AN INTRODUCTION TO CALVINISM

By Brother Mike Sutherland

Calvinism is a doctrine held to by Reformed Churches, Presbyterians, Reformed Baptists, Sovereign Grace Baptists, Primitive Baptists, and some others. Calvinism is the doctrine that states that the salvation of every man and woman is decided by God before those men and women are ever born. The Calvinists believe that specific men and women have been predestined to go to heaven before they are even born. The Calvinists also believe that specific men and women have been predestined to hell before they are even born. There is no choice in the matter for the lost sinner. Those predestined to go to hell will go to hell. Those predestined to go to heaven will go to heaven. According to them, you have no choice. We are here to tell you that Calvinism is a doctrine of devils and a philosophy of man based in Roman Catholic and Gnostic heresy. Many Baptist pastors will tell you that they are a two, three, or four point Calvinist without truly understanding what each of the five points means. Much of the doctrine of Calvinism really sounds good on the surface until it is examined under the light of the Bible. WE REJECT ALL FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM. WE ALSO REJECT ANY DOCTRINE THAT SAYS THAT YOU CAN LOSE YOUR SALVATION. The reason that we make both those statements together is that most Calvinists will tell you that you are either a Calvinist or you are an Arminian. We are neither Calvinistic nor Arminian. We are Biblical. The Arminians are a group of people that believe that you can lose your salvation. We reject both viewpoints as being unscriptural. We believe that salvation is available to all and is a whosover will salvation that cannot be lost. To support his false doctrine, the Calvinist has to throw out every all and every whosoever will in the Bible that relates to salvation. In every point of Calvinism they take good, sound Bible doctrine and then start pulling rotten fruit from the tree of knowledge to ADD to the word of God. When they do not add to the word of God, they wrest the scriptures to their own destruction. They read election and predestination into practically every scripture that deals with salvation. The five point Calvinistic doctrine of salvation is referred to by the acronym TULIP.

The word TULIP is an acronym for: **T**otal Depravity of man; Unconditional Election; **L**imited Atonement; **I**rresistible Grace; and finally **P**erseverance Of The Saints. The five tenets can be briefly described as follows:

(1) Total depravity states that the lost person has absolutely no free will and is absolutely incapable of responding to God. In other words, the sinner cannot repent unless God overpowers him.

(2) Unconditional Election states that a lost sinner is chosen to be saved regardless of whether they want to.

(3) Limited Atonement states that Christ died only for the elect and not for all men.

(4) Irresistible Grace states that the elect, or in other words those predestined to be saved, will not be able to resist the saving grace of God. They will be saved in spite

of themselves.

(5) Perseverance Of The Saints states that the "elect" will, by nature of their salvation, persevere to the end and that the identifying mark of one who has been predestined to be saved is his Perseverance in the things of God.

Dave Hunt on pages 108 and 109 of his book "What Love Is This" describes the TULIP briefly as thus:

"T" stands for Total Depravity: that man, because he is spiritually dead to God "in trespasses and in sins" (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13), is incapable of responding to the gospel, though able to make other moral choices. The Westminster Confession of Faith declares, "Our first parents…became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body…wholly inclined to all evil.... Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation…being altogether averse from that good, and dead to sin, is not able by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

"U" stands for Unconditional Election: that God decides on no basis whatsoever but by the mystery of His will to save some, called the elect, and to allow all others to go to hell, even though He could save all mankind if He so desired. The Canons of Dort declare, "That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it proceeds from God's eternal decree...[by] which decree, he graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate, and inclines them to believe, while he leaves the non-elect in his just judgment to their own wickedness and obduracy."

"L" stands for Limited Atonement: that the elect are the only ones for whom Christ died in payment of the penalty for their sins, and that His death is efficacious for no others, nor was intended to be. Dort declares: "For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that…the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect…all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation…he purchased by his death."

"I" stands for Irresistible Grace: that God is able to cause whomever He will to respond to the gospel; that without this enabling, no one could do so; and that He only provides this Irresistible Grace to the elect and damns the rest. The Westminster Confession states: "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death…effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace."

AN INTRODUCTION TO CALVINISM

"P" stands for Perseverance of the Saints: that God will not allow any of the elect to fall away. It is consistent with the salvation that He has sovereignly given them. The Westminster Confession states: "They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election.

If you are a pastor, preacher, or evangelist who is teetering on the destructive Calvinist cliff, we would encourage you to put down every book that you have ever read by a Calvinist and before you proceed any further search the scriptures for understanding. If you state that you are a two, three, or four point Calvinist, do you really understand what you are saying, or are you taking the word of another man? How would you answer the following questions in the light of the fact that GOD IS LOVE and is the author and finisher of JUSTICE (THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE) :

1. Do you really believe that you are unable to be saved without being regenerated first; in other words, that you cannot respond to the gospel without being overpowered by God? What if God chose not to overpower you? Would that make God a respecter of persons? Would that mean that God does not love you? See: GOD'S WILL AND MAN'S WILL

2. Do you really believe that God has predestined YOU to heaven or HELL without your having a choice; how can you be sure? Do you believe that God has predestined your baby boy or baby girl to hell; what about your mother or father? Would you call your mother a loving mother if she brought forth an infant who she planned to throw into the lake of fire? Yet, that is what the Calvinist accuses God of doing

3. Do you really believe in the doctrine of limited atonement; that Christ did not die for everyone? Do you really believe that the Lord Jesus Christ did not die for your brother, your sister, your daughter, your wife, your husband, your father, or your mother? If he did not die for your mother or your father, then who did he die for?

4. Do you really believe that men and women cannot resist the grace of God in turning them to salvation? Have you ever known anyone to resist the grace of God in salvation? Did you resist the grace of God for a long time before you were saved?

5. Do you really believe that men and women must persevere unto the end to be saved? Does that mean that they are working for their salvation?

In our study and research over the last several years we have noticed that Calvinism is running rampant in Independent Baptist churches as well as other churches. We really believe that if saved, Bible believing preachers would research what Calvinists actually believe and then compare it to the

scriptures they would come away in shock. The list of five questions just above defines a lot of what the Calvinists believe about salvation. To get a deeper understanding of what Calvinists believe, we recommend the books "What Love Is This" by Dave Hunt and "The Other Side of Calvinism" by Laurence M. Vance. Dave Hunt has ties to the Plymouth Brethren and Laurence Vance is an Independent Baptist. These two books are probably the best two books that have ever been written in defense of the faith against Calvinism.

The words that the Calvinist likes to play with from his Pandora's toy box of salvation are: elect, elected, election, choose, chose, chosen, foreknow, foreknowledge, foreordained, ordained, predestinate, and predestinated. The Calvinist does not even like talking about free will. To the Calvinist, an act of free will is a violation of the sovereignty of God. To the Calvinist, the sovereignty of God is His preeminent attribute. To them, it supercedes every other attribute of God including the love of God. We have looked at every scripture that we could think of dealing with the doctrine of salvation.

WE SAY AGAIN THAT WE REJECT ALL FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM. We will agree that the depravity of man is a scriptural doctrine. We object to the addition of the word total; particularly as it is defined and described by the Calvinists themselves. When the Calvinists ADD their words to the word of God then it becomes heresy. This doctrine states that man is either not capable, or not able, to respond to the gospel without having been regenerated first. They also state that man is incapable of exercising faith in the Lord Jesus Christ without having been regenerated by the Spirit of God. One Calvinist stated that we are born again so that we may believe in Jesus. Both of those ideas are heresy. Both ideas are a direct contradiction of the Scriptures. In the Bible, faith, or belief, always come before regeneration by the Holy Ghost of God. The Bible sets faith as the condition for regeneration. Also, contrary to what Calvinists teach, faith by scriptural definition is not a work. The Bible no where says that faith is a gift of God. However, the Bible does say that salvation (through faith) is a gift of God (*Ephesians 2:8-10*).

> [8] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. *Ephesians 2:8-10*

"Through faith" is a prepositional phrase that modifies the noun "salvation". Salvation is the subject of the sentence. Thus, it is salvation that is the gift of God and NOT faith. The sovereign God of the universe has established faith as the condition for salvation. Therefore, faith cannot be a work because God will not accept our works as a basis for salvation.

We agree that the doctrine of election is a scriptural doctrine. The doctrine of Unconditional Election is not a scriptural doctrine. The word unconditional is an addition We disagree with the addition of the term unconditional; especially as it is applied by the Calvinists to the doctrine of salvation. The basic meaning of election is to choose or to be chosen. God speaks of choosing and being chosen 123 times in our King James Bibles. Thirty of these occurrences appear in the New Testament. Ninety-three of these appear in the Old Testament. In none of these Scriptures, is it indicated that God predestinated particular individuals to salvation and particular individuals to

damnation. Predestination is NEVER to salvation. Predestination is NEVER mentioned in relation to a lost man or woman. Predestination is NEVER to damnation. IN THE BIBLE, PREDESTINATION IS ONLY USED OF SAVED PEOPLE.

We agree that the doctrine of the grace of God in salvation is a scriptural doctrine. Irresistible grace is NOT a scriptural doctrine. The addition of the term irresistible turns the grace of God into imposition. For grace to be grace, it must be freely given and freely received. Grace in salvation is the gift of God to all men. For a gift to be a gift, it must be both given and received. Titus 2:11 says: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,". Grace in no way implies the imposition of the will of one upon the will another. When speaking of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:10, the clear message of the Holy Ghost of God is that the grace of God can be resisted, or bestowed in vain. If you are a preacher, pastor, or teacher how many times have you seen the evidence of an individual under conviction resist the call to come to salvation. You can see the conviction all over their face and yet they resist the saving grace of God. One of the clearest cases of resisting the Holy Ghost of God occurred in Acts chapter 7 when Stephen was preaching to the Jews.

We believe in the doctrine of eternal security. Many Baptists will say that they believe in perseverance of the saints because they confuse it with the scriptural doctrine of everlasting life (or eternal security). A scriptural study of the Calvinistic doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints will prove it to be a very clever presentation of a works based salvation. It lines up very well with the Arminian doctrine of conditional security. In hearing the Calvinists themselves explain it, Perseverance of the Saints sounds much like the doctrine of the crowd that says that you can lose your salvation. Perseverance of the Saints is NOT the scriptural doctrine of Eternal Security.

Calvinism is a synthesis of Augustinianism, Platonism, Gnosticism, and Bible truth. A little heresy is added here and a little heresy is added there and the first thing you know the whole Biblical doctrine of salvation is leavened with philosophy, Gnosticism, false doctrine, and other lies of Satan. The doctrine of Calvinism kills many of the so called reformed churches. One of the problems with Calvinism is well presented by the question: “How can you know, or be sure, that you are one of the elect?”. Calvinism presents seven major dangers. From The Landmarks Of Baptist Doctrine Book III by Pastor Robert Sargent the following seven dangers are listed:

1. Calvinism destroys missionary and soul winning endeavor.
2. Calvinism wrests the Scriptures.
3. Calvinism leads to extremes and other heresy.
4. Calvinism is a doctrine that promotes spiritual pride.
5. Calvinism slights the character of God.
6. Calvinism makes God to be the author of sin.
7. Calvinism undermines human responsibility.

Much of this doctrine cannot be explained without an in depth study of the theology behind it. The problem with much of our theology and theologians down through the ages is that much of the theology and many of the theologians have tried to reason the Scriptures out according to man’s

understanding, reason, and logic. Much of man's theology is not enlightened by the Holy Ghost of God, but is rather conceived in the darkness of the natural man's mind.. Calvinism is an elitist gospel that appeals to intellectuals and human pride and human reason. God says in *1 Corinthians 2:12-16*:

> [12] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. [13] Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. [14] But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. [15] But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. [16] For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. *1 Corinthians 2:12-16*

Much of the doctrine of Calvinism has not come from the mind of Christ. Every foul word that flies from the mouth of the Calvinist god ends up roosting in the tree of knowledge. The tree of knowledge has Gnostics roosting in it. If you stand around the tree long enough, you will be fed some of the poisonous fruit from it from the pens of "Saint?" Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Calvin. All three of these men were arch persecutors of Bible believing Christians and Jews. These men and their churches either advocated and/or participated in the torture, maiming, and murder of Bible believing Christians and their offspring including infants and unborn babies! Knowing that, can I trust their theology? Absolutely not! Yet, we have so called Bible believing Baptist preachers and teachers that appeal to these three heretics to support their elitist, Satanic, and Gnostic Calvinistic theology. CALVINISM IS A DOCTRINE OF DEVILS AND A DAMNABLE HERESY!

> [17] Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. *2 Peter 3:17*

> [8] 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*

This study barely even scratches the surface of the heresy of Calvinism. For an in depth study of the multiple heresies of Calvinism, we highly recommend the books "What Love Is This" by Dave Hunt and "The Other Side Of Calvinism" by Laurence Vance.