

## The Five Principles of Calvinism

Calvinism is a very logical theology developed in the middle of the 1500's. It is the foundation of the Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, and Baptist churches, among others. While his theories are self-consistent (there are not glaring gaps or contradictions), they do not match up well with our perception of reality. Calvin acknowledged the problem, but explained that this was merely due to the fact that God's thoughts are so much higher than ours. His system can be summarized by five major principles. Each point can be defended with numerous Scriptures. However, just as many Scriptures can be quoted to disprove them. Whether Calvin's principles are in keeping with the Scriptures must be determined not by quoting favorite verses, but by searching out all the passages on the subject, each in its context, making all the passages harmonize with each other, rather than conflict with each other. If two Scriptures appear to contradict one another, we understand them incorrectly.

### 1. Hereditary Total Depravity

Calvin taught that people were born guilty of sin, that one is born bent toward evil, incapable of doing good. This theory was first advanced by the Catholic Church centuries before Calvin. But, being Catholic himself, he assumed it to be true and never questioned it. He believed that the sin of Adam and Eve was transmitted to future generations. All the rest of Calvinism hinges on this point. This idea leads to the necessity of infant baptism.

### 2. Unconditional Election

Because people cannot choose good, then God must do the choosing. God chooses some for salvation (the elect). Those He does not choose are the condemned. This idea denies that people are able to make choices, but rather that our perception of making choices is an illusion.

### 3. Limited Atonement

Since God chose those who would be saved before the foundation of the world, then Jesus did not die for all, but only for the saved. It boils down to wondering if Jesus death was useful for those who will be condemned on that Day.

### 4. Irresistible Grace

The elect cannot resist the grace of God. This explains why totally depraved people go to church.

### 5. Perseverance of the Saints

Since the elect cannot resist the grace of God, they cannot do anything that would cause them to be condemned. The explanation of church people who went bad is that they were not saved in the first place, because the elect cannot resist the grace of God.