

# What Is Calvinism

by L.R. Shelton

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*Calvinism is a systematic presentation of the truths of God's Word, emphasizing the sovereignty of God and the total depravity of man.*

**Duration:** 25:56

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 2:24

**Topics:** "Calvinism", "Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of Calvinism and its implications. He emphasizes that a true Calvinist is not passive but actively engaged in missionary work. The preacher highlights the power of prayer, preaching, and the Holy Spirit in the life of a Calvinist. He also emphasizes the total depravity of the human heart and the need for the Holy Spirit to unshackle the will of sinners. The sermon concludes by asserting that salvation rests solely in the will of God and that those who are unsaved are actually seeking after the false god of Satan.

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## Transcript

This is the Voice of Truth, the voice of God's inerrant, absolute, eternal, unbroken, verbally inspired word. The Voice of Truth is coming to you from the Metropolitan Tabernacle of the First Baptist Church of Algiers. We're located at 501 Opelousas Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana.

This is Pastor Albert Pindarva speaking, inviting you to stay tuned to hear God's message by our late Pastor L.R. Shelton on the subject, What is Calvinism? And this is number 156 in this series. I have often been branded by unsaved religionists as a hyper-Calvinist, but I'm doubtful if my critics know the difference between Calvinism, hyper-Calvinism, and Arminianism. These names do not mean a thing in the world to the average individual, but they are names for systems of doctrines that are being preached today.

Let me say in the very beginning that I am an old Puritan Calvinistic preacher, but in spite of that, I am branded by many critics as a hyper-Calvinist, which I deny. I'm also called by some a hard-shelled Baptist preacher, which is practically the same thing as a hyper-Calvinist. In this study we want to discuss the evils of Calvinism from the viewpoint of an unsaved religionist, or as viewed by an Arminian.

Our subject is, What is Calvinism? Calvinism is a belief, a systematic presentation of the truths of God's Word as set forth by John Calvin, an old Puritan preacher. John Calvin got it from St. Augustine and God's

Word. St. Augustine got it from the Apostle Paul, and the Apostle Paul received it directly by revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me make this statement that Baptists today have a Calvinistic creed, but an Arminian ministry. Baptists as a whole do not believe and preach their own creed. I will challenge anyone on every inch of ground with that statement, that Baptists today do not preach their creed.

They do not believe their creed. Over a period of time, they have slowly departed from it and come to embrace a system of teachings known as Arminianism, which has led Baptists largely to a theological position of practice known as Campbellism. And ninety percent, at least, of our Baptist people today are Campbellites in practice.

That's right. Now, I will let you look up that word Campbellism and see what a Campbellite is. All right, now you listen.

Now get seated there, ground your radio quietly. We're going into one of the greatest teachings of God's Word. I'm not going to present this subject from a cold theological point of view, but from a practical point of view that the common man, even the child that's sitting there by your side, can understand.

Now, let's notice what Calvinism teaches and see why an unsaved religionist or an Arminian hates the doctrine of Calvinism and why they find so much fault with it. In other words, why do folks find so much fault with my preaching? Why do they brand me as this, or that, or the other? Why do they try to apologize for my type of ministry or preaching? It is because they don't understand it. In connection with this statement, let me present this question.

If that's true, why didn't the Lord Jesus Christ, when giving his Word that we call the Holy Bible through the Holy Spirit to individuals, make the truth so plain and simple that man could understand it? Well, my friend, he did. If you're a born-again believer, the reason you don't understand the Bible, you're not saved. The Lord God of heaven, listen now, the Lord God of heaven cannot explain spiritual truth to the natural mind so that natural man can understand it.

You don't understand spiritual truth with your natural mind, and only a born-again believer can grasp and understand spiritual truth. Now, brother, it's true, the natural man cannot understand spiritual truth according to 1 Corinthians 2.14. And that's why unsaved religionists hate the doctrines of Calvinism today as they do. A woman said the other night, I wish you had quit using that expression, unsaved religionist.

I want to let you know, brother Sheldon, I'm not an unsaved religionist. Well, the fact is, why was it making her mad? That was a dead giveaway to her that she was an unsaved religionist. That's the reason they cry down and hate the doctrines of God's Word that I preach, is because they are unsaved and they don't understand it.

They can't understand you can't understand God's Word by the natural mind. Save your gizzard if you had a dozen of them. All right, now let me call your attention to the first great truth set forth in Calvinism, and that is, get it now, that's the reason you hate it, every sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, according to Ephesians 2.1. And you have be quickened who are dead in trespasses and sins.

You see, Calvinism and God's Word coincide because the doctrine of Calvinism does nothing but set forth the truth of God's eternally verbally inspired Word. And every unsaved preacher hates that expression, the verbally inspired Word of God. The Bible is verbally inspired.

Every sinner is dead in trespasses and in sins, so deeply buried in the dungeon of sin that only the power of God can resurrect him. Now that's a Bible truth. That's a truth from God's eternal Word, and you as a sinner are dead in your trespasses and sins, and buried in the dungeon of sin.

Now before you ever can get saved, there's got to come a resurrection. All right, now let me call your attention to this great truth in connection with that. Every sinner who ever gets saved has got to come to know the quickening resurrection power of God's Holy Spirit.

We may call that conception. There's got to come a spiritual conception in your heart before there can be a new birth. There never has been a birth without a conception.

That's true in the plant life. That's why we have the March winds for the fruit and for the hickory nuts and different trees of that type. That's why we have the bees and the honeybees that take the nectar from the flower.

They transfer pollen from one to the other in pollinating, and that's conception. We have it in the family life. We have it in the animal life.

We have it in the plant life, and therefore we have it in the human life. We have it in spiritual life. There's got to be the spiritual conception, and that's brought about by the power of God's Holy Spirit as set forth here in 2 Thessalonians 2.13. Let me read it to you.

But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved to the Lord, listen now, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation. How? Through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. Now what's the sanctification of the Spirit there? Sanctification means set aside.

It's when the Holy Spirit powers over that individual or broods over that individual and plants the seed of truth in that individual's heart, and that's the conception, and in time it'll bring forth the new birth by the power of God's Holy Spirit and salvation is an inward work wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Now if you don't believe that, I have no message for you, and the Bible has no message for you. Now that's what it means by every sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, and they've got to be quickened or made alive by the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Now that's Calvinism. That's Bible. Now Arminianism don't believe that.

They don't. Campbellism don't believe it. I don't know of anyone else that does.

The Bible plainly says it there. I've seen preachers get so mad when I'd say that. I make that statement.

I've had them to come down the aisle, chomp in their and say, Brother Sheldon, that's a lie. I said it's God's Word. What you gonna do about it? You take it up with him, not with me.

Don't get mad with me. All right, let's go on. Another great truth that Calvinism declares is that man has a will and is not a machine, but that man's will is bound by Satan according to 2 Timothy 2 26, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Man is a free moral agent according to God's Word, but man does not have a will of his own. He is not a free-willed individual. He's a free moral agent.

Now there's a vast difference between being a free moral agent and makes you responsible than being a free will. You have no free will because your will is kept captive by Satan. Now every preach individual convicted by the Holy Spirit can say, Yes, preacher, but so if I had a free will, I would free the Christ without a moment's notice.

A convicted sinner not long ago, under conviction, had been brought to the place of no return, and one of these free willers came to this poor old lost sinner and said, Why don't you believe? Why don't you turn to Christ right now? And that sinner looked up with eyes of longing and said, My dear woman, I'd give 10 million worlds if I could turn to Christ now, if I had it, but I can't. All right, you let that soak in. Now brother, if I had a free will, the ever-awakened sinner would free the Christ without a moment's notice.

I want him. I believe that he's the Son of God. They'll cry, but your will is shackled.

Your will, which is held captive by Satan, has to be unshackled and set free by the power of the Holy Spirit. You see, a man is a depraved individual, according to God's Word, and has no righteousness of his own. Therefore, he is a corrupt, vile, and wicked, and his depraved nature, get it now, his depraved nature is under the control of Satan, who controls his will.

Every sinner's will is controlled by his depraved nature. Therefore, you're not a free willer. You see, man's will is held in slavery.

It is held captive by Satan, and the will of man is not free to act until it's set free by the power of God. Now you let that soak in. Now brother, that's God's Word.

Now this doctrine of depravity, as set forth by Calvin, is a great doctrine of God's Word, but unsaved religionists will not have it. They hate the doctrine of total depravity. Therefore, man's will, being shackled by Satan, held in bondage by his depraved nature, can only choose that which is evil.

Arminianism teaches that man is a free will agent, a free will individual, that his will can choose good, that he has the power to either choose Christ or not. That's right, and they'll tell you there's good in the heart and life of every sinner, and it's our business to bring that good out. That's Arminianism.

In other words, he only chooses that which is evil, and man does not seek God of his own will. You get that now? Man never would seek God of his own will, if let alone. This is clearly stated.

That's right. This is clearly stated in Romans 3.11. There is none that understandeth. There is none that seeketh after God.

Man of his own will never seeks God, but Arminianism, that is prevalent today everywhere, teaches that man does seek after God and has a free will to choose God. They overlook one fact, that man by nature is religious. Let me state that again, that man by nature is religious.

Man is a religious being. The fact that man is a religious being doesn't mean that he seeks after God, but he seeks after demon spirits and the presence of Satan. All of your religious seeking, apart from holy spirit conviction, is nothing more than the natural man.

It is natural state, depraved state, held captive by Satan, seeking after demon spirits, which give him religious experiences and religious feelings, and which imitate or try to imitate the Lord God of heaven. Now brother, that's putting it right down where it is. Grab a peg there and hold it.

Unsaved, depraved men and women, not knowing the true God, believe then that man is seeking after God when they have never sought after God themselves, but after the God of the world, a Satan. Now that is a pivot truth, and if you don't know that thing brother, you'd better get out of the pulpit preacher. If you can't tell the difference between a man seeking after a demon spirit and one who is under holy spirit conviction, you'd better get out of the pulpit and go digging taters for a living because brother, you're blind and the blind leading the blind, they'll both fall into the pit.

Now that's so, that's so. I spoke to a group of men and women the other night who believe and act in all of their religious services upon one thing, demonism, and I laid bare that thing from one end to the other. They invited me to preach to them and laid bare the falseness of their doctrines, and I did.

They sat there and wept and came around and said preacher, don't leave us, we've been listening to you over the radio, we know that you're right, and we won't be let out of this false concept of religious life. Now let's notice another great fact about Calvinism, and that is that Christ died only for the elect in a saving sense. There is no such doctrine taught in God's word that Christ died for everyone.

If Christ died for everyone and their sin debt were paid, then there would have to be universal salvation. Now brother, you tell me that Christ died for every sinner, every sinner's got to be saved. They couldn't go to hell if they wanted to because their sin debt's been paid, and you can't collect the debt twice.

You can't. If Christ died for everyone and their sin debt was paid, there would have to be universal salvation. This would have to be so.

Then there's risen up a group of men and women over the country who are universalists, and they teach and rightly so on the basis of their premises that if Christ died for everybody, everybody ultimately would be saved. Now they're right, and you go around and teach that Christ died for everybody, and if everybody's not saved, somebody's lied. You get it? Brother, Christ died for every individual and paid every individual's sin debt on Calvary's tree, then God would be bound to save every individual and take every individual to heaven, and that's a greatly prevalent today, universal salvation.

Listen to John, brother, if I believed that thing, and I did once, and I tried to convert everybody I met, I never let an individual pass. Never. I believed that one time before God saved me, and I wouldn't let an individual pass until I brought him to a decision for Christ.

If I could do it. Listen, listen to John 10, 15, As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I laid down my life for the sheep. He didn't say he laid down his life for the goats, but laid down his life for the sheep.

That's God's elect, and Christ died according to the scriptures. This truth is also brought out in 1 Peter 2, 24, 26. Listen, Who, his own self, bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.

For ye were a sheep gone astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls. So we see here that Christ laid down his life as the good shepherd for his sheep. Now, who, who are God's elect? Now, Christ, God knows them, Christ knows them, but he died only for God's elect.

That Bible truth, that's Bible truth that you can't get around, if you have any sense at all. A blind dog in a meat house couldn't see that. Why, no, it'll take some time for it to dawn upon you as God deals with you.

You'll have many a hour's struggle with it. Listen again, then in connection with this truth, there's another great truth that stands out in God's word, and that is Christ saves whom he will. Listen to John 5, 21.

John 5, 21. For as the Father raises up the dead and quickneth them, get this now, listen, even so the Son quickneth whom he will. Thou therefore the salvation of every sinner, rest holy and completely in the will of God.

That's right. That's a truth that makes Armenians so angry, that God is sovereign and Christ is Lord, and they think that that is one of the greatest evils of the Calvinistic system of doctrine, but that's God's word. This same truth is brought out in Romans 9, 18.

Therefore, hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth. You know, folks try to explain away the doctrine of election, kind of gets my goat a bad one. They say, you know, election applies only to God's choice in service, that it never applies to God's choice in salvation.

I'll tell you, friend, if God never calls you with the effectual call, you'll never get saved, and God calls only his elect with the effectual call. All right, listen again. Listen again.

Now, either God's word is true or God's a liar, but the word of God says you let God be true and ever man a liar. These truths being facts, we face another fact, that the Holy Spirit creates, argues real repentance and saving faith in the hearts of those for whom Christ died. Hebrews 12, 2 says that he, Christ, is the author and finisher of our faith.

And 2 Timothy 2, 25 says, for chance he will grant repentance unto them. Acts 5, 31 says he gave repentance unto Israel. And Acts 11, 18 says that he granted repentance unto life, unto the Gentiles.

Now, my friends, there comes in, in connection with God calling out his elect, there comes the convicting power of God's Holy Spirit. God grants repentance unto those, and he grants saving faith unto them, their means of grace. Now, what is hyper-Calvinism? Hyper-Calvinism says that no matter if they have never heard the gospel, they are going to be saved.

Now, that isn't God's word. Not a bit of it. No, sir.

A Calvinist cannot sit down and fold his hands. A true Calvinist is one of the greatest missionaries in the world. He knows the power of prayer.

He knows the power of preaching. He knows the power of the Holy Spirit in his preaching. He knows the convicting power of God's word.

He knows the total depravity of the human heart, and he knows it. And every sinner who ever gets saved comes to know who he is by nature, what he is by nature, and the judgment he is under. And that sinner is made by the Holy Spirit to flee to Christ for salvation in him and him alone.

Christ becomes a living reality to that individual's heart. Do you know Christ? Has he become a living reality to your heart, my friend? Again, the title of the message was, What is Calvinism? And this is number 156. This is the boss of truth.

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