination with salvation, which they never are in the Bible, but only in the philosophical speculations and theological implication of Calvinism." (Vance:35)
 - a. All Calvinists have one thing they agree upon, God by His sovereign,

elect decree, has determined before the foundation of the world who shall be saved and who shall be lost.

- b. Calvinists by rejecting the simplicity of salvation taught in the Scriptures have constructed a system of salvation that is unbiblical accompanied with an intricate invented vocabulary to explain their doctrine of salvation of TULIP.
- c. Such as supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism, total depravity and total inability, reprobation and preterition, double election or reprobation, synergism and non-synergism, free will and effectual calling, perseverance and preservation.

Calvinism is the teaching of man's logical theology!

II. Arminianism: The teaching of man.

- A. Arminianism is associated with James Arminius who was a Dutch theologian.
 1. He lived from 1560-1609, Arminius was four years old when Calvin died, so the two men could never meet, let alone debated their views.
 - * Before Arminius was born, Anastaius Veluanus (1520-1570) had rejected

the predestination of Calvinist in his book, A layman's Gide, which circulated all over the Netherlands.

2. He was born as the Reformation was already firmly established in Germany and Switzerland, but not in the Netherlands, the land of Arminius.
3. He lived when the Reformation in the Netherlands coincided with its liberation from Spanish domination and the rise of the Catholic Counter-Reformation to stamp out the increasing threat of Protestantism, issuing edicts against Lutherans and Anabaptist and their writings, many being burned alive.
4. He was appointed a legal guardian at his father's death, Theodorus Aemilius (1574), a protestant-leaning priest, cousin to his mother, after his death a second gardian Rudolphus Snellias was appointed, also a cousin of his mother, a linguist and mathematician from the University of Marburg in Germany, who enrolled Arminius at Marbury in 1575.
5. His studies were interrupted that year, as Spanish troops invaded Oudewater and massacred the town, killing his entire family.
6. He then spent the next five years at the University at Leiden from 1576-1581, distinguishing himself above his classmates and formerly ordained on

August 27, 1588 and was the first native Hollander to minster in the Reformed church in Amsterdam.

7. He married the daughter of a prominent merchant two years later and had twelve children, three died in infancy.
8. He remained in Amsterdam a total of fifteen years, until 1603, writing extensively, but most of his works were not published until after his death.
9. He was as orthodox on the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, as any Calvinist and and like Calvin he was not the originator of the system that bears his name.
10. He taught that man is born with a sin nature inherited from Adam through the fall, believed the Scriptures were Inspired, infallible and innearant, all sixty –six books, he believed the nature of the attributes of the Godhead, the Trinity
11. He like Calvin and other Reformers was strongly anti-Catholic, classifying himself beside ones who said the Pope was “the adulterer and pimp of the Church, the false prophet, the destroyer and subverter of the Church, the enemy of God and the Antichirst.”
12. He received his theological training from the academy in Geneva that was founded by Calvin and studied under Beza, the

successor of Calvin, subscribing to Calvin's statement on justification found in his *Institutes* and sanctification.

13. He started out as a committed Calvinist and then modified his views, yet he believed in eternal security like the Calvinist declaring, "At no period have I asserted 'that believers do finally decline or fall away from faith or salvation.'" (Vance:130).
14. He became sick confined to a bed, controversy daunted him, personal attacks were endless and theological controversies over Calvinism.
15. His views were expressed in a document submitted to the state of Holland by his **followers** called *The Remonstrance* in 1610.
16. In 1618, nine years after Arminius died a National Synod of the Church as stated was convened in Dort to examine the five points of Arminianism and was declared to be heretical after 154 sessions that lasted seven months, at which time the five points of Calvinism associated with John Calvin were associated, this was nine years after his death.
17. Yet, Arminius was a devout follower of Christ, who suffered much for his faith and is the theological basis for the Methodist, Wesleyan, Nazarenes,

Pentecostal, Free Will Baptist, Holiness, and many charismatic churches.

- B. The teachings of Arminianism also is know by five points as objection to the five points of Calvinism.
 - * You can not be a one, two or three point Calvinist, it is either five or nothing and since the first point is not defined Biblically, it is a faulty foundation on which the other four are built on!
 1. Election based on God's Foreknowledge of those who would respond to salvation.
 - * He rejected the idea of unconditional election" and that God elected some for hell.
 2. Unlimited atonement, the belief that Jesus Christ died on the cross for all people and His blood is able to atone for them and all can be saved.
 - * Rejecting limited atonement!
 3. Natural inability meaning that man can not save himself, but the Holy Spirit must bring about the New birth.
 - * Strict Arminians do not believe man is total depraved and condemned as a result of Adam's sin, Pelagianism, contradicting Roman. Rom. 5:12
 4. Prevenient grace, which believes that the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit enables the believer to respond to the

Gospel and to cooperate with God in the work of the individuals salvation.

* Wesley was big on this!

5. Conditional perseverance, the belief that man can choose to reject God and therefore fall from Grace in salvation after he has been born again.
 - * His followers believed this, but not Arminius, Calvinist call it works!
6. The only real fault of Arminius was to disagree with the established doctrines of Calvinism.
 - * Arminius had four significant disputes over Calvinism during his ministry, three in Amsterdam, one in Leiden.
7. Berkhof says, "It is a well-known fact that Arminius himself did not depart as far from the Scripture truth and from the teachings of the Reformers as did his followers." (Vance:138)

Arminianism is the teaching of man's logical theology!

III. Biblicism: The teaching of Scripture.

- A. Biblicism, for the lack of a better word is the interpretation of the Bible literally, this is what we are at Calvary Chapel, we neither embrace all the five points of Calvinism or those of Arminianism, only what we can verify through the Scriptures. Acts 17:11

* I use to call it Calvinianism, but I don't want to give any idea that we agree with Calvinism, in any way!

1. The failure of these two camps is to think that this argument of predestination and free will can be completely understood by the mind of man.
 - a. Isaiah tell us, "For My **thoughts** are not your **thoughts**, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My **thoughts** than your **thoughts**." Is. 55:8-9
 - * I can trust God what I can't understand, based on what I do understand!
 - b. Paul tells the Roman, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?". Rom. 11:33-35
2. The teaching of predestination or election is Biblical, but not the way Calvinist teach it by Calvinism is clearly taught throughout the Scripture from the

perspective of God's sovereignty and Foreknowledge.

- a. Overemphasizing and wrongly defining the sovereignty of God.
 - b. Basing everything that happens of the Eternal Decrees of God, making God the author of sin, saying that God decreed the fall of Adam.
3. The teaching of man's free-will by Arminianism is also clearly taught throughout Scripture, as man is a free moral being.
- a. The invitation is to "whosoever will", "all who are heavy laden", "choose you this day", "whosoever thirsts".
 - b. The provisions are for the whole world. Jn. 3:16; 1Jn. 2:2
4. Philip Schaff in his History of the Church states that both of these men are right in what they assure; both are wrong in what they deny.
- a. If either truth is pressed to the exclusion of the other it becomes a partial Biblical truth that ends in error.
 - b. D. L. Moody who said predestination and free-will are like two parallel line that never cross in this side of heaven, but when we get to heaven we will see how they intersect.
 - c. It is like the two oars you need to row, if you have just one, you end up going

in circles or like the metal speed bumps that mark out your lane on the freeway, too far over to the right or left will sound off the crossing of the metal bumps revealing your deviation.

- B.** The teaching of biblicism is simply the belief in the balance of the two Biblical truths recognizing the futile attempt to fully understand it to a rational end.
- * Predestination and free-will is much like attempting to squeeze a slimy oyster, just when you think you have it, it slips out of your hands!
1. We at Calvary Chapel believe that man is depraved, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God". Rom. 3:23
 2. We at Calvary Chapel believe in God's predestination from the foundations of the world. Eph. 1:4-6
 3. We at Calvary Chapel believe in man's free will to be saved and whosoever will, can take of the water of life freely. Rev. 22:17
 4. We at Calvary Chapel believe we are elect according or literally in harmony with the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. 1Pet. 1:2
 5. We at Calvary Chapel believe we are predestined to be conformed into the

image of God, being predestined, called, justify and glorified. Rom. 8:29-30

6. We at Calvary Chapel believe that we are saved through faith, that not of ourselves, for it is a gift of God lest any man should boast. Eph. 2:8-9
7. We at Calvary Chapel believe that Jesus Christ made a vicarious atonement by His death for the sins of the entire world, forgave us and redeemed us by His blood. 1Pet. 1:19

C. The warnings throughout the Scriptures are not hypothetical, but real.

1. Hebrews tells us that if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins". Heb. 10:26
* This is not falling into sin, backsliding, etc.
2. "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?" Heb. 10:29
 - a. There are five warning passages in Hebrews, each progressive and more severe!

- b. A Calvinist would merely say that the person was never born again, excluding any possibility of their not abiding in Christ. 1Jn. 2:19
3. All the warnings to continue and abide are given to the believer, not the non-believer.
 - a. If there is no chance of the believer not continuing, why the warnings?
 - b. Jesus makes this very clear, we must abide in Him, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." Jn. 15:4-6
 - d. I have never doubted my salvation in 41 years that I have been saved as I have abided in Christ!
4. The teaching of falling away is evident in the Scriptures.
 - a. The Spirit speaks this truth. 1Tim. 4:1
* "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith (at different given

- times), giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons”.
- b.** The apostle Peter provides us with an awesome warning. 2Pet. 2:20-21
 * “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.”
- 5.** How can the believer know and be assured of his salvation?
- a.** By abiding in Christ.
- 1)** The word abide and abides “meno”, appears twenty-two times in First John and it means to remain, continue, to not depart.
 - 2)** Yet the entire work of salvation is of God, as He enables us, but does not force us, it is in Him that we are to be confident always.
 - 3)** Chuch Smith said, “There are people who are always trying to pighole Calvary Chapel. Do you believe in eternal security” I say,

- “Yes, of course I believe in eternal security. As long as you abide in Christ, I’m eternally secure.”
 Distinctives:116
- 4)** “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ”. Phil. 1:6
- 5)** “For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. 2Tim. 1:12
- b.** By giving diligence making his calling and election sure, seeing that certain things are present in his or her life. 2Pet. 1:10
 * “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble”.
- c.** By knowing that Jesus is able to keep me from falling, and to present me faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Jude 24
- d.** By our love. Jn. 13:35; 1Cor. 13
- e.** The word “assured” is Biblical theology, the word “security” is man’s theology!

- f. The Bible tells us we are saved, we are being saved and that we shall be saved, it is a process from birth to glorification, yet in the mind of God it is as good as done! Eph. 2:8; 1Cor. 1:18; Heb. 9:28

Illustration

You might look at the two Scriptural doctrines of predestination or election and free will like walking through a door. On one side over the door it say “choose” and as you walk through on the other side it says, “I chose you”.

Biblicism is the teaching of Scriptures!

Conclusion

This is the doctrine of salvation from three perspectives or camps:

- I.** Calvinism: The teaching of man!
- II.** Arminianism: The teaching of man!
- III.** Biblicism: The teaching of Scriptures!