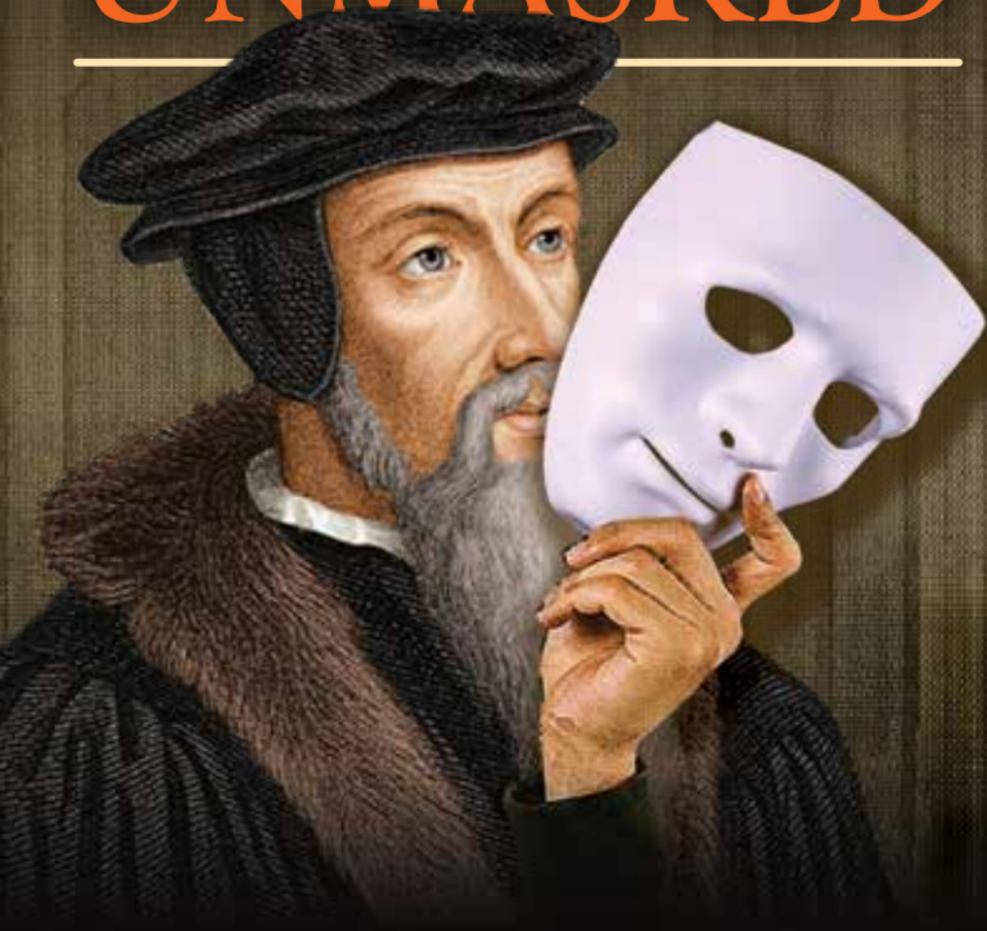




Calvinism

UNMASKED



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“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven”.

(Matthew 7:15-21)

CALVINISM UNMASKED

The Herald of Hope

Some 2000 years ago, the Lord Jesus warned His disciples of false prophets who would come in sheep's clothing and who would be ravenous wolves (Matt. 7:15).

A similar warning was voiced by the Apostle Paul when he spoke to the Ephesian church elders in Acts 20. *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”* (Acts 20:29-30).

Paul consistently warned the churches that he ministered to of the dangers that would confront the congregations. *“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears”* (Acts 20:31).

Unfortunately, today many congregations in Australia and around the world receive few warnings in relation to corrupt theology which is brought along by Bible teachers in their very midst. False teaching in today's world is rampant in Bible and Theological Colleges as well as Christian Conferences and can be found in churches of all denominations whether liberal or conservative.



One of the most popular false teachings today that affects every corner of the globe is Calvinism.

Calvinism has been around for centuries but in today's contemporary world it has been repackaged with its glossy books, its trendy teachers, and a plethora of new- style Reformed (Grace) churches.

In Australia the new Reformed churches are increasingly popular as many people, both young and old rightly reject churches that have made entertainment, charismatic excesses and prosperity preaching central to the life of their congregations.

Numbers of modern Reformed churches have the appearance of being theologically conservative, claiming to uphold the authority of Scripture, whilst removing the old religious traditions of their forefathers, such as creeds and collared clergyman in clerical robes. Many Reformed churches today seem to offer sound Bible preaching, conservative contemporary music and active discipleship programs along with well-staffed adult, youth, and children's ministries.

In Reformed churches the urgency of reaching the lost in evangelism can be stifled as Reformed doctrine teaches that God has already predetermined those that would respond to the Gospel. Evangelism then becomes only a means to call in the elect rather than the lost.

Calvinistic churches defame the character of God by publishing a false view of God and His character. The Calvinist's view of God is that He delights in the damnation of the lost and that Jesus Christ only loved the elect enough to die for them alone.

THE BEGINNINGS:

Calvinism is a belief system that has its roots in the theology of Augustine who was Bishop of Hippo in Northern Africa from 395 to 430.

In the 16th century Calvin systematized the teachings of Augustine on predestination and published them in his *Institutes*, affirming his Augustinian beliefs that: “God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction” (*Calvin’s Institutes, Ch. 21*).

In the 1640’s Calvinistic doctrines were incorporated into The Westminster Confession of Faith which is used by Reformed churches or adaptations of it, as their doctrinal statement today.

Reformed writer Loraine Boettner in his book, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, states: “The Calvinistic system emphasizes five distinct doctrines”.

The five doctrines of Calvinism are known as T-U-L-I-P: **T** – Total Depravity, **U** - Unconditional Election, **L** - Limited Atonement, **I** - Irresistible Grace and **P** - Perseverance of the Saints.

It should be noted that numbers of people in Reformed churches may not subscribe to ALL the five points of Calvinism.



Total Depravity: Calvinists rightly understand that man is depraved and cannot in any way merit righteousness before God (Jer. 1:9; Isa. 64:6; Eph. 2:8-9) but they err in believing that man is totally incapable of accepting God's free offer of salvation. In the Calvinist's mind only the elect can have faith which they see as a gift bestowed by a sovereign act of God.

Paul wrote about faith: *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom. 10:17).

Faith comes by hearing and believing the Word of God. God invites all humanity to respond to His offer of salvation but though all humanity is totally depraved, this does not make man incapable of hearing God's call and responding.

John wrote of Christ: *"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"* (John 1:9).

God does not call sinful man to respond and then prevent them from responding because they happen to be the unelected. God loves sinful humanity and says: *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, ALL the ends of the earth"* (Isa. 45:22).

Jonah warned the wicked people of Nineveh of God's impending judgement and they responded and were spared (Jonah 3:5,10) which shows that sinful people can understand and even obey the Word of God.

Numerous references could be cited on how God calls sinful men to respond to Him. (Gen. 4:7; Joshua 24:15; Acts 17:30; Rom. 1:16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). Jesus did not say, *"You cannot come to me"* but *"ye will not come to me, that ye might have life"* (John 5:40).

Unconditional Election: The Calvinistic doctrine of Unconditional Election teaches that God has chosen specific individuals for salvation whilst others are chosen by God for damnation. John Calvin wrote: “All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation” (Institutes, Book 3 Chap. 21:5).

The Westminster Confession of Faith in Chapter III also teaches Unconditional Election “...for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.”

The Bible says God has “*no pleasure in the death of the wicked*” (Ezek. 18:32; 33:11) and is longsuffering “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (2 Peter 3:9). Calvinistic Theology teaches the opposite; that God is more than willing for the non-elect to perish. Calvinism makes God out to be a respecter of persons but “*There is no respect of persons with God*” (Rom. 2:11).

We read in the Bible that God elects (chooses) individuals for various tasks. For example:

- i) God chose the nation of Israel to be His witness to the world, and to bring the Saviour forth (Deut. 7:6-8; Isa. 11:1-5; Matt. 2:6, 15, 17, 23).

NOTE: The Westminster Confession of Faith has been adopted by the Presbyterian Church of Australia with minor amendments as a statement of its key doctrines. The doctrinal statement of the Anglican Church of Australia, ‘The Thirty Nine Articles’ also teaches predestination and election. “... he (God) hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour” (Article XVII).

- ii) Jesus chose His twelve disciples including Judas to be with Him in the ministry (John 6:70).
- iii) In the “foreknowledge of God” the believers are chosen to bear fruit; to be holy and without blame, to be conformed to the image of His Son and to be a blessing in the world (John 15:16; Eph. 1:3-4; Rom. 8:29; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

The process of salvation is clearly described in Eph.1:13: *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”*



The elect are simply those that respond to the good news of salvation provided in the sacrificial death of Christ for the sins of the entire world. The elect in the New Testament Church are chosen for eternal blessings and not for salvation.

Paul told Timothy to pray for *“all men”* for *“God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Tim. 2:1-6).

Limited Atonement: The doctrine of Limited Atonement teaches that Christ only died for the elect and that He did not die for all people. This Calvinistic doctrine strikes a blow at the heart of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16).

Limited Atonement can be destroyed by one single verse of Scripture found in 2 Peter 2:1 for Christ even died for false prophets with damnable heresies who were *“denying the Lord that bought them”*. Jesus is the *“Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29) and He died for the sins of believers and unbelievers alike (John 3:14-18; 4:24, 1 John 2:1-2). Jesus is *“the Saviour of the world”* (1 John 4:14) though many reject Him.

Years ago, I was at a meeting in a church with some Reformed pastors and elders where I asked a question of a senior minister that was present. I wanted to know if he believed that Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross was for all people. The minister was emphatic in his answer to me, and it was abundantly clear that he did not believe that Christ’s death atoned for the sins of all humanity. That Reformed church minister had answered

my question honestly according to his theology, for Reformed theology at its core teaches that Christ only died for the selected elected.

Praise God that the atonement was for all humanity and not just for a few SELECTED ELECTED! See the following Scriptures: (Isa. 45:21-22; 53:6; Luke 2:10; John 12:32; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 5:14-20; Col. 1:20; Rom. 3:23-26; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:3-6; 1 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2; Rev. 22:17).

If Reformed ministers preached their gospel truthfully and openly according to their beliefs, then they would have to state to their congregations that Christ only died for some of the people in their churches. They would also have to state to their churches that Christ only loves some of them.

Furthermore, if Reformed ministers stand true to their beliefs, then they should inform their congregations that according to their theology and *The Westminster Confession* that some people in their congregations, including little babies and innocent children are foreordained by their 'Calvinist god' to an eternal Hell.



Of course, if Reformed ministers didn't hide the reality of the hideous heresies of Augustine and Calvin then they would gradually empty their churches.

Irresistible Grace: Calvinists believe that God makes His grace irresistible only to His elect people in order that they would be saved.

Calvinist author Edwin H. Palmer writes, "...God loves certain ones, sends Jesus to die for them, and then sends His Holy Spirit to cause them to accept the sacrifice that Christ has made for them.

...Irresistible means that when God has chosen some to be saved and when he sends his Spirit to change them from being hateful to being loving, no one can resist him." Palmer goes on to state: "He (man) is never able to choose good, God, and Christ, because he is in slavery to the Devil and his own sinful desires. He has no real freedom..." (The Five Points of Calvinism, pages 68-69, Edwin Palmer).

Calvinism denies that man has a freewill and that human beings can respond to God in their unsaved state.

Contrary to Calvinistic doctrines in fact, sinful man is told to seek the Lord in order to find Him (Jer. 29:13; 1 Chron. 28:9; Amos 5:4-6; Isa. 55:6-7; Matt. 11:28).

The term Irresistible Grace is never found in the Bible. Men do resist God and His grace before they are converted; Paul did (Acts 9:3).



God made man with a free will. Originally, Adam and Eve were sinless yet they chose to sin (Gen. 2:15- 17; 3:6); because their wills were independent of their natures! Their sons, Cain and Abel both had sinful natures and Cain chose to rebel against God whilst his brother Abel chose to obey the Lord. Joshua told Israel, *“Choose you this day whom ye will serve”* (Josh. 24:15); some obeyed and some turned to idolatry.

No person can blame God for sending them to hell. When men go to hell it is because they bring *“upon themselves swift destruction”* (2 Peter 2:1).

To Israel Jesus said: *“How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”* (Matt. 23:37).

God never forces individuals to be saved and His grace is not offered to just a select few. All are responsible for what they do with Christ.

Biblical salvation is not a gift given only to a select few who cannot resist but a free gift given to all who see their great need and who flee *“for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them...even Jesus”* (Heb. 6:18-20).

Jesus said *“Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”* (Rev. 22:17). The grace of God and the salvation of God is open to any that would come to Him. For *“the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to ALL MEN”* (Titus 2:11).

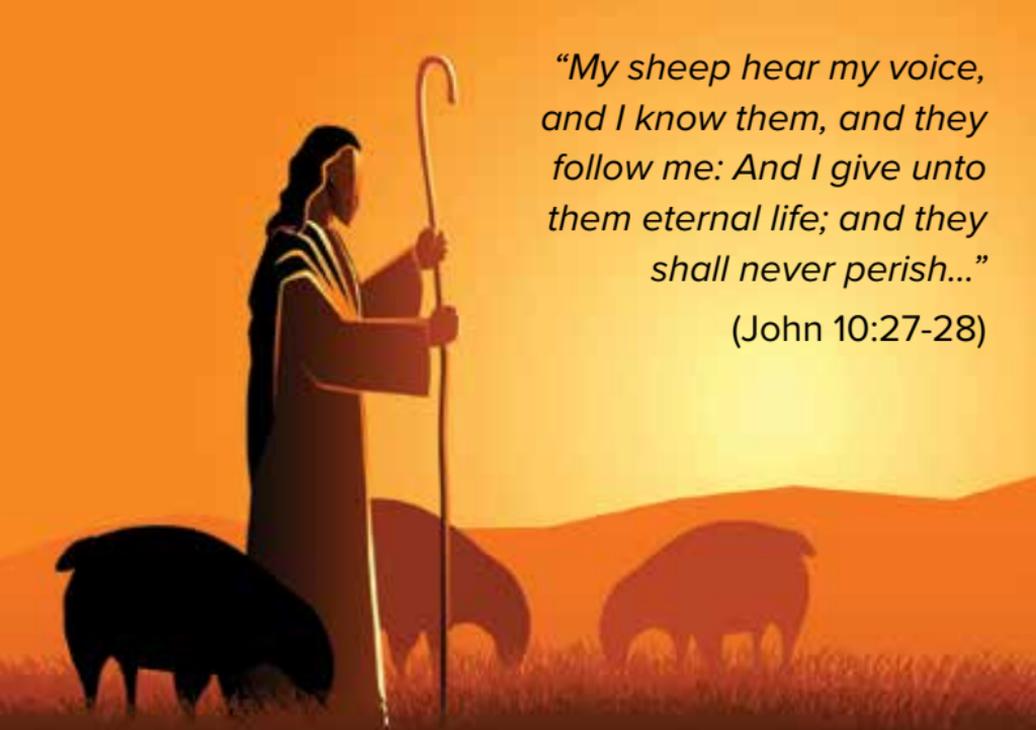
Perseverance of the Saints: Calvinists believe that the true elect of God will persevere to the end and therefore cannot lose their salvation.

I along with many other Christians, would affirm that believers can never lose their salvation, but our salvation does not depend on our perseverance. God Himself is the one that preserves the believer for all eternity.

The Bible teaches that once a person trusts Christ for their salvation that they are eternally secure. Our eternal security rests on the finished work of Christ and not on our effectiveness in living out the Christian life.

Christ’s righteousness is imputed to our account at the moment of salvation (2 Cor. 5:21).

Numerous scriptures in the Bible show us that every believer is secure in Christ and in fact becomes a child of God receiving eternal life the moment that they believe (John 1:12). Believers receive the free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23) and not probationary life at salvation. We are

A silhouette of a shepherd with a staff and sheep against a sunset background. The shepherd is on the left, holding a long staff. Three sheep are visible in the foreground and middle ground. The background shows rolling hills under a bright orange and yellow sky.

*“My sheep hear my voice,
and I know them, and they
follow me: And I give unto
them eternal life; and they
shall never perish...”*

(John 10:27-28)

not like criminals out on probation, in the hope of freedom, but we have already *“passed from death unto life”* because of the blood of the Lamb (John 5:24; 10:27-28).

Calvin believed perseverance was a gift from God given only to whom God chooses. In reality, salvation is a gift from God to all who simply trust in Christ. When a person has received the gift of salvation then that which accompanies salvation is the Holy Spirit’s work in PRESERVING us. Jude wrote to believers and identified them as *the “preserved in Christ”* (Jude 1).

Peter in his epistle shows that the believer’s security and inheritance is because of the work of God and not man. Every believer has *“an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven*

for you, who are **KEPT** by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:4-5).

In his book, *The Faith of God’s Elect*, John F Parkinson writes, “The dogma of perseverance has serious implications for the Calvinist believer. How can he know if he is in a present state of perseverance, or whether in God’s estimation, he has already fallen away in his heart? Thus the Calvinist is in the intolerable position of uncertainty. He can never be sure of his salvation because he doesn’t know whether he will persevere to the end. For the Calvinist the overriding question is not ‘Am I saved’? but ‘Am I elect’?” (Pages 90-91).

Thank God that the believer’s salvation does not depend on his or her perseverance but in God’s preservation of all that trust in Him.

Paul wrote: “*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*” (Phil. 1:6).

Dr Curtis Hutson, Editor of *The Sword of the Lord*, writes; “Calvin and those who follow him claimed to believe and follow the Lord. But a careful student will find that again and again they go beyond Scripture, and that Calvinism is a philosophy developed by man and developed on fallible logic and frail, human reasoning with the perversion of some Scriptures, the misuse of others, and the total ignoring of many clear scriptures...

Calvinism goes into the realm of human philosophy. It is not a Bible doctrine but a system of human philosophy, especially appealing to the scholarly intellect, the self sufficient and the proud mind. Brilliant, philosophical scholarly preachers are apt to be misled on this matter more than the humble hearted Bible believing Christian”.

Conclusion: The writer acknowledges that there are Godly believers who attend Reformed churches who have a heart for the Gospel, yet they still must be warned of the gross errors promoted by the proponents of Reformed theology.

Calvinism denies that God loves sinful men except for a chosen few. It denies that Christ died for the sins of the world and can lead precious souls, young and old into numbers of damnable heresies.

The Calvinist Gospel teaches salvation by selection instead of by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus and is therefore another Gospel (Gal 1:19).

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:28-30).

THE CALVINIST WAY OF SALVATION



Before creation God chose some to be saved and some to be damned. The elect cannot resist Christ and are predestined to heaven. The unelected cannot choose Christ and are predestined to hell.

THE BIBLICAL WAY OF SALVATION

Before creation God wrote all names in the Book of Life. The names of all who turn to Christ remain in the Book of Life. Those who reject Christ have their names blotted out of the Book of life.

(Exod. 32:32-33;
Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5;
13:8; 20:15)



GOD



loved

THE WORLD

John 3:16



“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”
(Isa. 55:6-7).

“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”
(2 Peter 3:9).

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”
(John 3:16).

