

News and Current Events :: Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends

Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/1/13 11:47

Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--A group of 15 evangelists meeting in Jackson, Tenn., Jan. 7-8 said they have concerns about the growth of Calvinism and the rise of a Willow Creek-style of non-confrontational evangelism within Southern Baptist churches.

A LifeWay Research study released in November reported about 10 percent of Southern Baptist pastors identified themselves as Calvinists. However, 29 percent of recent SBC seminary graduates espoused Calvinist doctrine.

The study concluded that a minority of SBC churches are led by Calvinist-leaning pastors, but that number is increasing. Also, Calvinist-led churches are generally smaller in worship attendance and baptisms than non-Calvinist churches. However, the study said the baptism rates between Calvinist and non-Calvinist led churches are virtually identical. Additionally, the study found that Calvinistic recent graduates report that they conduct ...

read more: <http://www.baptistpress.com/BPnews.asp?ID=27181>

Re: Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends, on: 2008/1/13 12:10

I always believed that Baptists were Calvinistic. They believe in Once Saved Always Saved.

Re: Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/1/13 12:16

Here is another good article about this topic.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--While LifeWay Research found the number of Southern Baptist pastors embracing five-point Calvinism to be relatively small, it is undeniable that the conversations on Calvinism within the Southern Baptist Convention have brought renewed interest to the theological system.

Proponents of Calvinism, or Reformed theology, view it as a healthy return to early Southern Baptist heritage. Others see Calvinism as a negative trend and fear it is threatening to take over the SBC. In its inaugural survey, LifeWay Research sought to document the prevalence—or lack thereof—of Calvinism within the SBC.

More Here (<http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID23993>) Article

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2008/1/13 12:39

Quote:

-----I always believed that Baptists were Calvinistic. They believe in Once Saved Always Saved.

No Calvinist would agree with you on this, we believe that those whom God has elected will persevere in the faith, because of God's working in them to will and do His good pleasure. But a decision, or aisle walking does not mean someone is saved. 8-)

Re:, on: 2008/1/13 13:42

Quote:

-----I always believed that Baptists were Calvinistic. They believe in Once Saved Always Saved.

Compliments, that is the status quo comment for many who claim they are Calvinists...OSAS.

However there are many Bible Believing Christians who do believe in our eternal security who do not believe in or promote Calvinism.

AND when taking someone who claims they are a Calvinist simply on this OSAS understanding, and then explain the distorted TULIP, they say...OH NO, I don't believe that at all.

The Doctrine is dangerous. One can have and believe in their Eternal Security through scripture alone...the Doctrines of Christ.

Calvinism is Reformed Theology...reformed Catholicism....and many Calvinists still have a carry over of some of Catholicism.

The Doctrines of Jesus Christ need no reforming...never have and never will.

Also, no two Calvinists are exactly alike or that doctrine within different denominations.

A Baptist Calvinist is not the same as a Presbyterian Calvinist.

That's why it is extremely difficult witnessing to them, if you assume they all believe the same.

Love in Christ
Katy

Re: Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends - posted by frazier72, on: 2008/1/13 13:59

Read Geisler's book Chosen but Free. Actually shows the sides of both HYPER CALVINIST, HYPER ARMINIAN, and the classifications of moderate's in both views. He explains the only difference between the moderate Calvinist and moderate Arminian is the belief in OSAS, other than that they are very close. By his definition I probably consider myself a moderate Calvinist, because I disagree with the Hyper Calvinist belief of Election, Gifts of the Spirit have ceased, and that man does not have Free Will. It is actually a very good read, and he shows all the verses that each side uses to defend their position, and gives detailed explanations from both views. Geisler is tremendous in Theology and Apologetics.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2008/1/13 14:11

Quote:

-----Read Geisler's book Chosen but Free

Better yet, read Geisler's book and then "The Potter's Freedom" by James White, and see which one stays truest to Scripture alone, and which one actually takes time to exegete the passages, and show the meanings of words used.

Truly a challenge anyone could take :-D

Re: Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends - posted by intrcssr83 (), on: 2008/1/13 16:32

Quote:

-----by sermonindex on 2008/1/14 2:47:28

Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--A group of 15 evangelists meeting in Jackson, Tenn., Jan. 7-8 said they have concerns about the growth of Calvinism and the rise of a Willow Creek-style of non-confrontational evangelism within Southern Baptist churches.

A LifeWay Research study released in November reported about 10 percent of Southern Baptist pastors identified themselves as Calvinists. However, 29 percent of recent SBC seminary graduates espoused Calvinist doctrine.

The seeker-friendly model is completely antithetical to reformed theology.

If Total Depravity is realised by the church, practical application would be that a lot of emphasis will be on prayer, because it is acknowledged that only God can convert the soul. In fact, when everyone prays for the salvation of another and that God will soften the heart of the non-believer, he is being calvinistic that very moment even if he does not realise it. Because in so doing, he recognises God's sovereignty in salvation and that only God can convert and draw the soul to him. The Calvinistic church understands that their prayers is one of the means that God is using to bring about the salvation of the lost (the ends) The Arminian believes that man can reject God's will and therefore, prayer becomes useless since God does not infringe on man's will.

Perservance of saints which would mean that those who appear to fall away are obviously not saved in the first place. The church who believes in this fifth point of TULIP would focus less of its resources trying to keep lukewarm members within the church (lest they fall away from an Arminian view), but will focus more on discipling true converts and reaching out to the lost. Leaders are a precious commodity in any organisation. The church included. Yet most of the resources are spent trying to retain false converts.

Secondly, it will also affect the way the church is run. If the church starts with an Arminian mentality whereby the saved can be lost, then the church will attempt to be seeker-friendly as a means to retain these people. A Calvinistic church would not do the same. The Calvinist church practices church discipline because they recognise that if a true Christian is living in sin for a period of time, he will turn to God following discipline. If he is a false convert, he will leave the church and not falsely console himself that he is saved when he isn't. He is not "innoculated to the gospel" message of repentance in the future because he is well aware that he is not saved in the first place. His identify as a false convert is made plain for him to see.

The Arminian seeker-friendly church will not practise church discipline because it might turn the true believer away from God and the believer might lose his salvation. The Calvinist church understand that the elect WILL stay in the church, and that Godly disciple WILL correct and refine the church (not destroy it). Godly discipline edifies the church as well as the individual. The implication is that the focus of the local congregation is Christ centred; the focus is primary on fellowship of saints and worship of God.

A calvinistic understanding on soteriology would also interpret the parables such that they are recognised as speaking of false converts within the church, of whom the false will be exposed on the day of judgement. As a church, the calvinistic one would be alert towards the wheat among the tares, understanding that there are false converts within its fold. The Arminian church would typically view the parables as referring to two groups of believers who are both saved, but one is carnal and one is spirit-filled; church discipline is not practised. In application, the calvinistic church will not allow those of questionable character to serve in certain ministry because they may well be false converts. The Arminian church would not mind if that keeps them faithfully coming to church.

The Calvinist church's focus will not be on following up worldly people within the church, but will instead focus their effort on discipling true converts so as to develop leaders who are strong and biblical in their thinking. I'm not saying that reaching out to questionable converts is not needed. I am saying that the focus would be different.

When the church is Calvinistic in thinking, its focus on evangelism will be one that uses the law to demonstrate the depravity of man. The sinful man is shown to be depraved and repentance is needed to come to God. The Arminian would usually coax the believer to just believe in Christ, attend church regularly and then grow in faith along the way.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?vA2zvqQ1w-Os>) Albert Mohler and RC Sproul on the Seeker-Sensitive Movement

Re: Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends - posted by iansmith (), on: 2008/1/13 21:07

I think this quote from the article has a lot to say:

"Southern Baptists neglected serious Christian education from the early 1960s, and that's when all the trouble started. From discipleship training we went to the amorphous youth groups, whose only real good was to keep kids happy until they graduated from high school and graduated from church. Now, you have a generation who have come along and want something deeper and they have latched onto Calvinism."

As a SBC member myself I've noticed a trend towards Calvinism in my own church. On one hand I understand it intellectually, but on another I dislike that it seems to have quenched some of the fire for Evangelism.

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/1/13 22:25

The Lord told His followers to wait in Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high.

Not from books.

Not from theological arguments or doctrinal positions.

But power, from on High.

Holy men of God preached the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from above. And they didn't hide behind a box while they did it.

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/1/13 22:30

For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*.

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/1/13 22:32

EDIT: Post deleted.

My comments were not appropriate or edifying.

I apologise if they offended anyone at all.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/1/14 3:24

When I consider the missionary and evangelical zeal of Paul Washer, David Brainerd, William Carey, Spurgeon, Joseph Alleine, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, MacArthur, Hudson Taylor, Jonathan Edwards, and a host of others who held to Calvin's understanding of Paul's teaching of Sovereign Grace, I cannot help but expect that the problem SBC is experiencing is not with "Calvinism" itself but is with those who misunderstand it.

For myself I may say that since becoming a so-called "five pointer" I have far greater zeal for missions and evangelism, and my reliance is more fixed upon God.

Re: Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends - posted by rookie (), on: 2008/1/14 8:24

Quote:
-----JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--A group of 15 evangelists meeting in Jackson, Tenn., Jan. 7-8 said they have concerns about the growth of Calvinism and the rise of a Willow Creek-style of non-confrontational evangelism within Southern Baptist churches.

This is also the story of the Brethren in Christ church. For the last 20 years Calvinism has been creeping into the church which was once moored in the influences of the Moravian, Anabaptist, and Wesleyan ways. With the growth of this influence, this particular denomination has suffered and has grown more liberal. This denomination is now growing more in likeness to a business enterprise. And after reading up on the emergent church, which began under the influence of Peter Drucker, a business guru of the past, many churches seek to be like Willowcreek and Saddleback.

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2008/1/14 10:07

theopenlife,

As someone studying missions I do have to admit that there are many people who hold Calvinistic views who are very zealous for missions... but I would say that the vast majority of people who hold to reformed doctrine are trending towards hyper-calvinism.

This study wasn't about the effects of calvinism, but instead about calvinism taken to one of its many conclusions = apathy.

I have strong calvinistic views, just as Paul Washer. But I liked something that Paul Washer once said, he said that in his prayer closet he was a Calvinist, but if he had to pick ten men to start a church with, he would pick the ten most Arminian men he could find.

In the prayer closet I'm reformed, but when I'm talking to someone about Jesus I'm an Arminian. Traditionally the evangelical zeal in the Baptist church has been Arminian, and we're losing that evangelical zeal as many of our young men are shifting towards hyper-calvinism, I think there's a link, I've seen it in my own SBC church.

Young men would rather study doctrine than tell someone the good news... its a scary day.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/14 13:29

Quote:

theopenlife wrote:
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For myself I may say that since becoming a so-called "five pointer" I have far greater zeal for missions and evangelism, and my reliance is more fixed upon God.

but you have just as nice of a "line-up" on the other side... these are just names to back up our beliefs, we could say Wesley, Finney, Tozer, Keith Daniel, Ravenhill for example on the other side....

Both sides have truths.

Ignoring them, any of them is not being true to scripture. I myself don't know, I know Finney was such a man of God people fell on their faces before he even opened his mouth, I love the puritan writings and some of the Calvinist old preachers, I love Wesley too. I see truth from all... and to say ex Keith Daniel has wrong doctrine or Tozer or Ravenhill... I don't know.

w what to say to such people, other then i feel sorry for them

Re: Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends - posted by whyme, on: 2008/1/14 13:29

Has anyone who holds the view that believing the doctrine of sovereign election leads to apathy in evangelism got a theory on why the greatest missionaries, preachers, evangelists and revivalists of all time held the same doctrinal belief?

Brainerd, Whitfield, Edwards, Spurgeon, Martin Lloyd Jones, Bunyan, Carey, George Mueller, McChesney, Evan Roberts.

The lack of zeal and commitment to the unsaved lies not in the sovereignty of God but in the weakness of men.

If you want to question anything, question how all the Arminian zeal in the world is unable to account for the fact that, according to Leonard Ravenhill, only 2% of the church is saved, much less the world. The problem is not a lack of zeal but but a lack of knowledge (ie., doctrine).

Re: - posted by intrcssr83 (), on: 2008/1/14 15:44

Quote:

-----by whyme on 2008/1/15 4:29:53

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Exactly.

While many may see a lack of zeal in pro-activity within ministry as a logical conclusion of belief in predestination, when one actually looks through the testimony of history, the argument becomes nothing more than a rationalistic Strawman without real factual support.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/14 15:55

Quote:

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some of the greatest preachers in history did not hold this doctrine. Just to keep the balance of truth here

Re:, on: 2008/1/14 16:36

Here is an article that may be of great help in understanding both Calvinism and Armenian.

From the perspective of a Bible Believing Christian who is neither.

<http://www.bible-truth.org/election.htm>

Love in Christ
Katy

PS: and Jeff, this may be the answers you are looking for and have been asking...even with your recent thread.

Re: - posted by tjervant (), on: 2008/1/14 17:37

A quote from the article by Cooper P. Abrams, III that Katy posted:

“I am fast coming to believe that Calvinism is actually a cult”.

And a quote from Charles H. Spurgeon:

“Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else”.

I guess this debate will continue for some time.

The way one person explains Calvinism...I agree.

The way the next person explains Calvinism...I think its heresy.

Re: - posted by davyman, on: 2008/1/14 18:47

Quote:

Katy-did wrote:

Here is an article that may be of great help in understanding both Calvinism and Armenian.

From the perspective of a Bible Believing Christian who is neither.

<http://www.bible-truth.org/election.htm>

Love in Christ
Katy

PS: and Jeff, this may be the answers you are looking for and have been asking...even with your recent thread.

My grandma was from Armenia and I'm a Calvinist so I guess I'm an Armenian Calvinist. I thought the article was heavy handed toward the Arminian camp. All of the citations were in his section on Arminianism. The writer was wrong on his statement that Calvin developed the "Calvinist" system of soteriology. I would argue that it was Paul, clearly seen in the b

ooks of Romans and Ephesians. But Augustine certainly was a proponent of election loooong before Calvin. Calvin spent far less time on the doctrine of election during the reformation than did Luther. This article was hardly a scholarly work.

I admit there are some hard things about the doctrine of election to understand. I've just read Tozer's attempt to reconcile the conflict. Even his great understanding doesn't reconcile the debate.

On the original article about the SBC, I found it interesting that there was both concern felt about the lack of, even apathy toward, evangelism; yet in the same article, the young "Calvinists" were quoted as saying they felt more zeal for evangelism and missions. The heart of a true Christian, whether A or C, should always go out to the hell-bound. We are, after all, the same except for the grace of God.

SDG,

Dave

Re:, on: 2008/1/14 18:50

Quote:

ChrisJD wrote:

EDIT: Post deleted.

My comments were not appropriate or edifying.

I apologise if they offended anyone at all.

moe_mac 2008 01/14 17:50

I think the main thing all should be most concerned about is if they were truth and they were not spoken.

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2008/1/14 19:06

When I studied North Korean Nuclear Diplomacy in University one of my professors once said something that clarified a lot of things for me. He had grown up in North Korea before Kim Il Sung became its defacto ruler and later fled to the South before eventually coming to the United States to teach at a University in Texas.

He said, 'If you're not a communist in your youth you don't have a heart, if you're still a communist in your old age you don't have a brain.'

For a young idealistic person communism has a certain heart attraction, for a person with more wisdom it proves to be more repulsive.

I think Calvinism and Arminianism are the same way. I would say, 'If you're not an Arminian in your youth you have no heart, if you're not a Calvinist in your old age you have no brain.' It doesn't fit exactly the same way, but the point is the same. If you want to be an effective minister of the gospel, sometime you have to stop thinking and start doing -be obedient to the Word of God, even when it contradicts theology.

But when you're ready to move from spiritual milk to spiritual meat, then you can start chewing on some doctrines like Calvinism... and appreciating what is positive about them, and spitting out the grizzle.

I certainly would get a stomach ache if I drank as much spoiled milk or ate as much grizzle as some of those theologians in the camps out there. There needs to be a balanced diet, and we also need to know when what doctrines we're eating into aren't good for us, or could turn us away from God's will for us.

PS. this is my 777th post, so it must have an extra measure of grace and wisdom.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2008/1/14 19:12

hi, when you weep over the poor sin sick, drug ridden, mentally sick homeless people you minister to; and see them cry out to God for help, you see them pray for salvation to come in their lives, you tend to believe in eternal security or you will be overcome by grief and the sufferings of your congregation. Jesus is either the saviour or not. Some people don't know who their parents are, who they are... if not for the holiness of Christ there is none here. jimp

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2008/1/14 19:49

Funny how that article does not even go into the history behind the Doctrines, and fails to speak of how the Arminians were rebelling against the Church of their day. The Articles of Remonstrance brought by the Arminian men were what brought the response from the Synod of Dort, which was the Five points of Calvinism, as they were in response to the five points of the Remonstrants (Arminians).

Again, it never ceases to amaze me how people will ignorantly write articles as if the ideas of Calvinism or Sovereign Grace were "new". However they start with the words, "In the beginning God.."

Again, someone needs to let these men know that leaving off key elements that led to these doctrines only show the inability to simply stick to Scripture. Personal attacks upon Calvin, or even Arminius do not do anything to establish or deny the truth or lack thereof in either view.

Re: - posted by davyman, on: 2008/1/14 19:58

I erred. Paul didn't "develop" the doctrine of election, he more clearly defined it. I have a friend who is rabbi emeritus of the local orthodox Jewish temple. I wrote a refutation of Open Theism a while back and quoted him: "a man does not injure a finger without the Lord first ordaining it." Imagine, a Jewish Calvinist!

SDG,

Dave

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/1/14 23:54

Quote:

-----A quote from the article by Cooper P. Abrams, III that Katy posted:

Interesting quote. Cooper must not be familiar with the definition of a Christian cult, as I received it in bible college. They drilled into us that, "A cult is any group or groups of person who profess to be orthodox while denying any of the central, essential doctrines of the Christian faith."

I would like to see which of the essentials of the faith Mr. Cooper thinks the "five points" deny?

As for those who claim to be **neither Calvinist or Arminian**, I must with all love state that **this is invalid**. I will remind everyone that this was once my position as well, but now see the impossibility of maintaining such a nonexistent stance...

Either you do or do not believe in unconditional election, which is not based upon any foreseen works, choices, or merit, but is solely decreed out of God's mysterious love in Christ for specific individuals.

Either you do or do not believe in the depravity of man, which is his unchangeable unwillingness to ever repent unto faith unless he is first regenerated by God's Spirit.

Either you do or do not believe in irresistible grace, which is the "inward call" given to the "few chosen" which "quickens them to life that were dead in trespasses and sins", changing them into "new creations" through "birth of the Spirit"; and is more than the common call of grace which is always willfully resisted and finally rejected by those who have not been elected.

Either you do or do not believe in particular redemption, which affirms that Christ's death brought benefits for all and is offered for all, but which completely atoned only for those who were elected unconditionally according to grace before time.

me.

Either you do or do not believe in the perseverance and preservation in faith of the saints, which confirms that one-hundred percent of those who are born again will be glorified with Christ at the resurrection of the just, nor will any of them ever finally apostatize from the faith. Those who apostatize were false converts and were never born again.

Carefully and honestly considered, these points stand and fall together, with *perhaps* some disagreement regarding Particular Redemption, though most reformed individuals will stress that there is no real argument - five points, or no points

My purpose is not to be contentious, but to disperse the ambiguity which adds to confusion. If you can say you believe in at least four of the points, Calvinists will accept you. Anything else and you will by default have only one option, Arminianism.

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2008/1/15 0:03

Does anyone know how I can make one of these smiley faces a box? :-)

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/15 2:05

I myself are a ONE-pointer in this sect called Christianity, our one and only point is

1. Jesus Christ

Calvinism and the rest, I have come to believe it is one of satans deceptions in these last days to hinder believers to look at what is really important. In many cases. the truth is most calvinists are lost, most arminians are lost, most protestants are lost. Most people in america, Sweden that profess Christ is lost. They are only Christian in name and do not live so otherwise. You can quote doctrines and quotes, but when we all find ourselves in a prison cell and being tortured, and like wurmbrant after 14 years you have forgot the entire bible, the only thing that is important is Christ, do you know him. Your doctrine is worthless, even if it is the idol Calvin than some call him. To me people come running to his rescue and try "defend" him, God dont need defending the true gospel.

The bible says God wants all people saved, any one who says different either cant read or are twisting scripture like satan. it says ALL MEN. Read it have faith in it. Cant you get it? accept your finite mind can never grasp God

1Ki 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

Calvinism makes God so small, calvinism robs God of his glory and humans try box God in.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/1/15 2:56

The "One Point" of Jesus Christ sounds valiant and wise, but it cannot negate any of what was written below. Either there is unconditional election or there is not. I am not saying that the gospel is solely the doctrine of election, but election is why the gospel works. Christ really atoned for a real people. He really bore their sins.

Can you imagine having to pay back a debt that someone already paid for you? That would be a double payment. If Christ bore all people's sins, then no one would have any sin to pay for in hell. Did He bear them or not?

It's important, Christian, because fourteen years into a prison sentence I will be comforted as Paul was by the knowledge that my perseverance is promised, my salvation was ordained, and all of it was because of God's mysterious love, not because of anything He foresaw me doing.

I do not deny that there is a certain sense in which God wants all men to repent and believe the gospel. It is similar to the sense in which He wants all men to enjoy the benefits of obedience. Nevertheless God has decreed in many instances the ability to carry out terrible sins. God does not take pleasure in murder, but has chosen to allow men to become their own punishments. Through such circumstances the Lord brings glory to Himself by demonstrating His justice. Sometimes, however, God intervenes to prevent men from accomplishing certain sins. Abimelech was kept by God from sleeping with Abraham's wife.

In the same way, though God does not take pleasure in the willful rebellion of men and their rejection of the Gospel, He has ordained to let many of them be punishments to their own sinful selves by giving them up to their reprobate minds. Yet, in other instances, God has chosen to intervene and grant grace for repentance. These cases are called "Irresistible grace" and are ministered to the Elect by the Holy Spirit.

This isn't fluff; it's the stuff of the faith.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/15 3:33

well brother I still tend to disagree with many things in Calvinism, but some things that really "disturbs" me is:

1. A Calvinist can never be sure that he is among the elect, I know what verses they quote to say they can know but in reality they must then rely on a "feeling" or an "experience" that they know they are among the elect. So how can you know? if you are a calvinist that you in reality are among the elect?

2. You say as above God will keep you, I believe this to, the bible says so. But the bible *also* says and warns men they can lose salvation. If not, it would be stupid of Paul to write all those epistles and warn people and tell them how to live. Just a waste of time, John did it also, and James, and Peter... if we can't lose our salvation they just wasted paper and a lot of time. I know this next one is really "carnal" but if it is true we can never lose our salvation. I need never pray or read bible or attend church again. Because I am elected. I will be in heaven no matter what. So as you say God is sovereign in electing, he can also sovereign throw any one out also. There are hundreds of warning verses, ALL written to other believers. Calvinist need these OSAS because they are very unsure they are among the elect, and because they have figured out a doctrine most of them consider themselves "better" Christians. When in most cases their lives are no different than arminians.

3. They refuse to accept certain verses or make them mean something they do not, like the Devil.

I have no problem with the election verses, predestination verses. They are there and they say what they say and I believe it. But also there are many verses that say God wants All men to be saved. They are there... And God does not mock men as Calvinist say he does. Why would he say he wants all saved when he doesn't? is he just mocking men? telling them to do things, commanding all men to do things that they can't? God is not like that.

I believe when we limit our minds to 5 points or 7 or 11, the sects are numerous. We open ourselves for deception. believe the Word of God, all of it, if you don't believe all of it you don't believe in the God of the Word. You believe in yourself because you yourself has decided what to believe.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/1/15 3:44

Edit Meant to PM!

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/15 3:57

of course brother,

I have read much brother, actually many of my favorite writers/preachers tend towards Calvin's understanding of certain verses. But I do not limit myself to just them, I have read the other side as well... And I think you do yourself a dis-service if you don't read the other side as well, Wesley, Tozer, Sparks, Watchman Nee, and many more (I hope you do)... and as you say I have found no satisfaction in some questions, and I have found no man that could give a good answer. I have read loooooong articles about this, trying to explain, but even after thousands of words have not been able to in a satisfying way. What I do is, I accept I can not understand, I do get "frustrated" Calvinist most often don't, like that Tozer advice, "greater minds have wrestled with this without coming to a satisfying answer"

And I will not claim I am greater than all these wrestlers. But I am deeply worried when so much scripture is ignored.... I hope you understand. I am not denying God is the savior, it is HIS work in us, He alone can save us. But at the same time scripture is full of scripture saying we have responsibility, free will and so on....

you know what I mean. Anyway... you should be sleeping now brother :-)) isn't it late over there?

your brother

Christian

Re: you must either... - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/1/15 4:42

Hi everyone.

The Lord Jesus prayed for all of those who would believe on Him through the words of the Apostles.

Can we set forth the explanations of those words which men have made through the centuries as the standard for the Apostolic faith?

Who told us to put forth these explanations? Or to hold them as any standard of truth?

The openlife, I think you are right about this: once these explanations are made and given forth as such, they do force people into to choosing:

G139

αἵρεσις

hairesis

hah'ee-res-is

From G138; properly a choice, that is, (specifically) a party or (abstractly) disunion. (Â“heresyÂ” is the Greek word itself.): - heresy , sect.

But again, who told us to do this?

EDIT: by "words of the Apostle's" I was referring to John 17:20.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/15 4:49

Quote:

-----But again, who told us to do this?

Good question, also i spoke yesterday with a brother who mentioned we use words to describe God and define him that are not found in scriptures, we have to look in a human dictionary to see what the word means. I see danger in this.

Re:, on: 2008/1/15 7:56

Good Morning!

Seems as though many here read this article. Of coarse it will offend anyone who is a strict Calvinist or Armenian.

The part that really spoke to my heart, and I agree 100% as this too is my own experience.....no one, unless they are in doctrinated into that system(Calvinism) would ever on their own come up with limited atonement.

I do believe this was the area he was the most offended with.

Only those who have not been indoctrinated by either side will look at the article more objectively.

A deeper understanding of a Christian Cult is someone who follows the teaching of a man.

Mormons follow Joseph Smith, Islam follows Mohammad, etc.

A wise apologetics said, if anyone, while sharing Christ with you, hands you a Book, other than the Bible, to explain salvation.....run!

I have found in all my times in discussion with Calvinists, when presenting scripture...they do in fact say.....you need to read the institutes of Calvin to explain to you the meaning of these scriptures. Do I? Really? The Holy Spirit has always been my teacher, as it should be. We have the anointing that we abide in Christ, and our minds have been renewed by the Holy Spirit...having the mind of Christ....not the mind of man trying to work out his own salvation.

Remember, no one has stood before the Judgment seat of Christ YET, nor has anyone's works. So you see, Calvinism/Armenians have yet to be judged at the Judgment seat of Christ. For all we know, much may be wood hay and stubble.

The Lord wants to work in you PERSONALLY ***His Life***, (not Calvin's or anyone else's) and He can't do that if you place someone or their doctrines before His personal HANDS on experience...That I may KNOW Him, WHO...Christ...and the Power of His resurrection...Who's power who's resurrection Power? Christ!!!...And that comes to you...not through anyone's doctrine, but totally surrender...having no other God's before you, loving God with ***ALL*** YOUR MIND HEART SOUL AND SPIRIT.

ALL means ALL.

Do we really NEED Calvin? Do you know Calvin stated that on Judgment day he was going to stand before a Tribunal!!! Hello!!! Those IN CHRIST stand IN CHRIST! Calvin never really understood Romans 6...He never sees his old man judicially rendered dead and himself alive IN CHRIST. He may have KNOWN much about our Life under Grace, through his own searching the works of others, yet, makes comments as this, only telling the real Calvin what he knew and didn't know personally of Christ in Him.

If, Paul teaches that we are an open book, and Christ is written in our Hearts..... 2 Corinthians 3...for ALL the world to read...then it is out of a LIFE IN CHRIST that is manifest to have the Power of the Holy Spirit to witness to the world. Did Calvin Really have this kind of LIFE manifesting Christ in Him? NO!

Many will try to excuse Calvin's behavior due to the politics of his time...is that an excuse? Where do the Doctrines of Obedience of Faith alter through events and politics of the world? Actually the TRUE Christian is not moved or swayed by any such things...as we are not of this world.

Calvin or anyone else cannot conform you to the image of Jesus Christ, as all of you is being conformed by the Spirit of the Lord, from Glory to Glory....not chapter by Chapter of the Institutes of Calvin or anyone else.

Do we really NEED Calvin/Calvinism?

No you don't! The Church got along just fine before Calvin came along. To say the Church was dead until the reformation revived it, is to say Jesus Christ died or that God was dead.

John Wycliffe lived 200-300 before Calvin, and believed that God placed KINGS over Governments, not the Church. That's a big issue, and we see that Calvinist Churches place the flag next to the cross in their churches. That is Idolatry!

Christianity has nothing to do with National PRIDE!

Love in Christ
Katy

Re: - posted by Tears_of_joy, on: 2008/1/15 9:59

Quote:

theopenlife wrote:
When I consider the missionary and evangelical zeal of Paul Washer, David Brainerd, William Carey, Spurgeon, Joseph Alleine, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, MacArthur, Hudson Taylor, Jonathan Edwards, and a host of others who held to Calvin's understanding of Paul's teaching of Sovereign Grace, I cannot help but expect that the problem SBC is experiencing is not with "Calvinism" itself but is with those who misunderstand it.

For myself I may say that since becoming a so-called "five pointer" I have far greater zeal for missions and evangelism, and my reliance is more fixed upon God.

Hello Michael, I cannot help but to say that it saddened me when I read this...
Brother has the Lord told you that you need to become so-called 'something'?

Has the Lord told you that you need to enter into a box and put God into a box of 'five point' something?

Isn't poor way these kind of human labeling? Also calling upon the authority of men as you numbered them? What about the others who didn't hold the doctrine but were zealous men of God? Also, many of these men (the ones that you numbered also) were preaching Christ and I can see Christ in them, not some human made box and putting God in it, whatever it is, Arminian or Calvinistic.

We need to take the whole council of God. What we need is Spirit filled life and brokenness before the Lord which is not measured with doctrine, but with humility and openness to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Could you take time and hear this message and share what you think:

Ye Shall Be Free Indeed!

<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=16067>

Also I would like to hear comments from others on this message.

Kire

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2008/1/15 10:00

One time while talking with a retired missionary we got to the topic of calvinism and arminianism. I started making a case for a balanced approach and he stopped me from putting my foot in my mouth.

He said, "Ian, if a man leaves the church after making a profession of faith and goes back to a life of sin, stubbornly and totally unrepentant, what would you say of that man." I stated, "He probably never was a Christian." He replied, "Ah yes, some people may argue that he was never a Christian, or that he lost his salvation, or that he's just backslidden into sin and he's still got his passport to heaven." But then he said the key point, "**Arminians and Calvinists may disagree as to how he got there, but at least we can all agree on where he is, and what he needs.**"

Re: - posted by Tears_of_joy, on: 2008/1/15 10:49

Jesus said also

Joh 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, **and they are life.**

I have seen some Calvinists and Arminianists discussing, but their words are lifeless. Death. They don't produce life, but ugliness.

the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, **and they are life.**

So, where is the problem?

Re: - posted by whyme, on: 2008/1/15 11:30

Some in this thread have questioned the priority or the necessity of this debate. The debate is necessary as it stems from meeting the admonitions, commands and instructions of the apostle Paul to command and teach sound doctrine. Your personal walk should be about an intimate and loving relationship with Jesus Christ. That doesn't preclude an understanding of good and sound doctrine, it necessitates it. The truth should be spoken and taught in Love. The question here is what is the truth. The truth is not a what but a who. Nonetheless, God has revealed certain things about His sovereignty in salvation that He wants honored. God has chosen the foolishness (in man's eyes) of preaching to save. If Scripture is correct, the doctrine of sovereign election is the gospel and should be preached as such.

Understanding what comprises the gospel is a worthy pursuit and certainly worthy of every disciple's time and energy. By the way, a true five pointer would believe with their whole heart that the gospel and the victory of Christ over death, Hell and Satan, should be proclaimed to every creature on earth and even to the spirits imprisoned in Hell for that matter. The truth of Christ is worthy to be shouted from the roof tops.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/1/15 13:22

Whyme, great response. I agree fully.

Kire, I will respond more fully after I get back from work, but in short, I never sought to become a so-called five pointer. Through my study of the scriptures there came a point when I realized, "I believe in all five of these things that happen to sum up the Doctrines of Grace." I see them everywhere in scripture. There is no mystical middle ground on such points as unconditional election or human depravity. There either is or is not such a thing, and your belief will shape your perspective of God and the gospel. Study to show yourself approved, who needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. These things must be divided as we study, because there are only two groups - truth and error. Blessings.

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2008/1/15 14:17

Over lunch yesterday I was talking with a fellow Christian worker. He is the son of a minister and a former YWAMer. We couldn't have more different backgrounds but we have a great relationship because of our love for the Lord. Yesterday we were talking theology and the topic was on how to preach the Gospel.

He was saying, 'preach the love of God and people will turn to Him... our job isn't to condemn men, they condemn themselves.' While I countered that we must preach against Sin, Jesus preached more on hell than any other person in the bible. Then I found the perfect illustration.

"Me and my brother used to play in the woods for hours every day. We would come home with all manner of mud and dirt caked on our bodies. For me, I felt miserable being dirty, so I went and sought out the bathtub to clean off. My brother on the other hand could have lived his entire life in that filth, had my mother not prompted his clean living with a wooden spoon. I think that preaching is the same way, there are some people that just need to be shown where the bathtub is and they will wash off, and there are others that need to be lead there with the rod.'

I think the case is true of this debate as well. The truth is that we need Jesus. How we get a relationship with Jesus besides, we all need Jesus. Some people just need to be told where Jesus is, and they will go there... others need to be lead to Jesus by his Sovereign Will, the destination is the same, and the need is the same in everyone's life. So instead of sitting around all day and talking semantics, let's go out and preach the simple Gospel!

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/15 14:20

1. Total depravity (Original Sin)
2. Unconditional election (God's Election)
3. Limited atonement (Particular Redemption)
4. Irresistible grace (Effectual Calling)
5. Perseverance of the Saints

The words

Unconditional, Total depravity, Limited atonement, Irresistible, Are not found in scripture, we can not define them by scripture, we have to go to a man made dictionary.

These are man made and not found in scripture. You may have a verse that describe something about God or his workings, then use that word. ex if a verse say "God can do anything, he knows everything." we can say scripture says that, If a verse say "God wants all people saved" we can say that.

but when we go outside of the bible to define God it is dangerous. If i want to know what Holy means...

then i read the 500 something verses we find Holy in. Then I know what God means by this word Holy.

I can not do this with the five points of Calvinism. I have to go outside of scripture to know what these words mean.

Quote:

-----God has revealed certain things about His sovereignty in salvation that He wants honored

yes, so he did with mans free will also, God wants all his word honored, not selected verses to fit my "doctrine". We can not twist scriptures and select. The whole counsel of God

Ezr 10:3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

Many have married a doctrine and have become unfaithful to God. They have gathered a "wife" in form of a doctrine,

In as they only preach and teach the verses that are according to their doctrine. I am grieved at when Benny Hinn does this, selects verses from the bible and run with them, I am grieved when Calvinist do this, I am grieved when Pentecostal church does this...i am grieved when anyone does this.

Stay with scripture, sure calvinism is according to scripture.... half of it.

Re: Evangelists lament Calvinism, SBC trends - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/15 14:41

For instance, there is the matter of our relationship to, and fellowship with, all other children of God. Fellowship with the Lord's people is an established law of spiritual fullness, and there can be no fullness apart from it. This question of Christian fellowship will have to be taken in both hands and settled finally. We shall - if we are going to have an "open heaven" - have to sit right down with this matter and do some honest and energetic thinking and deciding. What is the Lord's ground in this matter? It is absolutely nothing other, more, nor less, than Christ Himself and our common sharing of His life through new birth and utter yieldedness to Him as our Sovereign Head and Lord! Get down on to any other ground and we forsake the place of fullness. If we get on to the ground of a teaching, an interpretation, a particular and specific doctrine, or even emphasis, as something in itself, we at once set up standards or draw lines between ourselves and others, and even unconsciously we divide and give out an implication of division.

Or again; if we get on the ground of a denomination, a sect, a mission, a society, a "movement", or anything crystallized as to an association of the Lord's people, with an enterprise binding together those concerned - though it may be for the Lord - we open the door to every divisive thing, and we close it to fulness. On the one hand we very soon become governed by false and unsound judgments. Jealousies and rivalries can never see the light of day if the one concern is the Lord. They are born of concern for a thing. "Sheep stealing" is a common charge that needs to be looked at again in the light of Christ. Whose sheep are they? Are they His, or are they the property of a certain Christian enterprise or society? Unto what have they been "stolen"? Have they moved in a certain direction because they have found a larger measure of Christ there, or is it because they have really been enticed to swell the ranks of something less of Christ?

Are we really only too anxious to let "our" converts or members go, if they are going after the Lord? Do we want to keep

some thing together? Is the essence of division in the leaving of one association or connection because a greater measure of spiritual life has been found in other directions? Some thing exists which fails continually to meet spiritual need. That which does meet the hunger and longing of years comes along and from the old dead and barren connections the hungry move to the spiritual provision. Instead of Christians being glad if a genuine spiritual move takes place, the cry is not long in being heard: "Dividing the Lord's people." Are we sure that behind much of this sort of thing there are not vested interests, sentimentalities, men's traditions, or our own fears?

There is all the difference between the course represented above and the divisions between the Lord's people on the basis of doctrinal hair-splitting, or on the ground of technicalities in procedure, to say nothing of adherence to personalities, however much they may have been instruments of blessing. Anything that draws a line of fellowship narrower than the mutual love of the Holy Spirit is a departure from the Lord's ground of fullness of life. We are thinking of spiritual relationship and fellowship, not of public or "official" co-operation with what is unscriptural in doctrine and practice.

If the children of God will only make Christ their ground of fellowship, so much that hinders spiritual fullness and accounts for the present weakness, limitation, and defeat will be ruled out, and the great hinderer will be despoiled of his ground.

Then there is another direction in which this law of fullness operates and in which some serious adjustment is necessary. It is that of leaving room for

(<http://www.austin-sparks.net/english/000521.html>) Hindrances to fullness of life by T.A Sparks

Re: - posted by whyme, on: 2008/1/15 15:07

I guess that there are some on the thread who will view themselves as kicking against the goats when they challenge a five point believer while we five pointers will view ourselves as the goads. :-)

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/15 15:17

I am just concerned for my brethrens fullness in the life of Christ, why settle with Calvin when we have Jesus ?

the way, the truth and the five points.... or seven or eleven....depending on what kind of doctrine...

Re: - posted by SimpleLiving (), on: 2008/1/15 15:29

I find myself lost and confused in discussions like this. I don't understand them. Please don't misunderstand, I'm not saying anything against anyone in this thread, it's just that I do not understand.

Calvinists? Five Pointers? SBC? Why? Aren't these just divisions in the faith? I may agree with some points in some groups but I could never claim to be one of them because they aren't who I follow. Can anyone say that they agree with everything that any one of these groups claims to believe or represent?

I'm with hmmhmm all the way when he said,

Quote:

-----I myself are a ONE-pointer in this sect called Christianity, our one and only point is

1. Jesus Christ

Isn't this who we are? **Christians!** *Not* calvinists, reformed whatevers or *any other man-made group*. Follow no one but Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone.

I currently *attend* a Baptist church because that's where God has placed me until further notice. I don't claim to *be* a Baptist.

Isn't all of this just division?

Re: - posted by intrcssr83 (), on: 2008/1/15 17:10

Quote:

-----by whyme on 2008/1/16 2:30:59

Some in this thread have questioned the priority or the necessity of this debate. The debate is necessary as it stems from meeting the admonitions, commands and instructions of the apostle Paul to command and teach sound doctrine. Your personal walk should be about an intimate and loving relationship with Jesus Christ. That doesn't preclude an understanding of good and sound doctrine, it necessitates it. The truth should be spoken and taught in Love. The question here is what is the truth. The truth is not a what but a who. Nonetheless, God has revealed certain things about His sovereignty in salvation that He wants honored. God has chosen the foolishness (in man's eyes) of preaching to save. If Spurgeon is correct, the doctrine of sovereign election is the gospel and should be preached as such.

Understanding what comprises the gospel is a worthy pursuit and certainly worthy of every disciple's time and energy. By the way, a true five pointer would believe with their whole heart that the gospel and the victory of Christ over death, Hell and Satan, should be proclaimed to every creature on earth and even to the spirits imprisoned in Hell for that matter. The truth of Christ is worthy to be shouted from the roof tops.

Amen.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/15 17:14

Quote:

SimpleLiving wrote:

Isn't all of this just division?

Yes it is

Re: - posted by SimpleLiving (), on: 2008/1/15 17:38

Quote:

-----by intrcssr83 on 2008/1/15 16:10:27

Quote:

by whyme on 2008/1/16 2:30:59

Some in this thread have questioned the priority or the necessity of this debate. The debate is necessary as it stems from meeting the admonitions, commands and instructions of the apostle Paul to command and teach sound doctrine. Your personal walk should be about an intimate and loving relationship with Jesus Christ. That doesn't preclude an understanding of good and sound doctrine, it necessitates it. The truth should be spoken and taught in Love. The question here is what is the truth. The truth is not a what but a who. Nonetheless, God has revealed certain things about His sovereignty in salvation that He wants honored. God has chosen the foolishness (in man's eyes) of preaching to save. If Spurgeon is correct, the doctrine of sovereign election is the gospel and should be preached as such.

Understanding what comprises the gospel is a worthy pursuit and certainly worthy of every disciple's time and energy. By the way, a true five pointer would believe with their whole heart that the gospel and the victory of Christ over death, Hell and Satan, should be proclaimed to every creature on earth and even to the spirits imprisoned in Hell for that matter. The truth of Christ is worthy to be shouted from the roof tops.

Amen.

I see what you're saying but there's still a point that seems to be missing. The emphasis on these conversations about Calvinists and SBC and the others is about THESE GROUP's doctrines and THEIR beliefs, not necessarily the Bible's. The

The Bible is single-minded in its doctrine. These groups are not.

These different groups have the same Bible. No one group is bigger or smaller than the others. So, the difference in their doctrines is *division*. Why study and debate which of them to follow when they definitely contain errors?

We all have the Bible and the Holy Spirit available to each of us.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/1/15 22:41

I would like to express more thoughts on the impulse which is so common, which is to resist admitting sides on the most paramount positions of the Christian faith. I write, "admitting sides", rather than "taking sides", because virtually all professing Christians who are closely questioned will prove themselves to be either one or the other.

Now, I understand the frustration which some people have with adding new words and terms to the simple faith, but from the beginnings of Church history it has been a necessary practice to formulate orthodox summaries and expressions in order to guard against false teachings.

For example, one cannot find the Latin-based word "Trinity" written plainly in the scriptures, yet you probably use it to describe your belief in the Godhead. I appreciate that when I visit a professing church in my city, I may ask, "Do you believe in the Trinity?" If their pastor says no, I usually say goodbye.

I also sometimes refer to creeds as useful means of expressing a basic summary of beliefs. If I tell a brother, "I subscribe to everything in the Nicene creed (which I do)" then he immediately understands what would otherwise take fifteen minutes to say. The same goes with the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, or any other summary of beliefs. They are not to be regarded as the Bible, but they are good ways of expressing what people believe about the Bible.

Some people like to say, "I have no creed but Christ," or "My church doesn't teach the doctrines of men, only the Bible." But then I ask,

"What does the Bible teach?"

"Basically who Jesus is."

"Who is Jesus?"

"The Son of God, God Himself, who came to save people."

"Save them from what?"

"From sin."

"How did He accomplish this?..."

So on and so forth. These vague non-statements are too idealistic, and create equally ideal grounds for false teachers to "slip in unawares." Deceivers often hide behind ambiguous statements like, "we only teach Jesus."

When Paul said, "I resolve to preach nothing but Christ, and Him crucified," he didn't mean that he would never again write or explain anything else.

When a new convert says, "I only preach Christ," I excuse his immaturity and zeal for devotion. When a long-time professor says, "I have no creed but Christ," I become wary, knowing how many others have hid laziness or an agenda behind such diplomatic robes.

Did not Paul exhort us to "earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints"?

It is hard to contend in a dark room with a blindfold of vague terms wrapped upon one's head!

All blessings in truth, contending with hope of mutual benefit.

Re: - posted by SimpleLiving (), on: 2008/1/16 0:44

Quote:

-----by theopenlife on 2008/1/15 21:41:51

I would like to express more thoughts on the impulse which is so common, which is to resist admitting sides on the most paramount positions of the Christian faith. I write, "admitting sides", rather than "taking sides", because virtually all professing Christians who are closely questioned will prove themselves to be either one of the other.

I must not be part of the "virtually all" then. People have tried to do this to me. They work so hard asking their questions in order to put me in a category and they're determined to keep at it until they do so. When they feel *they* have enough information to put me in a category *they* feel I belong in, they claim victory. "See! You're a Calvinist!/Arminian!/etc." The re is no admitting on my side.

I've seen people give in and "admit" to being one thing or another but that's usually out of either intimidation or badgering and they just want the conversation to end so they can be left alone. Why is it so important for some people to feel the need to categorize everything and everyone? The answer is simple: they love control. They like being in control. They feel out of control when things/people don't fit into nice little boxes that suit them.

I have no need, or time, for that. It's nonsense to me. I am a Christian. A Christ follower. Period. What more does any one need to be?

Quote:

-----Now, I understand the frustration which some people have with adding new words and terms to the simple faith, but from the beginnings of Church history it has been a necessary practice to formulate orthodox summaries and expressions in order to guard against false teachings.

I don't believe that it *has* been necessary at all. As I said above, it's about people trying to understand, have control and put things in their boxes. If God was a small enough God, or if His Word was as simple as this, He wouldn't be God. Why would anyone want a God they can categorize and understand fully?

Church history has been about man wanting to be in control. It's about rebellion. Church history is about division. God, and the Bible, are about unity.

Quote:

-----I also sometimes refer to creeds as useful means of expressing a basic summary of beliefs. If I tell a brother, "I subscribe to everything in the Nicene creed (which I do)" then he immediately understands what would otherwise take fifteen minutes to say. The same goes with the Belgic Confession, the Hiedelberg Catechism, or any other summary of beliefs. They are not to be regarded as the Bible, but they are good ways of expressing what people believe about the bible.

So, the point is to simplify conversations with man's divisional categories and terminologies so they can take less time? Why not just discuss the Bible in its own terms? In the sample conversation you give, its clear the other man doesn't know why he believes what he does. Not all people use vagueness. And, as for that conversation, Jesus came to save us, yes, but not from our sin. He came to save us, through propitiation, from God's wrath because of our sins. When Jesus asked that the cup be taken from Him, the cup was filled with God's wrath. That cup of wrath was meant for us to drink. It wasn't sin that Jesus feared taking on. It was the Father's wrath. God did not look away because He couldn't bear to see His Son being beaten and abused. He looked away because the Bible says that He cannot look upon sin. The book of Isaiah tells us that it *pleased* God to crush Him! Jesus saved us from God's wrath! Glory to His name!

Quote:

-----Did not Paul exhort us to "earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints"?

It is hard to contend in a dark room with a blindfold of vague terms wrapped upon one's head!

But we don't need man's divisional doctrines in order to contend for the faith. That can be done with the Word and the Holy Spirit. These are what the Father gave us to work with and live by. The rest is man-made.

Brother, I'm truly not trying to be argumentative or spiteful. I'm simply trying to point out that debating or arguing on the side of man's categorical, denominational doctrine is a means of trying to justify it.

Rather than two people who disagree over what a scripture is saying and going their separate ways and starting new churches because of it, wouldn't it be more biblical, peace-keeping and Christlike to put the matter in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance? Surely He's capable of answering and resolving the situation. But, it's man's pride and ego that prevent that from happening because they don't want to end up being the one that's "wrong."

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2008/1/16 0:48

Brother Michael,

Your posts are beautiful, and I pray that God would grant me the softness and grace that are conveyed through your posts.

I especially enjoyed your "either/or" approach.

God's grace to you.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/1/16 1:19

Keith, I dearly hope that my posts have not frustrated you nor anyone else. Of course our intention should be, in such public forums, to bear one another patiently in mutual pursuit of understanding. At the same time, the facelessness of these forums and the fast pace of "read and respond" can sometimes make this medium as inhuman as Morse code. My apologies for any riling I've caused.

All the same, allow me to quote you,

Quote:

-----When Jesus asked that the cup be taken from Him, the cup was filled with God's wrath. That cup of wrath was meant for us to drink. It wasn't sin that Jesus feared taking on. It was the Father's wrath. God did not look away because He couldn't bear to see His Son being beaten and abused. He looked away because the Bible says that He cannot look upon sin. The book of Isaiah tells us that it pleased God to crush Him! Jesus saved us from God's wrath! Glory to His name!

What you have done here is formulated an explanation of your beliefs regarding the atonement. You have termed the crucifixion of Christ a "Propitiatory" death.

From this time on, when we speak or write one another, I will be certain that you do not believe in the "Governmental" view of the crucifixion, which supposes that Christ was made an example of justice without actually bearing the specific guilt of anyone's particular sins.

Your use of the term Propitiation, which you likely gathered from Paul, is a good example of how these terms help us understand what one another is even talking about.

This is the extent to which I am committed to theological terms and creeds. If they express the faith more readily than I am able to, I will make use of them. If they deviate, I will note my exceptions.

It is not as though I believe the bible *because* I am a Calvinist. I am a Calvinist because I came to the conclusion that this is what the bible teaches. No argument here, just a fact.

Have we not learned from that forsaken tower of Babel that if we are going to communicate, we must have common language?

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/16 2:59

Quote:

theopenlife wrote:

I also sometimes refer to creeds as useful means of expressing a basic summary of beliefs. If I tell a brother, "I subscribe to everything in the Nicene Creed (which I do)" then he immediately understands what would otherwise take fifteen minutes to say. The same goes with the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, or any other summary of beliefs. They are not to be regarded as the Bible, but they are good ways of expressing what people believe about the bible.

this can be a good thing, to express what one believe, often times though it will only work in countries with English as first language. If you were to visit Sweden and say I hold the Westminster Confession of Faith, no one would know what you believe. So it works in certain parts of the world.

I say again, Calvinism are very true, in many things, but what disturbs me is they are ignoring hundreds of scripture or explain away them making them mean something else than they do.

ex. I hold Paul Washer very highly, I believe we need thousands more of his caliber and zeal. But I have heard him say "when the bible says the barn is red, it means the barn is red" now this is very true statement.

but then I have heard him say "this does not mean what it says" in a verse in Rev that says God will scratch your name out of the book of life. Then he carefully says this is HIS interpretation of the verse, and he explains away what it clearly says in order to "fit" his doctrine that are in some areas obvious not found in the bible. And that so many can't accept that but instead they hold on to these doctrines and go find a verse that fits what they want it to fit. When Arminians do this it scares me too. We need ALL of scripture. Now Paul Washer should have said, I have not yet understood this verse, it contradicts what I believe. That would have been honest. But our fear of man makes us want to belong and we fit our beliefs. I am guilty of this too. I ask for God's grace to be faithful only to Him, even in my doctrines, that are important....we just need not ignore scriptures, or twisting them.

Edit: (https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id20964&forum34&2) Predestinarian & his friend

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2008/1/16 3:00

:-) hi, when I was first saved I was walking down the street in downtown NOLA with my red bible under my arm; when I came upon a group of men who came over to me and asked if I was saved. I said yes and before I could breathe one with a very harsh voice asked me if I spoke in tongues...another asked if I been baptized in Jesus name...shaken I sped away when they told me I would burn in hell if I had not. I wept before God and He spoke to my heart. He uses different people to reach different people. He has even used strange people like me. jimp

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/1/16 3:34

Hi everyone,

theopenlife, you had asked this

'Did not Paul exhort us to "earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints"?'

About this though, would that admonishment be grounds for setting forth those defences as orthodoxy? And to make them binding upon the consciences of believers?

I had made reference to John 17:20 before. Can the explanations of the Apostles words and the definitions used to

describe them be replaced for the faith once delivered?

Do the explanations and definitions of those words which are put forth tend toward forcing men into choosing positions about them?

G139

αἵρεσις

haireisis

hah'ee-res-is

From G138; properly a choice, that is, (specifically) a party or (abstractly) disunion. (Â“heresyÂ” is the Greek word itself.): - heresy , sect.

Thanks for your time,

Chris

Re: - posted by intrcssr83 (), on: 2008/1/16 4:12

Quote:

-----by SimpleLiving on 2008/1/16 8:38:46

I see what you're saying but there's still a point that seems to be missing. The emphasis on these conversations about Calvinists and SBC and the others is about THESE GROUP's doctrines and THEIR beliefs, not necessarily the Bible's. The Bible is single-minded in it's doctrine. These groups are not.

These different groups have the same Bible. No one group is bigger or smaller than the others. So, the difference in their doctrines is division. Why study and debate which of them to follow when they definitely contain errors?

We all have the Bible and the Holy Spirit available to each of us.

Sadly it's a case of "easier said than done".

The Bible does give us the exhortation that there will eventually come a time when church will reach full maturity and unity in Christ, ending all division over doctrine:

Eph 4:11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

Eph 4:12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Eph 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph 4:14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Eph 4:15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

I often wonder how God intends to bring this about.

Option #1:

The Holy Spirit brings the body together in such a way that people set aside differences and get along. Doctrine doesn't matter, hermeneutics is irrelevant, there is neither heresy nor orthodoxy, as the church simply has decided to put all these

e on an equal playing where "Christian" and "Christian" can stand together, eye-to-eye. It is ecumenism in it's truest form

Option #2:

Division is allowed to not just continue, but also increase. Differences simply outweigh commonalities in such a way that if there is to be any unity within the body, the basis of it would have to be very wide and all-encompassing, leaving no possibility of compromise. It simply becomes a matter of drawing the line between "us" and "them".

Option #3:

God raises up ministers with a new kind of anointing that simply says that everything the church has done up to that point has been completely wrong, there is now a need for a better way of "doing church" that promises holiness, unity, empowerment for ministry and the fulfillment of the great commission.

Option #4:

Through trials, tribulation and persecution against the church leading up to Christ's return, God simply pours out his refiner's fire, burning away everything not of his until we reach the lowest, common denominator which will be revealed as his spotless bride.

Re: in the multitude of words their wanteth not sin - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/1/16 5:45

Hi again everyone.

I would like to ask another question in regards to what I asked earlier.

What accounts for the difference in the number of words which the Apostle Paul wrote on the subject of the faith, and that of John Calvin, or others?

Inspiration from God?

If so, on who's part?

Thanks,

Chris

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/1/16 5:48

Will you say to me:

Paul was inspired of God, yet men cannot understand him

Calvin was not inspired of God but him you can understand.

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/1/16 10:59

The following is a quote from an article that is well worth reading.

"As diversified as the modern professing religious world may be with regard to its numerous sects and communions, split up as it is with its irreconcilable creeds and contentions, it will nevertheless be found, upon close and critical examination, that among those who can (reasonably) be called Christian, there are basically only two sections or parties. Practices may vary, diverse views on many subjects may be held, different attitudes may be taken up in relationship to many questions, and the outlooks may be fixed at widely differing angles, but the fundamental positions occupied will be found to center on one or the other of two distinct forms of belief. Perhaps it is more correct to say that all such perspectives derive from one of two systems of theology. The root principles of all are to be found embedded either in Calvinism or in Arminianism. Such, at least, are the modern terms used to distinguish and describe these widely differing systems of theological thought and teaching".

The article is (https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id19441&forum36) here

Edit: I'm not directing anyone to this article as a Calvinism endorsement, but I think it explains a few things that have been brought up in this thread well.

Re:, on: 2008/1/16 11:27

What I believe is so sad is God through Paul has perfectly declared who God's ELECT are.

If you read Romans 6-8 and these verses, the end of Romans 8 are a summary and exhortation of what Paul was saying before, beginning in Chapter 5/6,

Those who have yielded themselves to God to live the Righteousness of Christ in them, these are those given the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, who's end IS holiness and eternal life, these NOW call our Father Abba Father, are NOW joint heirs with Christ. Who HE has justified them HE has Glorified. (John 17).

Do you really need systems to teach you this? It's so simple....so don't be moved away from the SIMPLICITY that is IN CHRIST JESUS.

Read Romans 5-8...it's all there. If this speaks to you...you are God's Elect. There is no mystery about it. The Mystery is Christ In You...the Hope of Glory...John 17. Romans 5-8 explain how Christ comes to be IN YOU.

See how he sums up all he said before.....Nothing can separate you from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Are you In Christ Jesus, is He in You?

33Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Katy

Re: - posted by SimpleLiving (), on: 2008/1/16 11:37

Michael,

No, I wasn't frustrated when I wrote my last post. I was tired. A coworker came to my home last night and I was sharing Christ with them and it got late. I apologize if my tone came across as being frustrated. It probably came out that way when I started thinking of all the times people have "cornered" me and tried to pigeon-hole me by badgering me with questions. (I still can't believe people do that. I always wanted to respond by saying, "Hello? I'm not a video game. You are n't scoring any points here!")

I do believe that God holds his laws in high regard, as well as His attitude towards sin. Man did break God's moral law and Christ's death on the cross was a "legal substitute" for payment of our sins. But I believe that Jesus paid the penalty of the actual sins of people, not just showing man that God's laws were broken and some penalty was paid.

That's where the "propitiation" comes in. Christ satisfied our "legal debt" to God, for breaking His moral laws, by accepting the punishment on our behalf. The glorious thing is, God Himself provided it! It was the ONLY means which man could be reconciled to Him.

I will admit I may have used the term "propitiation" out of context because I'm not strong in doctrinal terminology. I know what happened, I just don't understand all the terms that people put on it. I apologize if I confused you, or anyone, with terminology I'm not versed well enough in to use. :oops:

It's also a conversation that, perhaps, I shouldn't have gotten involved in, precisely for that reason. All of this just seems, to me, to be man's prideful attempt to be in control and to be right. This is what causes division.

The Holy Spirit is able to resolve issues such as these, between men, if they would only humble themselves to ask Him and accept His answer.

No frustration or anything of the sort here, Brother. I hope I didn't cause any frustration either! :-)

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/16 13:41

Quote:

theopenlife wrote:
yet you probably use it to describe your belief in the Godhead. I appreciate that when I visit a professing church in my city, I may ask, "Do you believe in the Trinity?"

As you brother, i do belive in the trinity, can you explain to everyone in a satesfying way how $1 + 1 + 1 = 1$

?

I know there are some who try. there are creeds and confessions of faith that gives us *some* understanding of the trinity. But I think you agree it is beyond our mind to comprehend fully. I can try teach a dog why $1 + 1 + 1$ is only one, he will never get it. How much less will we with our limited minds trying to grasp God in our understanding. We are different beings. The trinity is one of those things, another is predestination, what my concern are, is that calvinism tried so hard define and understand certain mysteries, that they are where they are, i belive calvinism has painted itself into a corner and refuse to admit it. In the search for truth they have ignored other truths...

Re: - posted by davyman, on: 2008/1/20 18:04

If I may humbly submit something from Spurgeon:

If anyone should ask me what I mean by a Calvinist, I should reply, "He is one who says, Salvation is of the Lord." I can not find in Scripture any other doctrine than this. It is the essence of the Bible. "He only is my rock and my salvation." Tell me anything contrary to this truth, and it will be a heresy; tell me a heresy, and I shall find its essence here, that it has departed from this great, this fundamental, this rock-truth, "God is my rock and my salvation." What is the heresy of Rome, but the addition of something to the perfect merits of Jesus Christ—the bringing in of the works of the flesh, to assist in our justification? And what is the heresy of Arminianism but the addition of something to the work of the Redeemer?

This to me is the essence of the problem of Arminianism. Either Christ is all of our salvation, from beginning to end, or he is none. He is the author of it: we were chosen in him before the foundations of the universe were laid. He is the giver of our faith, and he is the object of our faith. And he is the finisher.

I want to be an Arminian in my flesh. I want my salvation to be based on the choice I made. I want to appear more spiritually in tune or more intelligent than my hell-bound friends and family. I want to say that I was saved because I cooperated with God in this wonderful salvation. But I cannot.

God, in his infinite mercy found me while I was still in my blood. He picked me up and breathed his life into me. I was dead in my trespasses and sins and he gave me a new birth. I was Lazarus in the tomb, he called me forth. I couldn't resist the life-giving Savior.

Every Scripture from "In the beginning" to "the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen," speaks of God's divine sovereignty in the affairs of men. He is infinitely wise, only he knows why he elects some unto salvation. He is infinitely holy, none of us deserve our salvation. He is infinitely loving, and he pours his mercy on whom he will have mercy. It is his prerogative. He is infinitely just, and Jesus satisfied his justice for us.

Whether we are reformed or Arminian, we should hallow his name for the fact that Christ has paid it all. I've been encouraged in other posts by some of you with whom I have deep differences. We are still members of the body of Christ.

Reformed theology, that of Calvin and Knox and Luther and Edwards and Spurgeon, takes the big "I" out of the blessed salvation that God has graciously given. Brethren, let's remember "that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved." That is the only requirement.

SDG,

Dave

Re: - posted by Lawevangelis (), on: 2008/1/20 19:48

As adamant as everyone is here about their doctrinal position (or non-position, in some cases), all of this discussion misses the biggest issue in the error of these SBC "evangelists" thinking.

They think that an evangelist is someone who preaches the Gospel in a church building to church members and a few of their unsaved friends. They are bemoaning their fate like the dinosaurs might have, if they could speak, before they went extinct.

Ephesians 4 teaches that an evangelist equips the church to do the work of the ministry of evangelism.

My point is if these guys really want to do evangelism, why don't they go out on the streets and preach? Why do they need a church building? If they want to be evangelists, why don't they start teaching churches to do evangelism? If they had been doing that all along, maybe the churches wouldn't have gone seeker sensitive so quickly.

Blessings,

Jon

Re: - posted by davyman, on: 2008/1/21 8:11

Quote:

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Blessings,

Jon

Jon,

I agree with you. But I want to take it a step or two further. Are these evangelists afraid that people aren't going to be saved, or are they afraid that the doctrinally sound preachers being trained by SBC sems will exhort their members to do the work of evangelism, thus cutting them out? They lament that these "Calvinists" don't see the need for evangelism, yet the graduates say they have a stronger urge to evangelize.

To adhere to reformed theology one must adhere to sola scriptura. Scripture teaches "how will they hear without a preacher?"

Those of us with a reformed theology love to evangelize. We want to see mankind saved. We don't know whom God elects, so we must scatter seed everywhere. What we don't do is appeal to emotions or lead people in a contrived prayer. Either God speaks to a person's heart through the preaching of the gospel or he doesn't. Our job in evangelism is to sow the seed. God gives the increase.

SDG,

Dave