

CALVINISM AND JOHN 6

Message 1

Words: 6234

INTRO: We are going to take a little time out from the series of messages on the early parables of Christ to look at an important doctrine that entered around the time of the reformation. A month ago I did a wedding and at the wedding a young man came to me. It did not take him long to bring up what he wanted to talk about and it was Calvinism. So we had a lengthy discussion. At the end of this discussion he said, "Just answer one verse of Scripture for me." And that verse was John 6:44.

I had studied Calvinism some years ago for myself and was content to leave it at that. The doctrine of salvation in Calvinism was so far off base in my thinking that I had no further interest to pursue it. Later Dave Hunt wrote a book called, "What Love Is This?" He did a very thorough and well documented work on Calvinism. By now several other books have been written that at least all those considering Calvinism should read. They are the book I mentioned, and then there is a book called, "The Dark Side Of Calvinism", by George Bryson. And just recently a book was written by Dr. Bob Kirkland called, "Calvinims: None Dare Call It Heresy."

After looking at John 6:44, for the first time I got a renewed interest to study Calvinism again in light of this passage. Then I thought I needed to do at least one message to introduce those not familiar with this doctrine and found if I did that, I needed to do at least one more message. So I plan to do three messages. Now part of the reason for this is because today this is a growing doctrine among younger people, and second, it has early roots in our town. Because the major issues of Calvinism involve the doctrine of salvation, it is a very important issue.

Anyone one familiar with some of what Calvinism involves will know that even three messages is very brief for this subject. But may those contemplating Calvinism be challenged to read such books as I mentioned before they buy in. But I realized as well I don't have anything online on this subject except one messages

on the doctrine of election and one on predestination, which are big in Calvinism.

In this message we want to look at the character of Calvin; the famous TULIP, key words in Calvinism and assurance of salvation and Calvinism.

I. CALVINISM AND THE MAN CALVIN

A. The Background For His Views On Salvation

Who was John Calvin? John Calvin was raised a staunch Catholic. He was born in 1509 in France, and he died in 1564. So we see his life spanned the time of the reformation of the Catholic Church. Calvin did a lot of studying and by 1536 he left the Catholic church. He did a lot of preaching and teaching and finally ended up in Geneva, Switzerland where he also died in 1564.

The unmistakable fact is that John Calvin got much if not most of his doctrine from the early Catholic, Augustine. So let me quote Calvin from the book, "Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy." The writer says that Calvin said this: Augustine is so much at one with me that, if I had wished to write a confession of faith, it would abundantly satisfy me to quote wholesale from his writings" (13). This is also where he got the main points of his teaching on the doctrine of salvation which we will look at later.

It should be noted that Calvin like Augustine promoted infant baptism. Calvin says, "infants cannot be deprived of it without open violation of the will of God" (Inst. 4,16,8; <http://www.reformedtheology.ca/baptism.html>). He taught that infant baptism brought about forgiveness of sins. That, beyond doubt, is heresy (Hunt 429). Dave Hunt makes the observation that if he had not believed this, he would have needed to be re-baptized. The same holds true for Martin Luther.

As I thought of all this, much of the reformation was simply that; reformation. The Calvinist John Piper calls Augustine, Martin Luther and Calvin the three flawed fathers of the Christian church" (Hunt 397). He then

says, "The standard text on theology that Calvin and Luther drank from was Sentences by Peter Lombard. Nine-tenths of this book consists of quotations from Augustine. Luther was an Augustinian monk, and Calvin immersed himself in the writings of Augustine..." (397). So it is no wonder that Luther and Calvin continued infant baptism, which Augustine highly esteemed.

As I considered that in light of the Mennonites, the Mennonites did not reform Catholicism; they were awakened to true spiritual life. They did not claim to reform, they were reborn. How was this manifested in them? When they came to faith in Christ, they not only came out of the Catholic church, they were baptized upon their confession of faith. When the Catholic church suspected anyone of converting they asked if they were re-baptized. Many said, "No, I have only been baptized once." By this they meant their Catholic baptism had not been a true Christian baptism. Do our Mennonites who come out of traditional Mennonite churches need to consider baptism when they are reborn once more?

The Mennonites did not continue infant baptism. They did not continue the use of force to convert people, nor did they continue state run churches. They were told that if this is how you believe, you will never make it. They were persecuted by the Catholics and by many reformers.

B. His Character

It is worth knowing a little of Calvin's way of life as a professing Christian. If anyone disagreed with Calvin's doctrine, he was willing to have them killed. A case in point is Michael Servetus, one who dared disagree with Calvin, of whom Calvin said, "If he come, and my influence can avail, I will not suffer him to depart alive" (NDCIH 19). Servetus died screaming as he cooked alive. This is the character of Calvin. He would torment people endlessly to get them to come to the true faith, which of course was Calvinism. Where did Calvin get the encouragement to kill and torture to get people to change their view?

From Augustine, of whom Kirkland says was the father of the inquisitions. Further, John Calvin hated the Anabaptists. To Calvin, Catholicism was not heresy, but the Anabaptists were rank heretics. Again, so much more needs to be said. But you get a bit of a sense of the character of Calvin.

II. CALVINISM 101

So, before we look at our passage, let me give you Calvinism 101 and basically just outline what Calvinism believes regarding the doctrine of salvation. Some have said that Calvin did not actually believe some of these things, and I thought that might be correct. But reading more of his comments on passages of Scripture, I think they caught in the acronym what he actually taught. Modern teachers have summarized his doctrine by the acronym, TULIP. Let me give it very briefly.

A. The T

The T stands for total depravity. It basically says everybody who is not saved is dead in sins. He is so dead he cannot make spiritual decisions. So, before any person can make a spiritual decision, God has to make him born again. In a sense he has to get saved before he can get saved. So as soon as he is born again, he will without question believe and be saved. Now why did God make him to become born again before He could make any decision on his own?

B. The U

That brings us to the U in the TULIP. God, in eternity past UNCONDITIONALLY elected those whom He would cause to be born again. God chose him to get saved before He created the universe. God chose the elect regardless of whether they wanted to be chosen or regardless of what sins they were living in. And because God elected this person in eternity past with no respect to who or what this person wanted or was, God is now justified in making this person born again without this person's consent.

C. The L

That brings us to the L in the tulip. The L stands for limited atonement. Christ did not die for the world, He died for the elect, i.e., those whom He chose before the foundation of the world. You see, in electing a handful of people, He reprobated all the rest of mankind and they cannot choose to get saved. One wonders how a rational person can believe these doctrines.

D. The I

Next is the I of the tulip. It stands for irresistible grace. It means that if one was elected in eternity past and God has made you born again, He will send you irresistible grace and you will willingly choose to get saved. If you can do the mental gymnastics to comprehend such thinking, you have entered the elitist camp of Calvinism. If you cannot comprehend that, you are probably among the reprobated and God has made you so you cannot understand such deep thoughts.

E. The P

Then comes the last letter of the tulip, the p. It stands for perseverance of the saints. That means that if you are one of the elect you will get saved and you will persevere to the end. And if you do not persevere to the end, that means only one thing: you were never one of the elect in the first place. Now this point brings about a huge problem for Calvinists, and that is the assurance of salvation, and we will look at this later.

So, what is Calvinism's teaching on salvation? In eternity past God chose a few of all of mankind that He would save. His choice had nothing to do with what these people wanted or did not want. It was an unconditional election. And because only these can be saved, therefore Christ did not die for the whole world. He died only for the elect. So we have limited atonement. And so because He caused them to be born again, based on the fact that He had unconditionally elected them and Christ had died for these elect, God gives them the gift of faith and the gift of repentance, and He now

sends them irresistible grace and they can't help but repent and believe. And anybody who has been thus elected, they will without doubt persevere in the faith. If anyone does not persevere, he was not one of the elect, because the elect will persevere.

Now it is a continual problem with Calvinism that some Calvinist will say, "You are misrepresenting Calvinism." Kirkland, in "None Dare Call It Heresy" says, "There are some Calvinists who will argue that we have misrepresented Calvinism. One problem is some are Calvin Calvinists, others Thomas Fuller Calvinists, Arthur W. Pink Calvinists, Presbyterian Calvinists, Baptist Calvinists, MacArthur Calvinists, and so forth. It would be difficult not to misrepresent somebody's version of Calvinism" (89).

III. KEY WORDS RELATED TO CALVINISM

A. Sovereign

We want to now look at a few key words as used in Calvinism. The first is the word 'sovereign'. I do not hold Calvinism as a cult, as some do, but it is as important to define terms when dealing with Calvinism as it is when discussing doctrine with the cults. What words actually mean and what Calvinism means by some words are two different things.

So what does the word *sovereign* mean? Let me note first that this word does not occur in Scripture. So its meaning must be established from the way we use it. English dictionaries define a sovereign as a supreme ruler. In a democracy the people are sovereign; but in a dictatorship or a monarchy there is one supreme ruler and that ruler is sovereign. He has ultimate power in the sphere over which he rules. Without question, God Almighty is the supreme ruler of the universe.

So how does Calvinism define the word 'sovereign'? In an internet article in Christianity.com., the word *sovereign* is defined in Calvinism like this: "If you were to look up the word 'sovereign' in the dictionary, you would find words and phrases like 'superior,'

'greatest,' 'supreme in power and authority,' 'ruler,' and 'independent of all others' in its definition. But the way I like to explain God's sovereignty best is simply to say, 'God is in control.'"

Well, the way he likes to define *sovereign* is the Calvinistic definition. By saying, "God is in control" he means God has determined everything that will happen and man has no choice about it. But in the English word 'sovereign' not even a dictator predetermines everything all his subjects will do. I do not know of a word to describe a God who is like what Calvinists mean by the word *sovereign*, other than to say He has determined everything anybody will ever do and we have no choice at all. That is Calvinistic sovereignty. If you disagree read Calvin's institutes, not MacArthur or Pink or anybody else.

B. Election

Another very key word is election. So what does election mean in the Bible? It means *to choose*. In salvation it means that God chose some to be saved. Go to Ephesians 1 which Calvinists so often resort. In verses 3-4 Paul, in introducing this letter speaks of election. It says:

3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

The word 'chose' in verse 4 is the word we speak of in the doctrine election, or the doctrine of choosing. Whom did God choose before the foundation of the world? Well, this verse does not tell us whom He chose. It tells us that He chose the Christian to be holy and without blame before Him in love.

In Calvinistic election it is taught that God elected a select number of people in eternity past, and this election had nothing to do with who these people were or what

they would do or want, and He will save them and they will persevere to the end. Any Calvinist who will listen to this message, please send me any verse that says God elected a few and reprobated the rest. You see, in Calvinism, who the elect are, nobody knows. If you claim to have become a Christian, and you persevere to the end, you might be one of them; stress on 'might be'. But even then you cannot know, as we will see later.

I have briefly mentioned election earlier. Let me here add briefly what I understand election to mean. It is not complicated. God, in eternity past chose for Himself those among mankind who would respond to Him in repentance and faith. He chose those who would choose Him. And because God is omniscient, He knew from the beginning who they would be. So 1 Peter says that the Christian is 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God', 1 Peter 1:2.

In 2 Peter 1:10 he writes, "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble..." You see, we have something to do with our election and making sure it happens.

C. Predestination

Another word we must define is predestination. The Calvinistic Westminster Confession of Faith says that, God "freely and unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass." God predestined everything and whatever we do. That means man does not have a free will, though some argue that.

So what does predestination mean. The word 'predestination' in the NT is *prohorizo* and it means *to mark out beforehand*. It is to set or mark out the boundaries beforehand. When I type the word horizo in my computer it automatically corrects it to 'horizon', and in fact we get our word horizon from this word. The horizon marks the boundary between heaven and earth.

The word translated predestination does not mean to predetermine, nor does our English word mean that. God's will is that we should all be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. We will see yet that God's will does not always happen, and that is due, not to any failure on the part of God; but failure on the part of sinful man.

I do not find in Scripture that the wicked are predestined to anything. Check it out for yourself.

Once predestination is used in connection with the wicked, though the wicked are not said to be predestined to anything, but rather that Christ was predestined to be delivered to wicked man (Acts 4:28). The other four occurrences of this word are with relation to the righteous; twice in Romans and twice in Ephesians. I want to read for you what the believer is predestined to. We go first to Romans 8:29. It says:

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

God foreknew those who would be saved because He knew who would choose Him. And He predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son. He wants the believer to be conformed to the likeness of Christ. It does not say, "For whom He foreknew, these will be conformed to the image of His Son." The word *predestination* does not mean predeterminism and it never guarantees arrival. It is what God wants to happen. Surely nobody will argue that everybody who gets saved actually gets fully conformed to the image of Christ. But that is what God wants to happen. That is what God has marked the believer out to.

We go now to Ephesians 1:5. I'll read 3-6, which says:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*
5 *having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*
6 *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.*

Verse 4, God chose us that we should become holy and without blame. Verse 5, He predestined us to adoption as sons. Now I do not have time to deal with the doctrine of adoption. But the doctrine of adoption is not the same as the doctrine of salvation. Here is a question you might ponder: If we are born again, that is born into the family of God, why do we yet need adoption? I believe adoption happens after we are resurrected. So listen to Romans 8:23:

Ro 8:23 *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

What is the adoption? It is the redemption of the body, and that happens at the resurrection. But once more, the word *prohorizo* does not guarantee arrival. This is what God wants to happen. He also wants all men to be saved and few ever are.

We go then to Ephesians 5:11-12 which says:

11 *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,*

12 *that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.*

God has marked us out to be to the praise of His glory. We all know that this does not always happen, but it is this that God wants to happen.

Anybody wanting greater detail can listen to our messages on those subjects at sermonaudio.com/mecl.

D. Foreknowledge

The next key word is foreknowledge. If you want to know Calvin's view of foreknowledge, read book 3 chapter 21 in his Institutes of the Christian Religion. If you can come out of the cloud understanding what he believes, please let me know. But the meaning of foreknowledge is the same in the Greek as in English. It means to know beforehand. 1 Peter 1:2 says that Christians are elect, chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, not according to election, or choosing. This causes a huge problem for Calvinism.

My son-in-law and I listened to John MacArthur on assurance of salvation and when he read Romans 8:28 and here are his words: Verse 28, *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." When God calls according to redemptive purpose, everything works to that end. "For whom He did foreknow," which means to predetermine to love..."* end quote. But it does not mean that.

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/DOC-13/the-doctrine-of-salvation-assurance>

When God created man, He chose that the just shall be justified and be just by faith. That is a principle that runs throughout Scripture. You want to be chosen by God? Choose Him and live by faith. Without faith it is impossible to please Him (Heb.6). And how do we get faith? By being born again? No, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). And how are we born again, by election? No, by the Word of God: 1 Peter 1:23 says, *"having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever"*. Election is by faith. James 1:18 says, *"Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."* How did God regenerate us? By election? No, by the Word of truth!

E. Decrees

Another matter we must understand is that of God's decrees.

Again, definition is important. Calvinists make much of God's decrees and especially His hidden decrees. In the OT several words are translated 'decrees' but I only find God involved in decrees twice and that is in Daniel, and neither reference has to do with salvation. In the NT it does not say that God decreed anything.

But let me ask, just what is a decree according to the Calvinist? Augustus H. Strong, one of the strongest of Calvinists defines a decree like this: "By the decrees of God we mean that eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, past, present and future" end quote (353). So God has predetermined everything that will happen. Everything that is to happen according to the plan of God has been rendered certain in His decrees. Later he says, "While God's total plan with regard to creatures is called predestination, or foreordination, his purpose so to act that certain will believe and be saved is called election, and his purpose so to act that certain will refuse to believe and be lost is called reprobation" end quote (355).

The Westminster Confession of Faith says, "By the decrees of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death...Those of mankind that are predestined unto life, God...hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory...to the praise of his glorious grace... The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will...for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures... to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious grace."

But once more we have to search out a definition that is not Calvinistic as their views color how they define words. Calvinism has to bend a number of words in order to make them mean that which fits their view. So, just what is a decree? Well, we go to the Bible to find out.

By the way, to any Calvinist who listens to this message, would you please send me any passages of Scripture that say God has decreed that most should be lost and some should be saved.

To define decrees we'll go to just a few NT verses and you can find this in many others as well.

We'll go to Luke 2:1 first. It says:

2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Now let me tell you what it does not say, nor can say. It cannot say, "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world WILL BE taxed." Why can it not say that? Because you cannot follow a decree up with an indicative mood verb. You can see here that a decree does not mean that what has been decreed will without question happen. Because what is decreed, just like what is willed is always future and may or may not happen. The verbs are in the subjunctive mood; the mood of wish. A wish, or decree is followed up by an infinitive or a subjunctive mood verb because it is not certain that what the verb expresses will actually happen.

Now look at Acts 16:4. A question had arisen among the new churches in Asia because of some of the laws Gentile converts needed to keep. Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to ask the Apostles about this and they decreed what laws should be kept. So look at verse 4:

16:4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

Well, the way the Calvinist defines a decree and the way the Bible defines it is entirely different. The English word means *an official order by a legal authority*. Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary says it is an official ruling or law (ZPBD). That is what we saw in

both references we looked at, and so it is used in the rest of Scripture. A decree can be made, but the certainty of its fulfillment cannot be guaranteed, therefore the subjunctive mood of the verb follows.

God has decreed that all men should love Him above everything else. Does it always happen? He has decreed that no one should lie. Is that ever violated?

F. World

We have to define one more word and it is the word world. One must be careful here as the Scripture translates different words by the one word *world*. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world..." The word here is *kosmos*. The word *kosmos* in different contexts can mean different things like the universe, the earth, or lost mankind. What does the word world mean in the context of John 3:16? To me and you and the dictionary, the word world here means mankind or lost mankind. But what does it mean to the Calvinist? It cannot mean mankind or lost mankind to them. Why not. That would mean Christ died for everybody, but according to election, and limited atonement it MUST mean the elect, because Christ died only for the elect.

Concl: To conclude this point, I think it is impossible to define these six words according to their rightful meaning and hold to historic Calvinism.

IV. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION AND CALVINISM

There is another problem area for Calvinism. It is this: If you are a true Calvinist you cannot have assurance of salvation and if you have assurance of salvation, you are not a true Calvinist. I listened to John MacArthur on assurance of salvation and he taught you can know you are saved, but he did not answer the Calvinistic questions that arise in Calvinism.

Kirkland says, and I quote: *Even John Calvin himself did not possess assurance of salvation. Writing in his will shortly before his death in 1564, he declared: "I testify also and profess that I humbly seek from God that He may*

so will me to be washed and purified by the great Redeemer's blood, shed for the sins of the human race, that it may be permitted me to stand before His tribunal under the covert of the Redeemer Himself'" (pg. 79).

His insecurity is abundantly clear. When he wrote the words "that He may so will me to be washed and purified by the great Redeemer's blood" he stressed the words, 'that He may so will me'. He did not know if he was one of the elect. When he said that *God might will him to be washed by the great Redeemer's blood*, he stressed the words, 'shed for the sins of the human race.' Did he change his mind about Christ dying for the elect only just before he died? It seems he might have.

But Calvinistic doctrine traps a person into not being able to have assurance of salvation. Why? Well, here is the teaching. If anyone professes to be a Christian, and he then falls into sin and lives in it, it is proof that he was not one of the elect in the first place because the elect will persevere to the end. So, because you cannot know with certainty that you will not fall into such sin, therefore you have to wait until you die before you can have any amount of assurance. The message I listened to by John MacArthur did not address this problem.

I used to think that one of the positive things about Calvinism is that they stress holiness of life. That is a positive. But now I wonder if it is because they believe that if you do not persevere to the end, you have shown yourself not to be one of the elect. So to give evidence that you are one of the elect, you have to continue in holiness. Is that the motivation for their holiness preaching? If so, that can end one up in a works salvation, and also, if so, as I see it, it is then not a pure motivation.

Well, furthermore in Calvinism, if you profess to be a Christian, and you live faithfully to the end, you still do not know if you are one of the elect. Why not? Because of Matthew 7:22-23. These are horrifying verses to the Calvinist. Jesus said:

22 *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'"*

23 *"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*

Let me give you an example from Legoinaire Ministries, which is a ministry of R.C. Sproul. He says, "Many people practice divination in hope of seeing the future (ordained in God's hidden decrees)."

What he means, I think, is that they want to know if they are one of the elect. You cannot know from the Bible, so you have to stoop to divination. He then goes on like this:

"Reformed believers may not be inclined to this sin, but we can be too occupied with His (i.e. God's) hidden will and lapse into hyper-Calvinism. For example, we might let the truth that the Lord cannot fail to save His elect (whom He knows secretly) make us neglect evangelism since 'He will save His chosen no matter what I do.' God did not tell us about His sovereignty to paralyze us"

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/gods-hidden-will/>

Dave Hunt writes of a Ligonier National Conference with 5,000 people present in June of 2000. And Bob Wilkin of Grace Evangelical Society said, "John Piper...described himself as a 'seven point Calvinist'...[and said] that no Christian can be sure he is a true believer; hence there is an ongoing need to be dedicated to the Lord and deny ourselves so that we might make it. [We must endure to the end to be saved" (483). The writer then said, "My heart is heavy as I write this from Orlando. I feel such a burden for the people here. Why? Because their theology makes assurance impossible It...permeated the whole conference."

You see, if a person believes he is one of the elect, he cannot have assurance until he has persevered to the end, and even then it is not sure. Here is what they conclude of a professing Christian who lives in sin. This person has professed to be saved and now he is living in sin and he never repented and died in that sin. What do they say to

that? They say that means he never got saved in the first place because if he had he would have endured to the end. So to have assurance of salvation you have to know the future of your own life and that you will not commit such sins. And where in the Bible will you find assurance for that? You won't. All you will get is warnings.

John Piper, a staunch Calvinist has an article on the internet called, "The Agonizing Problem of Assurance of Salvation." Assurance of salvation is an agonizing problem for the true Calvinist. Why? Because he cannot know if he is saved or not.

Now I understand that Calvinists are not agreed among themselves on numerous issues, so one or the other is usually claiming that they are being misrepresented. But this much is clear in Calvinism. First, if you do not persevere to the end, then you were never truly saved in the first place. Second, you cannot foretell with certainty that you will remain faithful to the end. Only a foolish person would say that. Third, therefore you cannot know you are saved until you have been faithful to the end. Fourth, even if you claim to be a Christian and remain faithful to the end, it is still not 100% sure you are one of the elect. Matthew 7:22-23 is a most terrifying passage to the Calvinist. Even when he thinks he has done everything right, he still does not know if he is one of the elect. He may be one of those spoken of in these verses.

The doctrines of election and predestination, such simple and beautiful doctrines have become so entangled and warped, that Calvinists do not dare preach them in a multitude where the unsaved might be present. Oliver B. Green said he pitied the poor preacher who dared preach these doctrines where the unsaved were present. Well the facts are there are unsaved among almost every congregation including Calvinist congregations.

So listen to R.C. Sproul, another ardent Calvinist, on the subject of assurance. He says: A while back I had one of those moments of acute self-awareness...and suddenly the question hit me: 'R.c., what if you are not one of the redeemed? What if your destiny is not heaven after all,

but hell? Let me tell you that I was flooded in my body with a chill that went from my head to the bottom of my spine. I was terrified.

I tried to grab hold of myself. I thought, 'Well, it's a good sign that I'm worried about this. Only true Christians really care about salvation.' But then I began to take stock of my life, and I looked at my performance. My sins came pouring into my mind, and the more I looked at myself, the worse I felt. I thought, 'Maybe it's really true. Maybe I'm not saved after all.'

I went to my room and began to read the Bible. On my knees I said, 'Well, here I am. I can't point to my obedience. There's nothing I can offer... I knew that some people only flee to the Cross to escape hell... I could not be sure about my own heart and motivation. The I remembered John 6:68... Peter was also uncomfortable, but he realized that being uncomfortable with Jesus was better than any other option!" (Hunt 487).

Why does a man of Sproul's stature struggle with assurance of salvation? A true Calvinist cannot have assurance of salvation. This is an agonizing problem for them.

CONCL: In conclusion, we are preparing ourselves to look at John 6:44. I am introducing us to Calvinism in order to understand the difficulty presented in John 6:44. We have looked at the man John Calvin briefly. He lived in the full time of the reformation. He was a young boy before it began and died after it was in full swing.

We saw that his theology was basically that of Augustine of Hippo, and fully a Catholic who believed in infant baptism and baptismal regeneration, as did Calvin. We saw that he had picked up the militant methods of Augustine and was willing to torture and even have people killed who disagreed with him. In contrast was the scholarly and gentle Jacob Arminius. Arminius was not afraid to call Catholicism what it was. Calvin treated Catholicism as Christian and Arminius as an heretic.

We looked at the TULIP; total depravity; unconditional election; limited atonement; irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints. We saw that definition is crucial when discussing

Calvinism for the key words they use mean something other than their normal meaning. They have made the meaning of such words as sovereign; election; predestination; decrees; foreknowledge and world mean something not inherent in the words themselves.

Last we looked at the agonizing problem of assurance of salvation. The redefining of words and the problem of assurance of salvation are brought about by the insistence that the TULIP is biblical.