



Calvinism – April 12, 2018

Verses Covered

Romans 1:18

Romans 8:3 – 4

John 6:44

1 John 2:2

John 3:16

2 Peter 3:9

1 Timothy 1:15

Matthew 23:37 – 39, 26:24, 13:19, 22:14

Romans 9 – 11

So we're going to look today at Calvinism. It's less of an issue than it was a few years ago. But my position on Calvinism is really simple. If you're a Calvinist, I don't have any problem with that as long as you don't have any problem that I'm not a Calvinist. Now I'm going to explain today why I'm not. But I'm weary with the attitude of a lot of what I would call the neo-Calvinist. Mark Dever who pastor's a church in Washington D.C., I actually fired a tweet after him the other day based on one of his. I normally wait. I'm more mature than I used to be. But I fired this one out quickly. He made the statement that we've got to end the assault on Calvinism because every time that's occurred, Christianity has gone into decline. So the statement basically is, if you're not a Calvinist, you're damaging Christianity. Which is to me absolutely insane. There are a ton of men Dwight Moody, the Wesley brothers, Billy Graham, Charles Simeon. There are a ton of great preachers in time that have not been Calvinists. And so I just don't get this idea, but that is kind of the attitude of the neo-Calvinists, that you're not on their spiritual plane. You're not on their intellectual level unless you believe what they believe about reformed theology. The staff and I finished a book by R. C. Sproul on holiness a few years back. It was a really, really good book until we got to the last chapter. In the last chapter he basically said if you're not a Calvinist, you cannot understand the holiness of God. I'm going to tell you something you ought to do just as a practice. Forget all the detailed little nuances of theology. If you'll take the Bible, I stole this from Jerry Bridges who wrote *Trusting God*, which is really brilliant. He said if you read the Bible fast, just go from Genesis to Revelation, read it fast. Don't meditate. Don't take any breaks. Just fly through it. You'll get this picture, and he said it reverently, he said, "You get this picture of a God that loves His creation, is desperate to get them back, but they don't like Him." I mean that is, to me, the greatest, one sentence picture of what you have in the scripture.

So we're going to look at a Calvinist. T-U-L-I-P is really kind of their whole thing. They believe in:

Total Depravity

Unconditional Election

Limited Atonement

Irresistible Grace

Perseverance of the Saints

Total Depravity

Now I believe in this. Look with me in the book of Romans 1:18. And then we're going to look at Romans 8:1 – 4. Here's what he says in Romans 1.

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

So God's judgment is in the world. Look at Romans 8 beginning in verse 3.

³For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8 says you sin because you can't stop it. Your nature is such that you are going to sin and you're going to face the judgment of God. Now because of this, your sin puts you in trouble and you are so depraved you can't find God. Go to John 6:44. Listen to what Jesus says.

⁴⁴No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

You combine this with later on, John 16, where He talks about the Holy Spirit convicting the world. I do believe that we are totally depraved. I don't think that means we can't do good things. Lost people do good things. There are lost people that stay married. There are lost people that don't have affairs. There are lost people that make a marriage work. You can do good things just like as a Christian you can do bad things. But you are totally depraved in the sense that you're a sinner and you can't get to God unless He pulls you to Him. So unless the Holy Spirit convicts you, you can't be saved. So I'm totally good there.

Unconditional Election

We won't go there, but in Romans 9 – 11, it talks about Jacob and Esau. We don't have time to read these long passages. But the idea is that He picked Jacob to be the one that the Messiah would come through. Even though Esau was the firstborn, and He did it before they were born. I do believe in unconditional election in the sense that, now what a Calvinist would tell you, is that God

chooses you before you're born. So you don't have any choice in the matter. Before you're born He chooses whether or not you're going to heaven or hell which means, by the way, if you're a Calvinist you've got to live with the fact that God is creating people for hell. So you have to live with that fact if you take Calvinism at its purest level.

I do believe in unconditional election in the sense that there's nothing you do or don't do that causes God to draw you to Him. I think God draws everybody. And so I don't think you do anything in and of yourself that causes this or stops that. So I do believe in unconditional election. Your salvation; He doesn't look at this person and says, "Well they go to church three times a week. So I'm going to pull them to Me versus this person who's a child molester. I'm not going to pull them to me." That is not the idea. So I do agree that election, God's choice of us, is unconditional.

Limited Atonement

Now this is where I really struggle. They believe in what they call limited atonement. That is that the blood of Jesus is limited, it's only good for those that are elect. Now I have a great problem with that because of a couple verses. Look at 1 John 2:2.

²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

What has he just said? That the atonement is not limited. It is good for everybody in the world. Now if you take that then that means everybody gets a shot. So it's not limited. It is for everybody. If you look at John 3:16.

¹⁶For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

You have 2 Peter 3:9.

⁹The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

You have the passage in 1 Timothy 1:15 where Paul writes Timothy and says:

¹⁵It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

So the Bible says that the atonement isn't limited. Now it is limited in this sense. It's for everybody, but not everybody gets it. If you reject Christ, then the atonement is not applied to you. Now this is the other side of the equation. There's a preacher who's just a complete moron. His name is Rob Bell; his wife is Kristen Bell. Rob Bell says that when you die, that after a couple of hundred years of purgatory, God's love will overrule and will free you from that punishment. Now that's not true because your only atonement is in the blood of Jesus Christ. The Calvinists will say that its limited only to the elect. When Jesus says many will miss Him and a few will find Him, the Bible says, "many are called, few are chosen." When you look at those percentages, if

20% of the earth are believers, then God's created 80% of the people not to have a shot at the atonement of Jesus Christ. It bothers me that you have these clear statements in scripture that the atonement is not limited. And yet you have people telling you that it is. So you have to come back to the place where you look at the scripture. I don't care what I think. The scripture is very clear. 1 John 2:2 says that the blood of Jesus applied to everybody.

Irresistible Grace

Now this is where the real issue is. I want to make a point here in a minute. The grace is irresistible in that if God draws you, you have to come. You do not have the ability to say "No" to the Holy Spirit. If He speaks to you, that grace is irresistible and you're going to follow it and you can't stop it. But I want you to look at a couple places with me. Look at Matthew 23:37 – 39.

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. ³⁸Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! ³⁹For I say to you, from now on you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

Now does that sound like He caused it? Or they caused it? Where does he put the fault here? He puts it on the city. It's your fault. He said, "I did everything I could. You would not permit me." So I have the ability in and of myself to say, "No." Look at Matthew 26:24. They're at the Lord's Supper table. Jesus' head is in the bosom of Judas.

²⁴The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him;

Now what does that statement mean? He's going to go to the cross. Nothing can stop that.

but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.

So He says, "I'm going but you don't have to do what you're doing." Judas was not forced by God to betray Jesus Christ. He had an option not to and obviously the Holy Spirit's dealing with him like He did with all the others. Look at Matthew 13:19.

¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

The way you can really hear the word is if the Holy Spirit convicts you. You don't understand its importance and if you reject that conviction, Satan comes, takes what the Holy Spirit has done, and removes it from your life. So, again, grace is not irresistible. And then go back to Matthew 22:14. Listen to what He says.

¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.

So not everybody that's called is chosen. So obviously you can resist God's grace.

Perseverance of the Saints

This last one is perseverance of the saints which I do believe. We talked about that. Once legitimately saved, always saved. I almost did my dissertation on this. Because it's interesting to me. Nearly all the early Southern Baptist pulpits were Calvinists. But it never goes from the pulpit into the church. It never did. The church stayed outside of Calvinism and the vast majority of church people don't embrace it. I almost did my dissertation on it because I think the reason is, as pastors, we have a tendency to live in a bubble because we only work with believers. You live with unbelievers and you see them resist His calling and His grace. And I think people see that and so they begin to back away from this.

So a true Calvinist is going to tell you that you can't come to Christ on your own which I totally agree with. There's nothing that bases God's election. Which is really a horrible, unloving statement. Because if you take their position that there's no reason for God to elect you except His sovereign will, then He simply says, "Kathy goes, Chris doesn't." And there's no rhyme or reason for it. It's not a love statement. So He just before you're born decides that you're going or you're not going. Which means, again, as a matter of fact John Piper actually made this statement at a seminary. He said, "God creates people for Hell and that's a good thing." And when you start getting that far out there, you've love the deal. The atonement isn't limited. My wife and I are meeting in a couple of weeks with the senior pastors and their wives that have come through Central. We have 22 coming. And we have a number of Calvinists in there. And it's interesting, the new breed of Calvinists, the young guys, they've begun to realize the Bible doesn't teach this. So what they'll do is they'll say, "Well I'm a four point Calvinist." Well, the problem is that doesn't work either. If grace is irresistible, and Bob goes to heaven and Jim goes to hell, Jim went to Hell because God didn't speak to him. So you can't do a four-point thing. Either God's decided that He's only going to make a few for heaven and everybody else is going to Hell, or everybody has a shot. So for me, I struggle with Calvinism because, number one, I think a lot of the things scripture doesn't teach.

Let me show you something. Because their big place is Romans 9 – 11. Now they're going to talk about Jacob and Esau, but they're also going to talk about Pharaoh. That's what Paul talks about. And they're going to say, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart. He raised him up. And God made him do what he did." But if you back to Exodus, it's interesting. Slide back to Exodus chapter 7. I want you to look at how the Bible defines what happens to him. Look at Exodus 7:23. Now we're going to walk through some verses. But I want you to look in verse 13 it says:

7:13 Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

The Lord prophesied that his heart would be hardened, but it doesn't say at that point that God hardened his heart. Look at what it says in 7:22 - 23

7:22 - 23 Pharaoh's heart remained hardened so he wouldn't listen to them. He went in he didn't even take this to heart. Pharaoh turned and went into his house and he did not take even this to heart.

So it talks about him not taking it to heart. Look at 8:15

8:15 When Pharaoh saw there was a respite, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

So he did it.

8:19 The magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

It doesn’t define which one hardened it, but the idea is that he did it.

8:32 Pharaoh hardened his heart. This time he didn’t let the people go.

9:7 Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not even one of the livestock of Israel dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

In none of those does it say God hardened his heart. But now watch this.

9:12 But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had spoken to Moses.

But then look at 9:35.

9:35 So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as the Lord has spoken through Moses.

We’re back to a simple statement that it was hardened. Then you go to 10:20.

10:20 But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.

You go to 10:27.

10:27 But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he was not willing to let them go.

11:10 Moses and Aaron did all these wonders and the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.

So here’s what you have. You have several statements where it says his heart was hardened or that he hardened it. Then you have one statement where it says God does it. Then you have a couple more where he does it. Then the last three where God does it. Now I want you to look at what’s happened. Even the illustration that Romans uses and that the Calvinist use about Pharaoh, he makes a choice, then God hardens him as if to show him, “I can make you where this hardening never leaves you.” Then He gives him a couple more chances to harden, and finally God says, “OK. I’m done.” And then God hardens him for good. I think there’s some free will even in the

life of Pharaoh that God allowed, but there's a point at which your free will, God gives you chance after chance and finally God says, "OK. I'm done." And that's what He does with Pharaoh. So when you take the Romans passage alone and you go back to Exodus, it's not what it says.

Now there are a couple things that bother me that I think you have to address is you're a Calvinist. I went to lunch with a guy who used to go here before he moved to Dallas. A really great guy. He was a huge Calvinist. We go to lunch one day and we're discussing the Genesis creation story and the fall of man. And I said, as a Calvinist, how do you explain man sinning? And this is the typical Calvinist response. He said, "Well God caused man to sin so that He could show off His holiness in contrast by our sin." Now when you start making God the originator of sin, you've left some Biblical truth pretty badly. But that's what the Calvinist have to do. You only have two positions with Genesis 3. When God put the tree in the garden and let Satan get there, it was either because God was making us sin or because God was giving us free will and the opportunity to say yes or no to Him. If I were a Calvinist, I would never have children. There is absolutely no guarantee your child's coming to Christ. You have Jonathan Edwards, a well-known Calvinist, one of the founders of the first great awakening in America, you don't have this strict, straight line of people through his lineage that are all believers. Which means, if you're a Calvinist, that at some point God looked at some child and said, "No, I don't want you." When we were discussing this at CAPS a couple years ago, and once in a while we get in little Calvinist discussions there, one of the guys, I made that point, and one of the guys said, "Well your children don't have a guarantee of coming to Christ." And I said, "You're exactly right. But if my children miss Jesus, it's because they made that choice, not because my God told them they couldn't come." So, to me, if I was a Calvinist, I seriously would not have any children because you have no guarantee that they're going to be OK. And it's hard for me to imagine that I love my kids more than God loves them.

John Piper, who's kind of the big guru who started the new emphasis on Calvinism, makes two statements that drive me crazy. I had a big debate in one of my PhD seminars with a couple young guys. If I were to ask you today, he wrote a book on the Supremacy of Preaching, and He defined the gospel. So if I'm going to ask you today, "Define for me the gospel." What would you say it is? Good news of Jesus. He says that, now this is the typical Calvinist point. He says, "The good news is that the Lord God reigns." Now that's not good news if you don't have the blood of Jesus. Because if He reigns and I'm a sinner and the blood of Jesus doesn't take me home, I'm in a lot of trouble. So he takes that position which is hard core. But the other thing he says is, which is part of the neo-Calvinist movement, is that God can't love anything more than He loves Himself. Which, by the way, is nowhere in the scripture. And so therefore He doesn't really love you, but He knows you need Him so His love falls on you because that's the best thing for you. The problem is, the Bible never says God loves Himself anywhere in the scripture. It says in a million places God demonstrated His own love and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And it's interesting you have this Greek word, *huper*, which is a preposition that means to take personal interest in. So you actually have a statement that God loved us and He took a personal interest in me being saved. So again that drives me crazy.

I've never met a Calvinist that didn't believe he was going to heaven. When the day comes that I meet a Calvinist that looks at me and says, "You know, I think I'm going to Hell. And I think God chose me for Hell and He created me for Hell. I'm really good with that." When I meet that guy, I'm changing all my theology. But I've never met a guy that believes that about himself. The

other thing that's going crazy is Dever and 9Marks which is a big movement in the convention. I don't understand why but they're moving toward an acceptance of infant baptism as a legitimate baptism. Which does make sense, by the way, because if you believe that there's nothing that's going to cause your child to be saved and God's saving them before they're born, then I think infant baptism makes complete sense. They've kept that kind of quiet because they know most of us would go nuts. But this is kind of the problem that I have. I've always struggled with Calvinism because there are just so many things that don't make sense to me. And I really go back to Jerry Bridges. When I read the Bible, for example with you read the Old Testament you see God supernaturally pulling Israel out. You see God supernaturally protecting it from all these nations. And you see Israel completely rejecting God at every point. So you have this sovereign God that, now listen to me carefully, I had to address this the other day as well. The Calvinist will say to you that if you can resist God's grace, He's not sovereign. Let me explain something. You actually have three periods of history. You have Genesis 1 & 2 where God's completely sovereign. Genesis 3 through Revelation 19 where God's completely sovereign, but He allows man to have a choice. Revelation 19 to 22 you have the return of God's complete sovereignty. We start in His complete sovereignty where we don't have free will. Everything's perfect. We blow it up in Genesis 3. He renews it in Revelation 19. He's always sovereign. Because He's given me free will doesn't mean He's off His throne. I actually think it's the greatest example of His sovereignty in that in His sovereignty, and this is my understanding of what we are. He created a being, the only being in the universe in His image, so that He would have a being that would choose to love Him, not be robotic in that love. I think that's why marriage is designed to replicate the relationship with Christ. Marriage is not to be robotic. That's why I hate all the material that we have to discipline ourselves to have quiet time to be alone with Christ. We've totally misunderstood this whole thing. I don't think God's honored when I discipline myself to be alone with Him. I think He's honored when I want to be alone with Him. I can't imagine my wife being honored when I say, "Look I don't really want to be with you, but I've disciplined myself so we'll spend a night a week together." I don't think she's buying that. I don't think God buys it. I think the whole point of the Bible is that I'm in His image so I can be a being that will choose to love Him. We blew it. He redeemed us. And now we have a new chance to love Him. And I think even in that sovereignty that allows me free will, that free will is limited. Because when I die, I don't have free will anymore. Now He decides where I go. I decided where I go right now based on what I do with the grace of God and the atonement of Jesus Christ. When I die I don't have a choice anymore. He takes me where I decided to go under His sovereignty. I don't reject His sovereignty because He's given me a grace that's capable of being resisted. That's not the case. So I only address this because sooner or later somebody is going to sit you down and in this day and age they will be condescending and patronizing to you, they will make you believe you're not as spiritual as they are or as smart as they are if you don't believe what they believe about Calvinism. And I'm telling you, I think these things are terribly dangerous. The problem in the Southern Baptist convention today is that we've become almost wholly led by Calvinists in nearly every major position in our convention. As a matter of fact, I received a lot of pressure to run for president of the convention this year in June in Dallas because they wanted me to run against a guy who's a Calvinist that's running. But I like the guy and I don't think he's a crazy Calvinist, so I'm good. So I told them, "No." You're going to run into it and I'm just telling you, I think Jerry Bridges has the best answer. When you read the Bible, it really does seem like a Creator in love with a creation that doesn't love Him back. And He's doing everything He can to pull them back to Him. And that really is for me the great picture of Genesis to Revelation. And I think the big picture explains a great deal.

There are passages that seem to indicate some things, so I think both are in the scripture. But for me there are enough questions that Calvinism doesn't answer. The main one for me would be children. I would never have children because I wouldn't want to produce a kid that God's going to decide to send straight to Hell. That in and of itself is one of the arguments for me that I stay away from. So you're going to have some people do it, again, I've got some great friends that are Calvinist, but they're not crazy because they know I wouldn't last long. So I don't have any problem as long as you're OK that I'm not.

Questions

Q. I've had pretty straight forward conversations with people who are and the thing that I have a hard time wrapping my mind around is that some of the most passionate and awesome worshipers that I know are Calvinist. And I can't understand how, if I'm a Calvinist and I have that understanding in my mind that my kid's going to Hell, I would

A. I guarantee you there's not a Calvinist in the world that thinks his kid is going to Hell. Not a one. And the reason they're passionate worshipers is because of their arrogance. If in this room there are 10 of us that are saved by God, then I'm going to worship Him great because I got saved and you didn't. So it enhances a worship that may not be a worship of Him as much as, "I'm happy I'm going there and you're not." Though I think sometimes their passion in worship is tied to that. I remember a kid came into my office, a college kid, I don't know what he thought he was doing. He came in 10 minutes before Wednesday night service and he had 83 scriptures and wanted to run them through me on why Calvinism was legit. I looked at him and I said, "Son, I'm sorry, I love you, but you're nuts." So we went on from there.

Q. Do Calvinists, are they really controlling of their children, highly controlling even when their children become young adults?

A. I don't know that that's a Calvinism thing as far as being controlling over their children. I've never seen that. I don't know how that would play into it. I just know that they really do believe, when I said that at CAPs to this guy, they really do believe their kids are going to be OK. And if you're a Calvinist, you cannot know that. You just can't. So I don't know where they play that out

Q. Can a person who believes in Calvinism co-exist with the beliefs the Baptists believe?

A. Yeah, there are a ton of Baptists that are Calvinists. The problem with Baptists is historically we've only had two things we believed. I was taught this growing up. It was always true. We believed in the autonomy of the local church and the priesthood of the believer. Which for us was simply, we didn't like Catholics so we came up with those two beliefs. Priesthood of the believer, I'm my own priest to God. I come through the blood of Jesus individually. The church is autonomous which we still live with today. I don't have to do anything the convention tells me to do. But the danger point is, we never really set down we believed so you can pretty much believe almost anything to be a Baptist. Which is why in '79 we had a big battle in the convention over the inerrancy of scripture

because we had a ton of people that had left a belief in scripture because those were the only two things we believed. So Baptists have long been messed up. I don't know any other way to put it. We're just the most screwed up people. I mean you've got more goofy Baptists than you do fire ants. You've got Northern Baptist, you've got National Baptists, you've got American Baptist, you've got Missionary Baptists, you've got Southern Baptist. I mean we're crazy. It's embarrassing, but it's true.

Q. So would we classify that as false teaching?

A. No I would not classify it as false teaching. Because in Romans 9 – 11 there are some places that seem to indicate God chooses me. I'm just saying there's enough in the scripture that I don't go here. I would never classify it as false teaching. I would classify it as, because you can't argue perfectly either way. Then don't tell me this has to be true or I'm not spiritual because there are places, like right here, where Jesus said, "Man I love you, but you wouldn't come to me." That remove this as does all the Exodus passages. I think it is very confusing. And I think there's another way to look at Romans 9 – 11. I think Jacob and Esau and Pharaoh are all called positions, not salvation issues. They make it a salvation issue and I don't think that's it at all.

Q. So Romans 9:11 can you....

A. Well I don't really want to get into all the stuff. We'll have to do a whole other thing on Romans 9 – 11 so I don't want to go there.

¹¹for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, ¹²it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger."
¹³Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Look at what it says, "The older was savior." And that's my whole point. This is not a matter of salvation. It's not that Jacob gets saved and Esau doesn't. As a matter of fact, if you go back to the Old Testament passage, Esau is so blessed, but when Jacob shows back up he says, "Nah, I'm not mad at you at all." So God singularly blesses Esau. It's not a salvation issue. It's a called purpose issue. Pharaoh's not a salvation issue. It is a called purpose issue. He gives him a chance to do what's right like He did with Pilate. And he says, "No." And God gives him all these chances, shows him what's going to happen, gives him a couple more chances, and then finally says, "I'm done." So I think these are called purpose issues, not salvation issues. And that's the issue for me.

Q. You kind of mentioned how universal reconciliation, that how it was temporary, (Rob Bell's position), does Calvinism believe that?

A. No, no, no, no. Calvinism does not believe that. Rob Bell's just nuts. Calvinists do not believe, now the Pope obviously came out and said there's no Hell, and now he's trying to backtrack that one. It's what happens when the Pope's always 82 or older. That's the problem.

Q. I just was asking because you..... one way to reconcile that some people go to Hell and.....

A. No, I think yeah, and I think there may be some that might take that tack. No, I don't think they care, and seriously, I had a guy look at me at CAPs, a different guy, and I said, "So you don't have a problem with God sending people to Hell." And he said, "No, I don't have any problem with it at all." Why? Because he's not going. I mean if you really thought, if God's Holy Spirit came to you and said, "You're not going." I think there'd be wailing and gnashing of teeth. So I think that's the real issue. Everybody thinks they're going.

Q. So people that are going to Hell, what's their purpose in life?

A. If they're born to go to Hell, what's their purpose in life? The Calvinist would say that their sinful life is a great contrast to the righteousness of God. And it shows by that contrast how holy God is. That would be their argument. My response would be to your question, "I've got nothing for why they're made." And why does God keep making people for Hell? Why does He keep doing it because obviously He's still doing it. There are too many questions in Calvinism that bother me. Your point's well taken. I don't know why.

Q. So what is the point of church and outreach and saving?

A. They outreach furiously, but their argument is we do it because God tells us to do it. So they're obedient to the call. It's interesting, the first big missionaries we had, William Carey and Andrew Fuller, they were both Southern Baptist, both of them were Calvinist. But it's interesting, when I read Fuller's writings, he began to talk like atonement wasn't limited as he began to move into the mission field. So I think there's a shift when you really get out and meet people. I think you shift away.