

## Neo-Calvinism vs The Bible 011

Galatians 5:22

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If you could open your Bibles to Matthew 5:43-44. As folks are filing in, I want to remind you where we are on our study that we started a few weeks back on Neo-calvinism versus the Bible. We have seen an uptick in our era of people wanting to go back to the teachings of John Calvin as a plumb line of truth. Since that is the mentality out there, it is important that we examine this Neo-Calvinist movement in light of Scripture.

**Neo-Calvinism vs. The Bible**

- I. Calvinism's Mixed Blessing
- II. Why Critique Calvinism?
- III. **The Source of Calvin's Theology**
- IV. Calvin's Manner of Life
- V. TULIP Through the Grid of Scripture
- VI. Conclusion

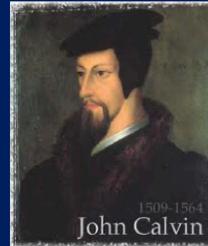
A portrait of John Calvin, a French theologian, reformer, and pastor. He is depicted with a long, dark beard and a black cap, wearing a dark, heavy robe. The portrait is set against a dark background.

We started with the Roman numeral I: the mixed blessing of Calvinism. Then we got into Roman numeral II: Why critique Calvinism? Then we got into Roman numeral III: where exactly did Calvin get his theology from? Now we are into Roman numeral IV, which is Calvin's manner of life. If John Calvin is the gold standard, what kind of person was he?

We spent some time with the writings of Bernard Cottrell last time, and he is the one who is actually a Calvinist, but he is an honest historian, and he is the one that tells us that there were 36-58 executions that Calvin was involved in. His work documents the dates, the executions, the methods, and the tortures that people in Geneva, Switzerland, that Calvin took over, experienced simply for questioning Calvin's theological views.

## IV. Calvin's Manner of Life

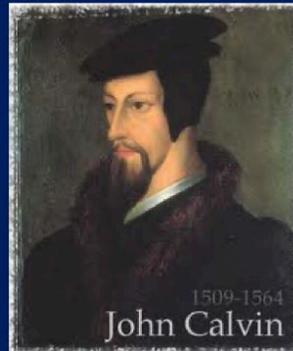
- A. Bernard Cottret
- B. Three infamous examples
- C. General examples
- D. The contrary example of Christ
- E. The contrary example of Christ's followers
- F. Lack of love implications
- G. Lack of love in Calvin's writings
- H. Conclusion



Then from there, we moved into three famous—or maybe infamous is a better expression—examples demonstrating Calvin's tyrannical nature. The case of Jacques Gruet; the case of Belot; and the most famous case, the case of Michael Servetus.

### B. Three Specific Infamous Examples

1. Jacques Gruet
2. Michael Servetus
3. Belot



From there, I want to move on. I want to give you some general examples. Those were more specific, but some more general, broad examples of Calvin's manner of life.

This is a letter that he wrote to one of his friends. His last name is Farrell. In this letter, this is what Calvin said:

"I am persuaded that it is not without the special will of God that, apart from any verdict of the judges, the criminals have endured protracted torment at the hands of the executioner."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Calvin's letter to Farel on 24 July, *Selected Works of John Calvin*. Cited in Paul Penley, "John Calvin Killed Rival Theologians: Bad Bible Interpretation Justified It," online:

These executions that he was involved in, Calvin looked at that as though he was carrying out the special will of God. Of course, this was the thinking of Augustine, where Calvin got so much of his material from. Augustine, as we talked about him, basically was the father of the Inquisition who basically believed, you could use political power to coerce conversions. Calvin, of course, carried that over in Geneva.

When he put people to death for heresy—and by the way, they were heretics. I would agree with Calvin's theology when he put heretics to death for denying the Trinity—Calvin was right theologically, obviously, but he basically believed that when he put these people to death, he was carrying out the special will of God. This is from an article by Paul Penley. It is an amazing article because he is talking about the importance of proper hermeneutics. "Hermeneutics" means "interpretation." In other words, if you do not interpret the Bible correctly, if you do not rightfully divide the Word of God, then this is the direction you move in; you start to take Israel's commands under a theocracy, and you start to apply them to the Church Age.

In this article he quotes Calvin. He says:

"Calvin stated, 'Whoever now shall contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death, knowingly and willingly incur their guilt. It is not human authority that speaks, it is God who speaks and prescribes a perpetual rule for His Church.'<sup>2</sup>

Much like Rome (he was kicked out of Roman Catholicism), he looked at himself as the vicar or the representative of Jesus on planet Earth, and he felt that he was in the Kingdom of Jesus because he did not believe in a future kingdom. He believed the Kingdom is now, and he had really no problem from a theological angle, taking over the institutions of human government and using it to liquidate heretics. He felt that he was theologically justified in doing so.

In the article, it brings up some minutes from the city council meetings in Geneva. Penley writes this:

"How could such torture be condoned? In November 1552 the Geneva Council declared Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion to be a 'holy doctrine which no man might speak against.' Disagreeing with Calvin's view was a violation warranting the death penalty according to the way Calvin interpreted Leviticus 24:16."<sup>3</sup>

You might be wondering what exactly Leviticus 24:16 says.

*""Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death; all the congregations shall certainly stone him. The alien as*

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<http://www.reenactingtheway.com/blog/john-calvin-had-people-killed-and-bad-bible-interpretation-justified-it>, 05 March 2015, accessed 13 November 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

*well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death""  
(Leviticus 24:16).*

This is why, when Jesus claimed to be the great "I Am," the "ego eimi [ἐγὼ εἰμι]," which is a title that rests only with God. That is a title that God used of Himself when He was speaking to Moses in Exodus 3:14. This is why, when Jesus used that title for Himself in John 8:58-59, it says: *"Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him"* (John 8:59). They tried to stone Him to death because they were operating under Israel's law, and they felt, wrongly, that Christ was blaspheming.

John Calvin in 1552 has no problem really taking over the Geneva Council and using political power to eradicate, liquidate—whatever word you want to use—heretics, because that is what the Bible says to do. You can see very quickly why this Israel-Church distinction is a big deal. We as Dispensationalists would never do something like this.

We basically say that applies to Israel and we are not Israel; we are the church. Israel was a nation; we consist of a spiritual man from all nations. It is a no-brainer that we would not use Leviticus 24:16 the way Calvin did. But Calvin did not have, as I have tried to explain, this Israel-Church distinction, and neither did Augustine, from whom he is largely getting his theology. "If you want to use Leviticus 24:16 to murder through governmental power, Trinitarian heretics, no problem, because that is what the Bible says to do." This is what we mean by rightfully dividing God's Word.

The Penley article is so good because it leads you into this type of historical insanity when these basic distinctions that we make here over and over again are not recognized.

Penley goes on:

"The Geneva city council records describe one verdict where a man who publicly protested against John Calvin's doctrine of predestination was flogged at all the city's main intersections (I guess it is not enough to flog him in one intersections in all the city's main intersections and then expelled...You did not get to disagree with Calvin in this town."<sup>4</sup>

Here are a couple of quotes from Dave Hunt. This one I have given to you before:

"In February 1555, Calvin's supporters gained the absolute majority on the council [in Geneva]. On May 16th, there was an attempted uprising because Calvin had excluded certain libertarian civic officials from the Lord's Supper. Leaders of the rebellion—"<sup>5</sup>

That part of it, I think you can exclude people from the Lord's Supper. We do it here all the time. We say that this is an open table in the sense that you must be a Christian to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Dave Hunt, "Calvinism Denied," in *Debating Calvinism: Five Points, Two Views*, ed. Dave Hunt and James White (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), pp. 23-24.

participate, you need not be a member of Sugar Land Bible Church to participate; but if you have never trusted Christ as your Savior, since this is a ritual for the saved rather than the unsaved, we say simply let the elements pass by and an opportunity is going to be given at the conclusion of this service to actually trust Christ to save you. That part of it is not that big of a deal.

"—Calvin had excluded certain libertarian civic officials from the Lord's Supper. Leaders of the rebellion who fled to Bern were sentenced to death in absentia. Four who failed to escape were beheaded, quartered, and their body parts hung in strategic locations as a warning. Evoking the phrase 'henchmen of Satan,' which he had used earlier against the Anabaptists, Calvin justified this barbarity by saying, 'Those who do not correct evil when they can do so and their office requires it are guilty of it.' From 1554 until his death in 1564, 'no one any longer dared oppose the Reformer openly.'"<sup>6</sup>

One of the scariest things in the world is if you have a guy with political power that is somewhat thin-skinned, which apparently Calvin was—he did not like any criticism—who also happens to think God is on his side. That is a dangerous combination. That is what you have in John Calvin. All of these people that are trying to make this man into a hero, I believe that he did contribute some good things to Christianity, but this is the side of it that is almost never brought up in these Neo-Calvinistic circles. They almost look at the guy as if he is an apostle.

Dave Hunt continues on in his very good book, "What Love Is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God." Dave Hunt says:

"With dictatorial control over the populace ('he ruled as few sovereigns have done'), Calvin imposed his brand of Christianity upon the citizenry with floggings, imprisonments, banishments, and burnings at the stake."<sup>7</sup>

Do you see that in the Great Commission, to go out and do this? I do not find it. The only justification you have is Israel under the Law, but we are in the Church Age now.

When John Calvin broke away from Rome, or they broke away from him or kicked him out, he brought a lot of Rome-ish theocratic ideas with him into his new found Protestantism.

"Calvin has been called 'the Protestant Pope' and 'the Geneva dictator' who 'would tolerate in Geneva the opinions of only one person, his own.'"<sup>8</sup>

We talk a lot about Sharia Law, which, when Muslims take over, that is what they impose, Sharia Law. Islam is not so much a religion. It is a religion, but when you

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Dave Hunt, *What Love Is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God*, 4th ed. (Bend, OR: Berean Call, 2013), 74; partly citing Williston Walker from *John Calvin: The Organizer of Reformed Protestantism* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 259 and 107.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

examine the foundational documents of Islam, most of the things that it talks about are not so much religion, but about political control.

Islam, like Marxism, is a worldwide conquest ideology. That is what it is. It is what both of them are. That is how you have to understand it. The media wants you to think it is only a religious thing. It is religious, but there is a lot more to it than religion. There is a lot about politics.

When you visit a part of the world that is dominated by Sharia Law, women cannot drive. If they do drive, they are punished. Women better go outside with their burqas on, because if they do not have their burqas on in the Middle Eastern sun, they are punished. We rightfully decry that in Islam, but Calvin, to a very large extent imposed the same type of thing. I would call it a Christian version of Sharia Law.

Will Durant, in his book "The Story of Civilization," writes this:

"To regulate lay conduct a system of domiciliary visits was established...and questioned the occupants on all phases of their lives..."<sup>9</sup>

How would you like that, for the pastor to show up at your doorstep with political power saying, "When are you going to go on vacation? What are you going to be wearing to church on Sunday? What other books besides my sermons are you reading?" That is what Calvin did.

"...[he] questioned all the occupants on all phases of their lives...The allowable color and quantity of clothing, and the number of dishes permissible at a meal, were specified by law. Jewelry and lace were frowned upon. A woman was jailed for arranging her hair to an immoral height...Censorship of the press was taken over from the Catholic and secular precedents and enlarged: books of immoral tendency were banned..."<sup>10</sup>

I am a lawyer. We have lawyers in our flock here. That language, "immoral tendency," would probably be struck down by our United States Supreme Court because it is very vague and overbroad language. "Immoral tendency," what does that mean? Any worldview can be read into that.

"To speak disrespectfully of Calvin or the clergy was a crime. A first violation of these ordinances was punished with a reprimand, further violation with fines, persistent violation with imprisonment or banishment."

"Fornication was to be punished with exile or drowning—" <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Will Durant, "Caesar and Christ," *Pt. III of The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), 474.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

This sounds like the Old Testament Pharisees, does it not? The woman caught in adultery, they were going to kill. It is interesting that they did not. It takes two to tango. What about the man? "We caught her in the very act." Do you remember John 8? What about the man? If you have a very low view of women, you single out the woman. "It is obviously her fault."

That is when Jesus came along, you will remember, and wrote in the sand and the ground in the dust. Nobody knows what He was writing. Everybody thinks they know, but it does not say. Everybody has a theory. My theory is that He wrote down the Ten Commandments, like one of them, like "Thou shalt not murder." It condemned the stone throwers, and they went their way.

Jesus said, "Where are your condemners?" Then He said, "Neither do I condemn you." But then He says, "Leave your life of sin" (John 8). He did not approve of adultery, but He showed grace to that woman. When a woman is physically punished for fornication or adultery, to me that goes directly against what Jesus role-modeled.

"A first violation of these ordinances was with a reprimand, further violation with fines, persistent violation with imprisonment or banishment. Fornication was to be punished with exile or drowning; adultery, blasphemy, or idolatry with death...a child was beheaded for striking its parents."<sup>12</sup>

That is one way to get rebellious kids under control, I guess. You know where they are getting all this from? They are getting it from the Law. The Law says that if a kid starts mouthing off to his parents, then stone him to death. If you do not have an Israel-Church distinction, you can just go to those Old Testament passages and say, "God is on my side."

"In the years 1558-59 there were 414 prosecutions for moral offenses; between 1542 and 1564 there were seventy-six banishments and fifty-eight executions; the total population of Geneva at that time was about 20,000."

Twenty thousand people trapped in tyranny, a Christian form of Sharia Law, I will call it.

James Edward McGoldrick says in an academic article, "Introducing John Calvin: The Reformer's Preparation," he says this about Geneva when Calvin ruled with an iron fist:

"A measure of legalism became apparent in Geneva, as the consistory put the lives of church members under continuous review and applied discipline to offenders."<sup>13</sup>

When you put church members under continuous review, that is an outworking, I will show you this when we get to the P in TULIP, that if you are really a Christian, you need to be persevering in good works, but no one defines exactly what that means. This is

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> James Edward McGoldrick, "Introducing John Calvin: The Reformer's Preparation," *Reformation and Revival* 10, no. 4 (2001): 21.

why those under the Calvinistic system have almost no assurance of salvation. They do not know if they have done enough to prove they are persevering, to prove they are one of the elect who has been given the gift of faith. I will show you the quotes. They go to their graves, scared out of their minds that, "Maybe I am not going to make it into heaven," which is not the time to have your mind dominated by false doctrine. When you are dying, you need to have confidence in the promises of God. Absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8).

These people under the Calvinistic system, even today, do not have that. If you believe that you have the authority of the government to persecute the non-Christian, then you put people under perpetual review to see if they are really Christians or not. That is where all of this comes from.

"—church members under continuous review and applied discipline to offenders. Church attendance was compulsory. Eating fish on Fridays was forbidden, as were attendance at theaters, dancing, card playing, and criticism of pastors. All heretical teaching was deemed to be subversive and subject to penalties under criminal law. Flagrant infractions could lead to punishment, imprisonment, and in extreme cases death. Judicial torture was common procedure."<sup>14</sup>

This quote I have given you before. Philip Schaff is considered to be a first-rate church historian. His book "History of the Christian Church" is considered a classic. This is what he said about that time period:

"The Reformers inherited the doctrine of persecution from their mother Church, and practiced it as far as they had power. They fought intolerance with intolerance. They differed from their opponents in the degree and extent, but not in the principle, of intolerance. They broke down the tyranny of popery, and thus opened the way for the development of religious freedom; but they denied to others the liberty which they exercise themselves."<sup>15</sup>

What good is it to become a Protestant if you are just going to create a Protestant kingdom that is just like the Roman Catholic kingdom that you fled from?

"The Protestant governments in Germany and Switzerland excluded, within the limits of their jurisdiction, the Roman Catholics from all religious and civil rights, and took exclusive possession of their churches, convents, and other property. They banished, imprisoned, drowned, beheaded, hanged, and burned Anabaptists, Antitrinitarians, Schwenkfeldians, and other dissenters."<sup>16</sup>

These are some generic examples of what it was like in Geneva.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 8 , p. 700.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Edward Gibbon is another first-rate historian. He wrote the book "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire." He is a quote by George Zeller of Middletown Bible Church. I would recommend to you, like I did last week, their website, [middletownbiblechurch.org](http://middletownbiblechurch.org). There are some great articles on these subjects there. There is a quote from George Zeller that it is followed by the quote from Edward Gibbon:

"The Reformers came out of Roman Catholicism which was known for its intolerance and persecution of anyone who differed from Catholic dogma, as anyone who has studied the Spanish Inquisition fully knows. The tragedy is that John Calvin and some of the Reformers, became shamefully intolerant of those who differed from their doctrinal position, even to the point of executing the offender!"<sup>17</sup>

With that being said, here is the quote from Edward Gibbon:

"The Reformers were ambitious of succeeding the tyrants whom they had dethroned. They imposed with equal rigor their creeds and confessions; they asserted the right of the magistrate to punish heretics with death. The nature of the tiger was the same..."<sup>18</sup>

It reminds me of that story that Jesus told about a man who was possessed by a demon. When the demon is cast out of the man and nothing better comes into the life of the man who had the demon, in other words he never got saved. What it says is that demon roams about arid places and gets seven friends worse than itself, and all seven of them go back into the same man (Matthew 12:43-45). The state of the man at the end is worse than the beginning. At the beginning he had one demon inside of him; at the end he had seven demons inside of him.

That is what this reminds me of when I read all these things. The Reformers broke away from Roman Catholicism (praise God for that), but it is a movement that is destined to fail because it does not replace what you left with something better. If you do not replace it with something better, you are just going to imitate the pattern of the people that you fled from. That is why Edward Gibbon says, "The nature of the tiger was the same." You walk into Geneva and it is no different from a Roman Catholic controlled jurisdiction. It is just that in Roman Catholicism the enemies of the Protestants; under the new system, the enemies of the Roman Catholics; but the nature of the tiger is exactly the same.

This is not Christianity. Christianity is about a change. It is about a changed life. Of course, people are at different stages of growth, but the agenda of Jesus is not only to morally reform people on the outside; the agenda of Jesus is to come into a person and change them from the inside out. It does not really help a human being to evict one

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<sup>17</sup> Edward Gibbon *Decline and Fall*, ch. LIV. Initial quote by George Zeller, "Should We Go Back to the Reformation?" online: [www.middletownbiblechurch.org/reformed/backto.htm](http://www.middletownbiblechurch.org/reformed/backto.htm), accessed 22 November 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

thing if it is not replaced with something better. That is largely what you see in this newfound Protestant movement that John Calvin and others were orchestrating.

These are, as most would agree, I would think, horrific examples. Compare those examples to the teachings of Jesus. What did Jesus say in Matthew 5:43-44?

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy—'" (Matthew 5:43).*

By the way, "hate your enemy," I do not think is found in the Bible. When Jesus says, "You have heard it said," He is not referring back to the Law of Moses. I could show you in the Law of Moses where it says in Leviticus 19 that you are to love your neighbor as you love yourself. When Jesus is referencing, "You have heard it said, 'Hate your enemy,'" He is referring to Pharisaical tradition, man-made.

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:43-44).*

Even people that are obnoxious and rude and have the wrong theology. There is nothing here about "Do not get mad, get even." There is certainly nothing here about physically persecuting people, even if you have the power to do it. You can see how far Calvinism got away from what the master, Jesus Christ, was teaching, although Calvin justified all of these actions as being God's representative on earth. He was not God's representative on earth at all.

Over in Luke 23:34 are some of the final words of Christ on the cross. What did Jesus say there?

*"But Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves" (Luke 23:34).*

Can you imagine that, taking the Son of God's garments and starting some gambling to figure out who is going to get what? That is what they were doing with the garments of the Son of God as He was dying.

What does Jesus say as He is dying on the cross? He says, "I am going to get every single one of you big time when I come back the second time, you are going to be sorry." No. He starts to pray to the Father, "Forgive them. They have no idea what they are doing."

While I am on this subject, there is this weird teaching out there that says that you do not have to forgive someone unless they come and ask you for forgiveness. Have you guys heard stuff like that? How does that comport at all with what Jesus said? These people that were dividing up His garments did not come and ask for forgiveness, but Jesus forgave them anyway. That is the Christian life. Forgiving someone, of course, is not the same thing as trusting them again where you put yourself into harm's way, but the idea—and I have heard a lot of people say this in Christian circles—that you do not

have to forgive someone unless they come and ask for forgiveness, that totally runs afoul of what Jesus is role modeling for us. He is forgiving people that do not even know what they are doing, and they are not asking for forgiveness.

Forgiveness is more for you than for them because it releases you from all kinds of problems: high blood pressure, ulcers, being angry and upset all the time. If you are going to be a bitter person, first of all, you are not going to impact the person that hurt you. You being bitter at them is not impacting them at all. They might not even know they hurt you in the first place. Being a bitter person is like taking poison and swallowing it, thinking you are going to poison the person that damaged you, when in reality the only person that you are hurting is yourself. This is basic Christianity.

"Pastor, you do not know what they did to me." No, I do not, but I know what He did for you. Forgive as you have been forgiven (Ephesians 4:32). In fact, remember the parable Jesus taught about that in Matthew 18? The guy that owed somebody a lot of money, and he was forgiven. That guy turned around and found a guy that owed him a few bucks and said, "Throw him in the debtors' prison."

That is how foolish we look when we do not forgive people. It is as if I am going to hold people to a standard of justice when God, in His infinite mercy, decided not to hold me to a standard of justice. We learn to be forgiving people when we understand the grace that God has given to us. That is what Jesus is role-modeling here in Luke 23:34. It does not include lighting people on fire because they criticize your theology.

How about John 13:15? That was just Jesus. We cannot expect to be like Him, can we? What does Jesus say in John 13:15?

*"For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you" (John 13:15).*

If Jesus said, "Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do," maybe we should be like that also. In all of these things, morally speaking, He has set for us an example.

Dave Hunt writes this:

"Perhaps Calvin thought he was God's instrument to force irresistible grace (a key doctrine of Calvinism) upon the citizens of Geneva, Switzerland—" <sup>19</sup>

That is another part of their doctrine where, if you are one of the elect, you are going to get saved whether you want to or not. If you believe that, and you have the reins of political authority, why not use political authority to expedite the process? Ideas have consequences.

"Perhaps Calvin thought he was God's instrument to force irresistible grace (a key doctrine in Calvinism) upon the citizens of Geneva,

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<sup>19</sup> Dave Hunt, *What Love Is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God*, 4th ed. (Bend, OR: Berean Call, 2013), 72.

Switzerland—even those who proved their unworthiness by resisting to the death. He unquestionably did his best to be irresistible in imposing 'righteousness.' but what he imposed, and the manner in which he imposed it was far from the grace and the teachings and example of Christ."<sup>20</sup>

You want someone to impose righteousness? Jesus is going to do that pretty well when He comes back, trust me; but if you think that we are in the Kingdom now and that He is reigning now in a kingdom sense, that He is reigning now on David's throne, then why not just get the show rolling? We will impose righteousness right now through government. Not having this Israel-Church distinction leads to total confusion.

We have the contrary example of Jesus. We have the contrary example of Christ's followers. A lot of people will say, "That is what Jesus did. I cannot do that." You are right. You cannot, but He can do it through you. He can teach you to be a forgiving person, even if you are not, because it is not you doing it—it is Him doing it through you.

Is that not what Stephen role-modeled in Acts 7:60? Stephen, the first martyr of the Church Age, was stoned to death totally unfairly. I think it is around Acts 7:55 that it talks about how he was under the domination of the Holy Spirit when this martyrdom happened. It says:

*"Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them!' Having said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:60).*

That is what Jesus said on the cross. Why is Stephen saying the same thing? Because the Holy Spirit was upon Stephen—in Stephen—and Jesus was living out His life through Stephen. That is why Stephen was a forgiving person to the point of death, just like Jesus was. He was not doing these things under his own strength or his power. This is how God wants to make us, not resentful, angry, antagonistic people, but He wants us to walk in love.

That is the fruit of the spirit, is it not? Notice Galatians 5:22.

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).*

It is the Holy Spirit that produces love in the life of the Christian. Do you remember 2 Peter 1:5-7, which gives the portrait of growth? If you want to know if you are growing as a Christian, here is a really good barometer. These are the attributes that will begin to manifest in your life. It starts with faith, because without faith, it is impossible to please God. It ends with love, and in between are goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, brotherly kindness, and love. Not "eros" romantic love, not "philia" brotherly love, not "storge" family love, but "agape" selfless love.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

It is the type of love about which Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13, says that if you do not have it, you can know Bible doctrine until the cows come home. You can be spiritually gifted, crazy gifted, but if you do not walk in love, you are just a resounding gong. All those other things that you have—gifting or whatever it is—do not really amount to much if a person does not walk in love.

Here is 2 Peter 1:5-7:

*"Now for this reason also, applying all diligence—" (2 Peter 1:5).*

I have to take some action steps here. To get saved, I have to trust Christ, but to grow I have to say, "Lord, this area of my life is not good. Can You help me?" I have to understand what God says. I have to, through volition, yield the members of my body to the commands of God under His power.

*"Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in self-control, perseverance—" (2 Peter 1:5-7).*

That is the word "hupomone [ὑπομονή]," where you can stand up under unfair treatment and do not throw in the towel at the first conflict.

*"—and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love" (2 Peter 1:5-7).*

"Agape [ἀγάπη]" self-sacrificial love, a love that does not expect anything back. "I do not have that Lord." The Lord says, "You are right, you do not; but I have it. If you walk by My Spirit like Stephen did, you will have it too."

Someone said the Christian life is impossibly difficult. It is not difficult; it is impossible. God never expects a person to live the Christian life through their own power. He has resources from above that are given to you at the point of faith alone in Christ alone to walk out Christianity.

You will notice here that this command of love, that Calvin did not exhibit, is a command for God's people. You cannot use the excuse that "Jesus did it, and I am not Jesus." What does the Apostle Paul say in 1 Corinthians 11:1? That is our communion passage, but if you go back to 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul says to the Corinthians:

*"Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).*

"Imitate me as I follow Jesus." Paul would be the first to say, "If I am not following Jesus then do not follow me, but as long as I am following Jesus, imitate me," indicating that the love of Christ is something that can come into the life of the individual Christian, like Paul and everyone else in Corinth, following Paul.

One of the things these people did not have was love. That is why he has to include the whole love chapter (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). They had a lot of giftings, crazy giftings. They were gifted unbelievably, but they were not walking in love, so they were just a resounding gong. Paul says, "I am walking in love because I am following Jesus. So you walk in love to follow me as I follow Jesus Christ."

The idea that we are going to let Calvin off the hook because he was just a disciple of Christ, he was not Christ—no, you do not let people off the hook because God expects things from us as we claim the name Jesus Christ in terms of our lifestyle. One of the things that you will start seeing in Calvinism, when you start drilling down on all of this stuff, is a lack of love in their teachings. In fact, I personally have had very strong Calvinists that I know who have come to me and made the argument that the love of God is really not that big of a deal, and you are exaggerating it too much.

They will do things, weird stuff, like look at how many verses there are on God's wrath and His holiness. "There are 50 verses," (I do not know the count) "but how many verses are there on love? There are only one, two, or three." They will say stuff like that. When I heard that the first time, it was shocking. It was like, "Are we reading the same book?"

There is a direct quote from John Calvin. This is in his "Institutes of the Christian Religion."

"Calvin said of God, 'for, (as he hates sin) he can only love those whom he justifies [i.e., the elect].'"<sup>21</sup>

In other words, the love of God in Calvinism does not go to the whole world. They believe in something called Limited Atonement—that Jesus did not even die for the world. God's love is only for those that are chosen in Him; the rest of the world God does not love. That is what he said:

"'For, (as he hates sin) he can only love those whom he justifies [i.e., the elect].'"<sup>22</sup>

Excuse me, what about John 3:16? "*For God so loved the world.*" They really do a number on "world" there. It is amazing how hard these people work to get the Bible to say something it is not saying. That is the power of religion. You fall in love with a religious system, and you will come to the Bible and try to rewrite it.

We have a tremendous ability as lost human beings to do that, but if you were stuck on a desert island and you did not know anything about Calvinism, and you had your Bible, let us say on the desert island—open to John 3:16, and some Calvinists came swimming to the shore and told you that you were reading the Bible errantly. "That verse does not mean what it says." You would think they were stark raving mad, would

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<sup>21</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 3, Chapter xi, section 11.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

you not? Yet, Calvinists—and I will give you the quotes—say this all of the time, "God does not love everybody," when John 3:16 is very clear:

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

God loves the whole world. The death of Jesus is for the whole world. All of planet Earth, as I am speaking now, is savable—not saved, until they trust in the provision—but savable. That is basic reading comprehension, is it not? But John Calvin, supposedly one of the smartest men in church history—and I do not doubt that he had a keen intellect; you got to have a keen intellect to rewrite the Bible and get everybody to believe it.

They do not believe that God loves everybody or that Jesus died for the whole world. In fact, Jay Adams, the great counselor, basically says that when he counsels people, he does not tell them that Christ died for them because he does not know if they are one of the elect. Therefore, he is not really sure if Christ died for that person or not. Utter foolishness. In your evangelism, you can clearly say to any person that God brings upon your path, "God loves you and Jesus died for you."

Bob Kirkland in his very good book called "Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy," talks about the lack of love implications. He says:

"The primary teaching in Calvinism is the teaching on 'election' in that the majority of people God created, He did not elect to save nor did He love them. In fact, He hated them from before they were even born. Under the Calvinist view of election, wherein God does not love every human being or desires that each one come to faith and be saved, it makes sense that John Calvin did not have God's love toward those he saw as his unsaved fellow man. After all, if God does not even love them, why should he? It is this reasoning that would have made it easy for Calvin to justify the torture and murder of people whom he believed, in his own estimation, to be heretics."<sup>23</sup>

If someone denies the Trinity, they are obviously not one of the elect. If they are not one of the elect, then they are going to suffer for all eternity. In fact, that is why they were born to suffer an eternity in hell forever, so that Calvin's rendition of God could be satisfied, which is a very sick God in my opinion. That is why Dave Hunt's book is called "What Love Is This?"

"Let us just get the process moving now, folks. Let us torture them now. Let us burn them to death now. God does not love them anyway." Do you see the logic? Ideas have consequences. The Bible says that God is love. He is righteous, true, faithful and just. Such are the fruits of the spirit as described in Galatians 5:22, and love is the first one mentioned. It is hard not to believe that Calvin was under the influence of some other

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<sup>23</sup> Bob Kirkland, *Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy; Spotlight on the Life and Teachings of John Calvin* (Eureka, MT: Lighthouse Trails, 2018), 23-24.

spirit other than the Holy Spirit. What you see in Calvinism is a lack of love in Calvin's writings.

Bob Kirkland says:

"You will have to look long and hard to find anything in Calvin's writings about love. It is certainly not obvious in his manner of life."<sup>24</sup>

Yet, what does 1 John 4:8 say?

*"The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8).*

This does not even say God is loving. This says God is love. That is who He is. Now, that is not all who He is. He is holy, also. But God Himself, in His core character, is love.

What is the goal of our instruction as Christians? What is it all about? Teaching the Bible verse by verse, putting up charts of the End Times, maps, graphs, notes? What is it all about? In other words, after all is said and done, what have we really said and done? What is the point of being here and doing this week after week after week? There must be some goal, right? Paul, writing to Timothy, tells us the goal. This is what it is all about at the end of the day:

*"But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (1 Timothy 1:5).*

Thomas Jefferson, one of the smartest men that is ever lived—I do not know where Thomas Jefferson stood with the Lord. There are some views he had that seemed to me to be right on. Others were strange with his understanding of the Trinity. I think it goes down to what part of Jefferson's life are you studying? I do not know where he stood, but no one is going to deny that Thomas Jefferson was one of the smartest people that has ever lived. In fact, John F. Kennedy in the White House had all of these Nobel laureates into the White House for dinner. He said, "There has not been so much brain power in this dining room since the days of Thomas Jefferson, when Thomas Jefferson dined here alone." That is what he said.

Thomas Jefferson gave us the Declaration of Independence and understanding of our inalienable rights. What did Thomas Jefferson think about Calvinism? This is what he said to John Adams in a letter. He said:

"I can never join Calvin in addressing his god. He was indeed an Atheist, which I can never be; or rather his religion was Demonism. If ever a man worshiped a false god, he did. The being described in his 5 points is not the God whom you and I acknowledge and adore, the Creator and benevolent and governor of the world, but a daemon of malignant spirit. It

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

would be more pardonable to believe in no god at all, than to blaspheme him by the atrocious attributes of Calvin."<sup>25</sup>

"The Presbyterian clergy are the loudest, the most intolerant of the sects, the most tyrannical, and ambitious; ready at the word of the lawgiver, if such a word could be obtained, to put the torch to the pile, and to rekindle in this virgin hemisphere, the flames in which their oracle Calvin consumed poor Servetus, because he could not find in his Euclid the proposition which has demonstrated that the three are one, and one is three, nor subscribe to that of Calvin that magistrates have a right to exterminate all heretics to Calvinistic creeds."<sup>26</sup>

I agree with John Calvin on the Trinity, not Thomas Jefferson; but Thomas Jefferson was the first to say that there is no love in this God that he has produced. There is no love in the hellhole that he created in Geneva, Switzerland. If that is God, I do not want anything to do with it. Is that not what Paul said? If you do not have love, you are just a resounding gong (1 Corinthians 13:1).

I will conclude here with Bob Kirkland's statement:

"Will you believe the godly men who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or will you believe a man who wrote under the inspiration of the Catholic Bishop Augustine or will you believe a man who wrote under the inspiration of the Catholic Bishop Augustine and who was filled with hatred for those who disagreed with him?"<sup>27</sup>

That is a little bit on Calvin's manner of life. Next week we are going to start through TULIP. In fact, I thought of a sermon title, "Tiptoeing Through the TULIPs." I will show you the Calvinistic system, logically arranged with beautiful logic, but the initial premise is wrong. Human logic is only as good as the premise it is built on.

TULIP starts with Total Depravity and works its way out from there. This will be the bulk of the study. Everything else is an introduction on the whole subject of TULIP.

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<sup>25</sup> Jefferson, Letter to John Adams, April 11, 1823.

<sup>26</sup> Jefferson, letter to William Short, April 13, 1820.

<sup>27</sup> Bob Kirkland, *Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy; Spotlight on the Life and Teachings of John Calvin* (Eureka, MT: Lighthouse Trails, 2018), 41.