January 1, 2022

Happy New Year. Hope your New Year Day was warm and in cheers with family and friends. I’ll will remember this past New Year due to the weather conditions of rain and snow. But our Lord gave us a wonderful New Year’s day. I saw the nearby mountains tops full of snow making it a memorable day I will never forget. Our Lord is creator of beautiful things such as these mountains. Just look around, you’ll see His beautiful creation all around us.

Now for our **Bible Scripture Letter** topic for January 2022. In my early of walking with my Lord, I came across three Christian Doctrines I had never heard before. Maybe you too were or are in the same situation I was in. These Doctrines or Theology are **Calvinism, Arminianism** and **Universalism**. You as a believer fall into one of these Theology or do you? There are a number of articles on this subject but I selected two to bring this topic short. If you would like additional information of these Doctrines, please let me know and I’ll get them out to you.

So, let’s get started.

Your Brother in Christ, Tony Gonzalez

**1 Peter 3:15**

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense** to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

I included the article below to understand the “Five Points” of Calvinism.

It is a series of theological beliefs first promoted by John Calvin (1509-1564), one of the leaders of the Protestant reformation. They were affirmed by the *Synod of Dordt* (1618-1619) as being **the** doctrine of Salvation which is contained in the Bible. It laid the foundation for Reformed Theology.

Calvinism is often summarized by ***The Five Points of Calvinism***, which are easy to recall by using the acrostic "***TULIP****:*"

**T**: Total Depravity (Inability) refers to the fact that human sin has affected every aspect of the human character - thought, emotions, will, etc. Calvinism teaches that an unsaved person is completely unable to find salvation on his or her own. Salvation is only possible if God wills it and causes it through the work of the Holy Spirit.

**U**: Unconditional Election is the doctrine which teaches that God chooses some to be saved and some to be damned. These choices are not, however, based upon any acts performed by those people or any merit which they have achieved (otherwise, there would be a violation of the principle of Total Depravity).

According to Calvinism, election and damnation are based solely upon God's will and nothing else. In fact, election and damnation were decided before the world was even created, which results in complete predestination for all humans. Somehow, though, humans are still responsible to believe in Christianity - not that this appears to do any good. Denying either is heresy, thus it is necessary to believe both, despite the fact that they contradict each other.

**L**: Limited Atonement is a concept which teaches that Christ died for the sins of some (those predestined to heaven), but not for others (those predestined to hell). Thus, Christ did **not** die for the sins of the entire world, because otherwise the entire world would go to heaven. Instead, Calvinists believe that Christ died to atone for the specific sins of specific sinners, and only God knows who they are.

**I**: Irresistible Grace refers to the fact that when God has bestowed his grace upon a person because they have been predestined for heaven, it is impossible for a person to "resist" this grace and not end up in heaven. No matter what they do and no matter what they think, they are saved. In Calvinism, this is the corollary of the principle of Total Depravity, which teaches that it doesn't matter what a person does or thinks, it is impossible for them to avoid hell unless that happens to be what God wills. Calvinists take comfort in the idea that God's love will overcome their sins, but only because they assume that they are among the elect.

**P**: Perseverance of the Saints is the doctrine which argues that the saints (i.e., those whom God has saved) will always remain under God's protection until they are brought to heaven. In other words: Once a Saint, Always a Saint. The difference between this and Irresistible Grace is more a matter of emphasis than content.

The above Calvinist doctrine puts believers in a moral dilemma: should they even bother trying to be good?

**Problems**:
 Calvinist theology has not been without its contradictions, problems and critics. One of the most important was the challenge posed by Jacob Arminius, a Calvinist who argued that sinful humans do indeed have an ability to choose between doing good and doing evil, thus denying the doctrine of predestination. His perspective came to be known as Arminianism and developed into a much more moderate form of Calvinism which became influential in the United States.

 Another problem developed out of the fact that, if salvation came through God's Grace and without any influence of the human will, then it followed that no church and no religious authority could exert any control over human behavior. It didn't matter what the local minister thought of your actions - the salvation of your soul was up to God. This led to a reduction in the status and authority of local religious leaders, something very difficult for an organized church to accept. It also led people being influenced by the heresy of antinomianism, the belief that once a person has undergone conversion to Christianity, they are freed from the authority of any laws - not simply religious but also civil. This became known as the Antinomian Crisis in New England and led to a reassertion of authority on the part of church leaders.

*Source* atheism.about.com

The next article will compare the three Doctrines.

 Do you profess to be a Bible believing Christian? All Bible believing Christians fall into one of three categories of Christian beliefs, known as Calvinism, Arminianism and Universalism. These are the three distinct and separate schools of Christian theology. With regard to **salvation**, every professing Christian **inevitably falls into one of them**, whether he understands or is aware of these terms or not. So, if you claim to be a Bible believing Christian, after you remove all of your denominational clothing, you are a Calvinist Christian, or an Arminian Christian or a Universalist Christian.

 Each belief claims to be biblically based, and theologians have argued and debated the issues relating to them for centuries. However, the core differences between these three beliefs are irreconcilable.

 There are five points in Calvinism, five points in Arminianism, and even five points in Universalism, which outline each of these beliefs. It is not our intention to go into a detailed complicated theological analysis of each point in each belief system, but only to highlight and summarize **the core differences** between them.

 **Universalism** was the most widely held belief for the first five centuries, following the death of Jesus Christ. However, this all changed when the Roman Catholic Church, in the Fifth Ecumenical Council held in Constantinople in 553 A.D., pronounced anathema on anyone who believed in Universalism. The Roman Catholic Church reigned supreme and dominated the western world from the fifth century until the Protestant Reformation, which started in 1517 A.D. Currently, Universalism is a very small minority belief of perhaps no more than 2% of Bible believing Christians.

 **Calvinism** was the most dominant and widely held belief of Protestant Christians from the time of the Reformation for hundreds of centuries up until the last century.

 **Arminianism** has now overtaken Calvinism by a long way, and currently most Christian churches are Arminian in their belief.

**What is Calvinism?**

It is a system of theological belief promoted by the French man, John Calvin (1509-1564), and expressed in the document ‘Institutes of the Christian Religion’. Calvinism laid the foundation for the Reformed Theology of the Reformation period. Calvinism is the basis for the doctrine of many Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican and Reformed churches.

**According to Calvin:** before the beginning of the world, *God* ***predestined*** *to save a certain group of people called* ***God's Elect****.* God's sovereign will for the salvation of His Elect cannot be resisted or thwarted, as His irresistible grace ensures that all of them will willingly accept Jesus Christ at some point in their lives before they die. *The* ***non-Elect*** *cannot come to Christ because natural fallen man is totally sinful and depraved. Salvation is entirely the work of God from start to finish.* All believers (the Elect) will go to heaven, but all unbelievers (the non-Elect, the vast majority of humanity) will be judged by God and cast into hell where they will be **tortured forever**.

**What is Arminianism?**

It is a system of theological belief promoted by the Dutch man, Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). Arminius started out as a strict Calvinist, but later changed his views as stated in the document ‘The Remonstrance’. Arminianism is the theological basis for Methodists, Wesleyans, Nazarenes, Pentecostals, Free Will Baptists, Holiness churches and many charismatic churches. Roman Catholicism is also basically Arminian in its belief.

**According to Arminius*:*** *Christ died for all people and God* ***wills*** *all men to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.* However, God's will can be frustrated and thwarted by man and God's grace can be resisted by ***man's freewill.*** *This is because it is left to each person to ultimately decide whether he wishes to be saved or not.* Therefore, in order to go to heaven each person must ***choose*** *to accept Jesus Christ before he dies*. All those who die without choosing Christ (the vast majority of humanity) will be judged by God and cast into hell, where they will be **tortured forever**.

**What is Biblical Universalism?**

Origen of Alexandria (185-254 A.D.) is the earliest known Christian theologian to have written about Universalism, the belief that eventually everyone will be saved through the work of the cross. However, we do not believe that Origen had the full revelation of true Biblical Universalism.

**According to the Bible:** Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, died on the cross to forgive the sins of the whole world, and He is the Saviour of the world. Father God is working out His Grand Family Plan for the Universal Salvation and Reconciliation of All through His Son Jesus Christ in Ages, in God's time and order.

God first saves His **Elect few** (the Bride of Christ), whom He predestined from the foundation of the world to believe in Jesus Christ during this life before they die. They are the **first fruits** with Christ,who will rise in the First Resurrection at Jesus Christ’s Second Coming to enter the Millennial Kingdom with Him. The glorious purpose of God’s Elect Bride, the first fruits, is that after Jesus Christ marries her, there will be **the Great Harvest** of more fruits birthed from this marriage. The union of the Bride of Christ with Jesus Christ will bear multiple billions of spiritual children born into the Eternal Kingdom of God. These spiritual children are none other than **the rest of humanity** who will rise in the Second Resurrection.

Ultimately, through God’s refining yet merciful Lake of Fire judgement, all unbelieving resurrected people, without any exceptions, will repent and believe in the full work of the cross through God given faith. They will all freely and thankfully accept the gift of salvation and enter into the Eternal Kingdom of God of the New Heaven and the New Earth. .

**Which God are you serving?**

**The god of Calvinism** sacrificed his son *Jesus Christ to die on the cross for his elect few only, and he predestined only his elect to be saved.* This must also mean that he predestined, knowingly and willingly, to cast the vast majority of humanity (the non-elect) into hell to be tortured forever. This makes the god of Calvinism an evil god, infinitely and unimaginably more evil than Hitler could ever be.

**The god of Arminianism** *sacrificed his son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for all people, and he wills all people to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved,* but he has made himself helpless to save all people by allowing man's freewill to override his will in salvation. Against his will, the god of Arminianism is forced to throw the majority of humanity into hell to be tortured forever, because for one reason or another, they failed to accept Jesus Christ in this life before they died. Even worse than that, the god of Arminianism knowingly and willingly created human beings with the full foreknowledge that the vast majority of them would reject salvation and end up being tortured in hell forever. This makes the god of Arminianism both an evil god, as evil as the god of Calvinism, and a weak god who allows the will freewill of fallen man to override his will in salvation.

**The God of the Bible** sacrificed His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world. He died for all people; past, present and future, and He wills all people to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. He has unlimited wisdom, power and love to save all people in His time and His order. Ultimately, all people will freely and thankfully accept the gift of salvation in this life or the next life, and be reconciled to God through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. This makes the God of the Bible the all-powerful, loving, wise, just, merciful, forgiving and gracious Father God.

**Conclusion**

Make no mistake about it. You are profoundly affected by how you understand these three beliefs: Calvinism, Arminianism, and Universalism. Your understanding of God's sovereignty, His love, His justice, His righteousness, His forgiveness and His Grace are all fundamentally governed and colored by each belief system. People who believe that God will punish unbelievers in hell forever or annihilate them **limit** God’s sovereignty, power, love, forgiveness, grace, and the very Gospel of Jesus Christ itself. They deny that Jesus Christ is indeed who He says He is, the only begotten Son of Father God and the Savior of the world.

*Source godsplanforall.com*