



A SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION

ITS HISTORY & DOCTRINE

HISTORY

1. Intro & Overview of Church History
2. Forerunners of the Reformation
3. The Protestant Reformation
4. Puritanism & the Legacy of the Reformers

DOCTRINE

1. Reformation Doctrine: The Big Picture
2. **Total Depravity & Irresistible Grace**
3. Unconditional Election & Particular Redemption
4. Perseverance of the Saints & Answering Objections
5. The Other "Points" of Calvinism
6. Why the Reformation Matters Today



RECAP OF REFORMATION DOCTRINE: THE BIG PICTURE

FIVE SOLAS, SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

THE “FIVE SOLAS”

Protestant	Roman Catholic
Scripture alone (<i>sola Scriptura</i>)	Scripture and tradition
Faith alone (<i>sola fide</i>)	Faith and works
Grace alone (<i>sola gratia</i>)	Grace and merit
Christ alone (<i>solus Christus</i>)	Christ, Mary, & intercession of saints
Glory to God alone (<i>solī Deo gloria</i>)	God, saints, and church hierarchy

~ adapted from *Living for God's Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism* by Joel R. Beeke (RHB, 2008), pg. 5

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

- God is the Sovereign & no one's will can diminish His.
- God's sovereignty is displayed in Providence & Predestination.

God "works all things according to the counsel of his will." (Eph. 1:11)

God "does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" (Dan. 4:35)

PROVIDENCE

- God providentially controls:
 - Over **Nature & Weather** – Jer. 10:12-13, 14:22, Amos 4:7, Job 37:6-13, Matt. 5:45
 - Over **Animals** – Ps. 104:27-29, Matt. 6:26, Dan. 6:22
 - Over **“Chance” Events** – Prov. 16:33, Matt. 10:29
 - Over the **Womb** – Gen. 20:17-18, 29:31, Dt. 28:4, 1 Sam. 1:5, Ps. 127:3
 - Over **Kings & Nations** – Prov. 21:1, Job 12:23, Ps. 22:28, Acts 17:26
 - Over the **Lives of Men** – Ex. 4:11, Job 14:5, Ps. 139:16, 1 Sam. 2:7, Prov. 16:1,9, 19:21, 20:24, Jer. 10:23, 1 Cor. 4:7, Ps. 33:14-15
 - Over **Trouble & Suffering** – Is. 45:7, Amos 3:6, Job 2:10
 - Over **Life and Death** – Dt. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6
 - Over **Sin Itself** – Gen. 50:20, Prov. 16:4, Acts 4:27-28 with 2:23, Ex. 14:17, Judges 14:4, 1 Sam. 16:14, 2 Sam. 24:1,10 with 1 Chron. 21:1

PREDESTINATION

- God “pre” establishes our “destination”
- Christians believe this because of Scripture:
2 Thess. 2:13, 1 Thess. 5:9, 1 Pet. 1:1-2, Rom. 8:28-30, Eph. 1:3,11
- The questions come in how God predestines, on the basis of his foreknowledge of actions we choose, or does God predispose us to take those actions?



BACKGROUND TO THE “FIVE POINTS” OF CALVINISM

JACOBUS ARMINIUS & THE REMONSTRANCE



PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

WHY TALK ABOUT “CALVINISM”?

FOUNDATIONAL BUT SECONDARY

- “**Calvinism**” is a family doctrine. It is for the people of God, not important for unbelievers to learn.
- This doctrine explains what happens “behind the scenes” in conversion (from God’s perspective). It is Biblical and important, but secondary.

“God's sovereignty is to all other doctrines what the granite foundation is to the other strata of the earth. It underlies and sustains them, but it crops out only here and there. So this doctrine should underlie all our preaching, & should be definitely asserted only now and then.” - **Charles Hodge**

MISREPRESENTED

- Calvinism is often **misrepresented**. People reject the caricatures rather than the real doctrine.
- R.C. Sproul recounts a typical misconception:

“I am not a Calvinist because I do not believe that God brings some people, kicking and screaming against their wills, into the kingdom, while he excludes others from his kingdom who desperately want to be there.”

~ quoted in *Chosen by God* by
R.C. Sproul (Tyndale, 1986), pg. 122

NOT ABOUT CALVIN

- Calvinism is a *term*, not a *movement* worshiping a man.
- The system of thought is easily explained by using the **term** *Calvinism*, but Calvinists don't necessarily follow John Calvin on all points.
- Calvin became the most popular Reformed author years after his death, in his age, he was just one of many.

"I should not take it at all amiss, to be called a Calvinist, for distinction's sake: though I utterly disclaim a dependence on Calvin, or believing the doctrines which I hold, because he believed and taught them; and cannot justly be charged with believing in everything just as he taught." – Jonathan Edwards

A HUMBLE DOCTRINE

- Ultimately, Calvinism is a humble doctrine. It bows to the word of God in spite of human tendencies to elevate man's role in salvation.
- Many Calvinists (myself included) were converted to the system reluctantly, and so understand the difficulties many have with this doctrine.
- R.C. Sproul talks about coming to believe in Calvinism even though he didn't want to. He put a note on his desk to this effect:

“You are required to believe, to preach and to teach what the Bible says is true, not what you want the Bible to say is true.” – R.C. Sproul

The background of the slide features a faded, high-angle photograph of four large, standing statues of the Nicene Fathers in a church. The statues are made of light-colored stone or marble and are dressed in traditional ecclesiastical robes. They are positioned in a row, with the central figure holding a book. The lighting is soft, and the overall tone is historical and solemn.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

BIRTH OF THE “FIVE POINTS”

JACOBUS ARMINIUS (1560-1609)



- **Jacobus (or James) Arminius** was a Dutch pastor who studied for a time in Geneva under Theodore Beza.
- He advocated a modified form of Reformed theology that stressed the **free will** of man, **resistible grace** and election on the basis of **foreseen faith**.
- His followers petitioned the Dutch government with "**The Remonstrance**" in 1610.

"All unregenerate persons have freedom of will, and a capability of resisting the Holy Spirit, of rejecting the proffered grace of God,... And of not opening to Him who knocks at the door of the heart; and these things they can actually do." ~ Jacobus Arminius

THE REMONSTRANCE

- Remonstrance = “An earnest presentation of reasons for opposition or grievance, especially a document formally stating such points” (Merriam-webster.com)
- The Arminians presented five articles of faith, under the title ***The Arminian Articles of Remonstrance***
 1. God elects... on the basis of foreseen faith or unbelief.
 2. Christ died for... every man, although only believers are saved.
 3. Man is so depraved that divine grace is necessary unto faith.
 4. This grace may be resisted.
 5. Whether all who are truly regenerate will certainly persevere in the faith is a point which needs further investigation.

~ adapted from *Willing to Believe: The Controversy over Free Will* by R.C. Sproul (Baker Books, 1997), pg. 135

THE SYNOD OF DORT

- Counter-Remonstrants opposed the Remonstrants, and eventually the matter was officially considered by the Synod of Dort from 1618-1619.
- The **Canons of Dort** responded to each of the five Arminian articles of Remonstrance.
 - 1st Point: Election and Reprobation
 - 2nd Point: Christ's Death and Human Redemption Through It
 - 3rd & 4th Points: Human Corruption, Conversion to God, and the Way It Occurs
 - 5th Point: The Perseverance of the Saints
- The Canons of Dort today endure as an important confession of faith in the Reformed Church.

THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

- Today, the five counter-points that Dort raised against the Arminians, are remembered as the “five points of Calvinism” [**TULIP**].

Total Depravity – Fallen Man’s Inability to Come

Unconditional Election – God’s Sovereign Choice

Limited Atonement – Our Particular Redemption

Irresistible Grace – God’s Gracious, Enabling Call

Perseverance of the Saints – The Completion of
God’s Work in Us



TULIP: **T**OTAL DEPRAVITY

FALLEN MAN'S INABILITY TO COME

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

Total Depravity means that every aspect of man is tainted by sin. No one is as evil as they can be, but evil affects every part of our being – mind, will, heart, etc. We do not seek after God, naturally. And apart from God's initiative, we cannot please God. In fact, we are enslaved by the devil and are lost, blinded to the truth of the gospel and in need of God to mercifully reach down and intervene.

- Some prefer to use the phrase “**Radical Corruption.**”
- Emphasizes man's inability to believe due to his depraved heart.

TOTALITY

- **TOTAL** refers to:
 - **All faculties** of man – heart (affections), mind (thinking), body and soul are depraved – Gen. 8:21, Prov. 22:15, 1 Cor. 2:14, Eph. 4:17-19, Tit. 3:3
 - Rebellion against God is **complete** – Rom. 5:10
 - **Inability** to “do good”, “seek after God” or to “please God” – Rom. 3:9-18; 7:18; 8:7-8; 14:23
- **TOTAL** does not mean:
 - Every man is as bad as he can be (due to God’s common grace blessing whereby he restrains evil).
 - Every man is equally bad (in a relative sense).

INHERITED SIN

- **Original Sin** = doctrine that all humans are guilty due to Adam's sin, and all inherit sin because of Adam's fall.
 - Adam is our "federal head" – Rom. 5:12, 15-19; 1 Cor. 15:22-23
 - We are sinners "by nature" – Eph. 2:3
 - We are sinners from birth – Ps. 51:5, 58:3
 - We are captive to our "father the Devil" – Jn. 8:44, Acts 26:18, 2 Cor. 4:4, 2 Tim. 2:26
- In fact, we are "DEAD" in our sins – Eph. 2:1-3
 - We have no sensitivity to spiritual life.
 - **We don't need medicine, we need resurrection.**
 - We don't need heart surgery, we need a heart transplant – Ezek. 36:25-27

FREE WILL?

- Free Will = the **ability to choose what we want**
 - Man has this natural ability
 - But **man's will is bound by his evil desires** (Augustine / Luther)
 - Jonathan Edwards points out that: "The will always chooses according to its strongest inclination at the moment."
- We are free to choose what we want, but we are **unable to want or desire to please God**. (Rom. 8:7-8).
 - Our "want-ers" are broken
- We are unable to freely will to come to God, without God graciously changing our heart's disposition (John 6:44).
 - Once God changes our hearts, we freely come (no one is forced to come against his will, their will is changed)

NEXT POINT

- *Because man is fallen, he resists God's outward call to believe. He cannot seek God or please Him. He is an enemy of God.* = Total Depravity
- *So for the elect, God graciously overcomes their resistance and enables them to come and respond to God's call in the gospel.* = Irresistible Grace



TULIP: IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

GOD'S GRACIOUS, ENABLING CALL

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

Irresistible Grace does not mean that no one can resist God's grace. People do resist. But for all who have been elected, God will overcome their resistance and graciously save them. This captures the idea of regeneration preceding faith. Calvinists believe faith flows from a heart that has been regenerated. A dead heart cannot believe. Faith is the sign of what happened behind the scenes in the internal workings of the heart. So while it may look like faith causes the new birth from our perspective, it actually is the new birth which evidences itself in faith.

- Some prefer to use the phrase “**Effectual Grace.**”
- Emphasizes God's inward call which successfully imparts faith to the elect.

BUT CAN'T WE RESIST?

- People do resist God's outward call – Acts 7:51, Eph. 4:30, 1 Thess. 5:19
- But man is not neutral and able to evaluate God's call without a bias. He is:
 - Totally depraved in all facets of his being.
 - “By nature” a sinner, and is bound & blinded by Satan.
 - Without freedom to resist or accept God's drawing or enabling call.
- God's grace is effective, and effects His purpose in sending it.
 - “Who can resist God's will?” – Rom. 9:19

WHAT KIND OF GRACE

- Arminianism: **Prevenient Grace**
 - This is given to all men equally and allows their fallen natures to freely choose or reject salvation.
 - John 1:9 and Tit. 2:11 are their proof texts.
 - This seems to make nonsense of all the teaching about the condition of fallen man.
- Calvinism: **Sovereign Grace**
 - This is given to the elect and enables them to believe the gospel
 - This is why believers are considered “the called” 1 Cor. 1:23-24 (from those who hear the **outward call** of preaching, some evidence themselves to be “the called” – those who have received the **inward call**)

DRAWING: JOHN 6:37, 44, 65)

- No one can come to Christ without being “drawn” – John 6:44
 - “Draw” = “compel” (cf. James 2:6, Acts 16:19)
 - In Jn. 12:32, draw “all men” refers to all types of men, Gentiles and Jews.
- All who are “given/drawn” will come – John 6:37
- No one who comes will be cast out – John 6:37
- Those who are “drawn” were “granted” belief – John 6:65
- The reason not all believe, is because not all were “granted” – John 6:64-65

GIFTS OF GOD

The following are “gifts of God” – given freely. If man has natural ability, why must God provide these gifts?

- **Faith** (Phil. 1:29, 1 Pet. 1:21, 2 Pet. 1:1, Rom. 12:3)
- **Repentance** (2 Tim. 2:25, Acts 5:31, Acts 11:18)
- **Conversion** (Eph. 2:8-10, John. 6:65, Acts 16:14, James 1:18, Phil. 1:6, Matt. 11:27, John 1:13)

REGENERATION PRECEDES FAITH

- Belief flows from a changed / renewed heart – [1 John 5:1](#).
- Love & Life evidence the new birth – [1 John 4:7](#), John 3:6-8
- Faith and Repentance are gifts of God.
- The New Birth comes from “God’s will” not mans – [John 1:13](#), James 1:18.
- God opens our hearts to listen to the gospel – [Acts 16:14](#)
- To believe we need circumcised hearts – Deut. 30:6, Ezek. 36:25-27.
- Belief flows from our nature – John 10:14-16 (other sheep will listen to Jesus’ voice) & [John 10:24-30](#) (you don’t believe because you are not sheep)
- Belief comes from our being “appointed” – [Acts 13:48](#)

NEW HAMPSHIRE BAPTIST CONFESSION (1833)

Section 7: Of Grace in Regeneration:

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again (Jn. 3:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:14, Rev. 8:7-9; 21:27); that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind (2 Cor. 5:17; Ez. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28-29; 5:5; 1 Jn. 4:7); that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth (Jn. 3:8; 1:13; Jam. 1:16-18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 2:13), so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel (1 Pet. 1:22-25; 1 Jn. 5:1; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-11); and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life (Eph. 5:9; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 3:14-21; Matt. 3:8-10; 7:20; 1 Jn. 5:4, 18).