

# Calvinism #1

Martin Luther was one of the most prominent theologians of the Reformation movement. Because of his influence, most Protestant groups today believe that salvation is obtained by faith alone. His influence on Protestant denominations is rivaled only by John Calvin.

Calvin was born in 1509, and came to adulthood under the influences of the Reformation begun by Martin Luther. In 1536 he published the first edition of his Institutes of the Christian Religion, which contain a systematic theology based on the premises of the total depravity of man, and the individual predestination of the saved. Though few Christian denominations can be said to be fully Calvinistic in their theology, Calvin's writings have had a profound influence upon Protestant doctrine.

Calvin's theology, when stated plainly, is hardly palatable. Note this quote from Sam Morris, a former pastor of the First Baptist Church in Stamford, TX: "We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul ... All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger ..."

"The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul." While the quote sounds absurd on the surface, and indeed is, it is a simple, honest assessment of Calvinistic doctrine. The five foundational pillars of Calvinistic theology are total depravity, unconditional salvation, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints.

Over the next two weeks, we will concisely define each of the tenants of Calvinism, and refute them from scripture. It is important to note each of these "pillars" are interconnected. If any one of the five are disproved from scripture, the entire theology crumbles beneath its own weight. As stated previously, Calvin worked from the premise of the depravity of man. Calvin believed, as did others of his time, that we inherit the sin of Adam. In effect, that man is born into the world totally depraved. We will see how this fatally flawed assumption has allowed the construction of a set of false doctrines the likes of which the world has never seen.

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