

Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible 046

Revelation 13:10

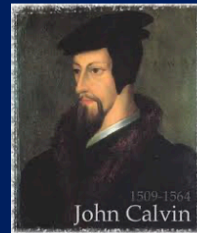
October 12, 2025

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Let's take our Bibles and open them to Revelation 13:10.

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



If you have been tracking with us here in Sunday School, we have been doing this teaching on Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible.

V. Running **TULIP** Through the Grid of Scripture

- A. **T**otal Depravity
- B. **U**nconditional Election
- C. **L**imited Atonement
- D. **I**rrresistible Grace
- E. **P**erseverance of the Saints



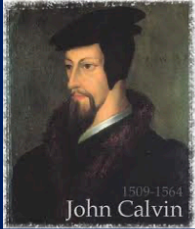
T Total Depravity
U Unconditional Election
L Limited Atonement
I Irresistible Grace
P Perseverance of the Saints

We are at that section of Scripture where we are looking at TULIP—"tiptoeing through the tulips," as we like to say—which is the Calvinistic mnemonic device.

And we continue to be at "P," the Perseverance of the Saints, comparing this to Scripture, looking at Scriptures that are taken out of context to support this, and running TULIP through the grid of Scripture.

E. Perseverance of the Saints

1. Calvinistic definition
2. Examples
3. **Problems with the Calvinistic understanding**



A small portrait of John Calvin, a French theologian, reformer, and pastor. The portrait shows him from the chest up, wearing a dark cap and a dark robe. Below the portrait, the text "1509-1564" and "John Calvin" is visible.

We have looked at the Calvinistic definition of the Perseverance of the Saints. It is not what we teach here, which is the preservation of the saints. God preserves us. We are being

"protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

But Calvinism and Arminianism, different sides, teach the same kind of idea: that the onus is on you. You have to persevere in good works and doctrine.

So the focus is on you. And if you do not persevere, then you lost your salvation, according to Arminianism. If you do not persevere, maybe you never had salvation, according to Calvinism.

Bob Kirkland summarizes:

"'P' stands for 'Perseverance of the Saints.' This is what Calvinists say gives them the assurance of eternal security, but in actuality 'the emphasis is upon the believer's faithfulness in persevering—not upon God's keeping power...uncertainty as to one's ultimate salvation is, in fact, built into the very fabric of Calvinism itself.'"¹

We have given a lot of quotes of Calvinists saying this. John Calvin himself said,

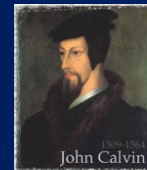
¹ Bob Kirkland, *Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy; Spotlight on the Life and Teachings of John Calvin* (Eureka, MT: Lighthouse Trails, 2018), 34.

"[T]hose who do not persevere unto the end belong not to the calling of God."²

What do you do with backslidden Christians? What do you do with any number of Christians that go back to the sin nature? Are they not Christians? Calvinism opens the door to the idea that maybe they are not Christians.

3. Problems with the Calvinistic Perseverance Definition

- a) Final salvation is unbiblical
- b) Scriptural examples of non-persevering saints
- c) **Support only found in out of context verses (Luke 4:9-12)**
- d) Subtle form of works salvation
- e) Preferability of immediate death following conversion?
- f) Lessens the importance of practical sanctification
- g) Lessens the importance of the Bema Seat warnings
- h) Destroys the assurance of salvation



So what we are doing is critiquing this idea of Perseverance of the Saints. We are trying to critique it biblically. We saw, subletter "a," that final salvation is an unbiblical idea.

God does not wait until you get to the end to announce whether you are saved or not. He gives you the immediate assurance on the front end, the moment you place your faith in Jesus for your personal sins.

And then, subletter "b," we talked about how there are a lot of examples in the Bible, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, of people that were clearly saved but did not persevere.

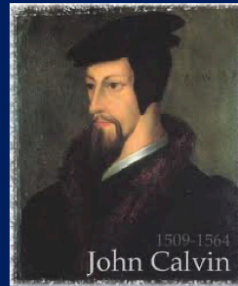
So that is a good way to refute this Perseverance of the Saints idea. Now, people would not believe something unless it looked like the Bible supported it.

So there are a number of verses that are used to promote this Perseverance of the Saints idea. What we have been doing as of late is looking at whether or not those are in context.

² John Calvin, *Calvin's Calvinism: God's Eternal Predestination and Secret Providence* (Reformed Free Publishing Association, Kindle edition from the 2009 2nd edition), Kindle location 532.

Out of Context Verses Used to Support the Perseverance of the Saints

1. Matthew 24:13
2. John 15:5-6, 8
3. 2 Corinthians 13:5
4. Ephesians 2:10
5. Hebrews 12:14
6. **Revelation 13:10**
7. Revelation 14:12
8. Revelation 22:14-15



We have looked at Matthew 24:13; John 15:5-6, 8; and 2 Corinthians 13:5. Last week we looked at Ephesians 2:10 and Hebrews 12:14.

Today we are going to look at three more verses, all in the Book of Revelation. And you might be saying to yourself, "Well, wait a minute, I thought you had seven up there last week. Now I see eight."

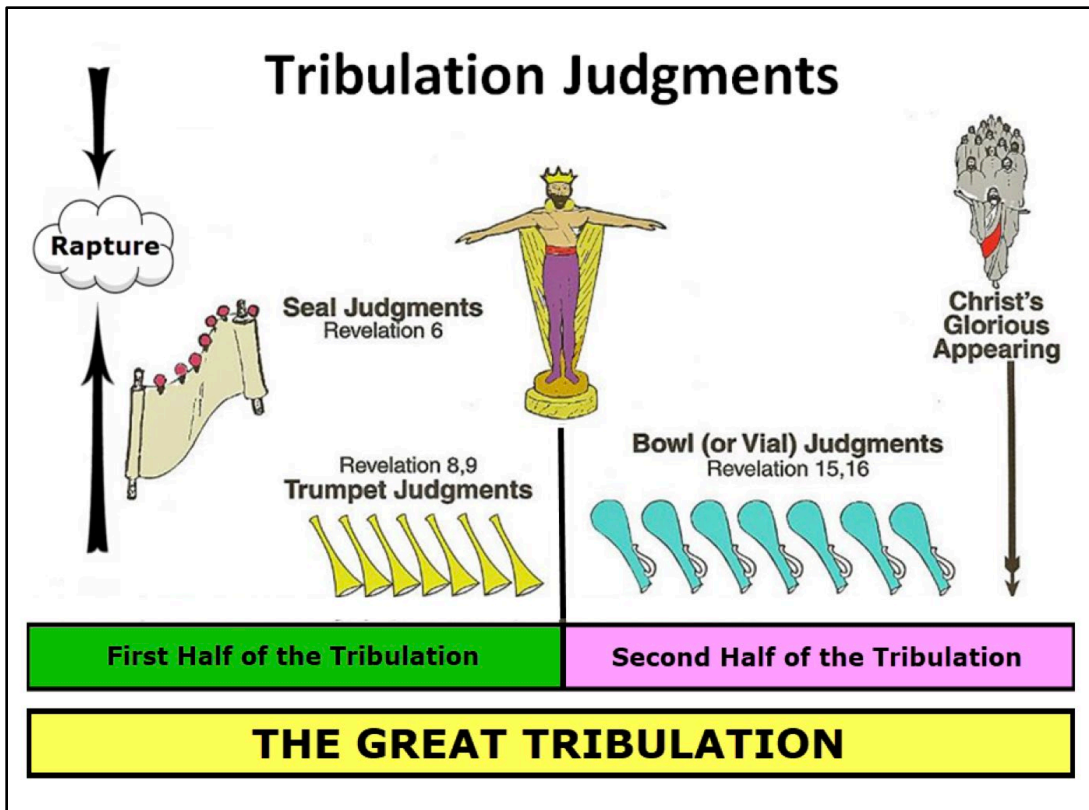
That is because I added one. And that is painful to do because I always want seven. Seven is the number of perfection, right? But I could not let that last one slip by. You will see why as we get into it.

Notice Revelation 13:10. This is sometimes used to support Perseverance of the Saints teaching. It says,

"If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints" (Revelation 13:10).

So people look at that and they say, "Well, there it is, right there in the Bible: the Perseverance of the Saints. This must be talking about having to endure till the end in order to demonstrate that we are one of the elect."

Well, the first thing to understand about Revelation 13:10 is that it is dealing with the generation that will be in the Tribulation Period after the Rapture of the church has already transpired.



This is the generation that is laboring under the tyranny and the oppression of the Antichrist. So this is not even talking about the church. In fact, you do not even see the word "church" here.

Now, what you do see is the word "saints." And people see the word "saints," and they immediately think that is talking about us, the church. But the truth of the matter is that in the Bible, the word "saints" is used in three different ways. Sometimes God's people, pre-Church-Age (you see this in the Psalms a lot) are called "saints." So that would be pre-Church-Age saints.

And then you get to the New Testament epistles, which govern the Church Age, and we are called "saints." But then there is a third category of saints.

The third category of saints is people who are won to Christ primarily through the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists in Revelation 7, the ministry of the two witnesses in Revelation 11, and the ministry of the angel in Revelation 14 who is flying to and fro over the earth in that time period, preaching the eternal gospel.

So this is a group of people here that are one to Christ after the church is gone. And when you read Revelation 7 and you start at Revelation 7:8 and go all the way through the end of the chapter, you see that there is a great harvest of souls that will come in during that seven-year Tribulation Period.

And this bothers people because we have a tendency in the Church Age to think that we are the most important instrument of God.

God has graciously used the church for the last 2,000 years. But the truth of the matter is that God does not need the church—did you know that?—to evangelize the world. God is going to do a great job evangelizing the world through His Jewish witnesses after the church is gone.

So what the church has left somewhat undone, or incomplete, regarding the Great Commission will be completed in God's end-time program through the two witnesses, the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, and the angel flying to and fro, giving men the eternal gospel.

So those are the saints that are being dealt with here. And Revelation 13:10 is an exhortation for them to endure, because they are going to need all the help they can get.

Revelation 13:10 is not saying, "You guys had better endure till the end of your life to prove that you are one of the elect." That is the furthest thing from the passage.

It is the idea that these believers are going to be under the tyranny and the oppression of the beast or the Antichrist during this seven-year Tribulation Period.

They are the ones that are going to be under all of these judgments that we read about in the Book of Revelation—the seal judgments, the trumpet judgments, the bowl judgments—many of them are going to be martyred.

In fact, Revelation 7 portrays many of these believers losing their lives—not all at once, by the way, but progressively or gradually. And as they lose their lives, one by one their souls go into the presence of the Lord.

So, obviously, a group of people that is enduring that kind of stuff needs a heavy calling and an exhortation, and even prayer for endurance—not to prove that they are saved, but just because of the oppression that they are going to be under.

And these are the ones that are going to be locked out of the mark of the beast system. You know this passage—the famous, or infamous, mark of the beast passage—Revelation 13:16-18. It says,

"And he [the false prophet] causes all,..." (Revelation 13:16).

Look at how universal this is:

"...the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on..." (Revelation 13:16).

The Greek here is "epi" (ἐπί; over, upon, on) not "en" (ἐν; in, under). If Revelation 13:16 was saying the mark was to be "in" the right hand or forehead, the Greek word would be "hypo" (ὑπό; under, beneath, in), from which we get the word "hypodermic."

The mark of the beast is something that goes on people's skin, on their right hand or forehead. I just saw a fascinating article from Bill Gates.

(People say, "Is Bill Gates mentioned in the Bible?" And he actually is. The Bible says "The Gates of Hell will not prevail against the church" [paraphrase, Matthew 16:18]. So he is in there.)

You know about Bill Gates—Mr. Globalist., Mr. Lockdown, and everything else. In this fairly recent article, he was talking about how the days of the smartphone are over, and technology is moving to the point at which they are going to put an insignia on your skin, and you do not have to fumble around with your cell phone anymore. The insignia is going to unlock your banking. It is going to give you immediate Wi-Fi access. And I am reading this and I cannot believe what I am reading.

But at the same time, I can believe it, because God says that technology, if I am reading Revelation 13 correctly, would evolve to that level.

So I am not saying that is the mark of the beast. What I am saying is that it is preparatory for the mark of the beast. I have always been a little uncomfortable with teaching that you get from a lot of prophecy teachers about something going inside your body—inside your skin—under your skin.

I always thought to myself, "Well, that is not exactly the way the Greek reads. It means "on," not "in" or "under." And lo and behold, now the technology is there to do this.

And the interesting thing about technology is that—and I am no tech expert, but I have read some articles on it—it actually doubles every two months. So that compounds.

So everything that we know today will be doubled within two months. And then that number, which is much bigger, will be doubled in two months. And you see this sort of technology curve, always moving us in the direction of what God said will happen at the end of the age.

It never seems to take us back the opposite way. I do not think that technology is evil. I enjoy technology. I am using technology right now.

But biblically speaking, we know that one day all of this tech stuff is going to fall into the wrong person's hands.

The Bible calls him the "*lawless one*" (2 Thessalonians 2:8) or the "*beast*" (Revelation 11, 13-17, 19-20), or the "*Antichrist*" (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7), or the "*son of perdition/destruction*" (John 17:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3).

There are many names for the Antichrist in the Bible. He is called the "little horn" (Daniel 7:8; 8:9). He is going to take this technology and exploit humanity with it and usher in one-world tyranny.

I have all these commentaries on the Book of Revelation on my bookshelves, and some of them are older commentaries, going back a hundred years or more. And it is really rather funny to watch commentators try to make any sense of Revelation 13.

They usually just allegorize it or make it less than what it means. But we are living in a time period when we do not have to do that anymore, because we see the technology moving into place.

Revelation 13:16-17 says,

"And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell,..." (Revelation 13:16-17).

What does that mean? Well, you are shut out of the economy unless you acquiesce to this system. And as you acquiesce to it, you are swearing allegiance to the Antichrist.

Now, when I talk like this, I get all these emails: "At work, I got this chip card, and I am really scared that I committed the unpardonable sin or something."

I would just say, "Don't worry about stuff like that, because Revelation 13 is talking about the mark of the beast system, which is not up and running presently, because we do not have the beast yet."

And the reason we do not have the beast yet is that there is a restrainer—the church's presence on the earth, as I would understand (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7)—holding back the beast.

So if you got a debit card or something at work, it is not something to panic about, because we do not have the beast yet, and you cannot have the mark of the beast without the beast.

And if I am understanding prophecy correctly, this kind of system is not fully functional until the second half of the Tribulation Period. But we clearly see the stage being set for this.

"and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom [Greek "sophia" (σοφία)]. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man;..." (Revelation 13:17-18).

Look at the word "man": that is the Greek word "anthropos" (ἄνθρωπος). I have all these people write to me saying, "You are taking it too literally. This is just a symbol of evil. Don't literalize it like you are doing."

But the text says "a man" (Revelation 13:18). The word translated "man" (Revelation 13:18) is "anthropos" (ἄνθρωπος). It is not just a spirit.

There is an anti-Christ spirit. But eventually that anti-Christ spirit is going to be embodied by a particular human being: the Antichrist.

He is called the beast here not because Revelation 13 is trying to show us that the beast is not a real person, but because Revelation 13 is just trying to show us what the Antichrist's character is going to be like. And his number in the system will be 666.

I just saw a video—I think it was over the weekend—I think it was yesterday—showing that China has the social credit score system. Have you heard of this? The moment your transactions become digitized is the moment that the state can run a profile on you, which cannot happen when you are dealing with things in cash.

If you are dealing with your transactions in cash, there is a veil of privacy. The state has no idea what you are spending your money on. But the moment everything becomes digital—becomes digitized—is the moment they are able to run a profile on anybody.

It is like buying something on Amazon. You buy an electronic book—and I buy a lot of those because I do not have any room anymore in my shelves, so I buy them electronically—I buy this electronic book with a credit card, and all of a sudden I get all these ads saying, "Well, if you like this book, you sure would like this one over here, and this one over there."

And you know what? They are right. I like all those books. And how do they know that? How do they know my individual tastes and preferences?

Well, the computer just ran a profile on me. It takes just a few seconds. And they can figure out my personality type, my buying habits, my values, and my beliefs.

Now, if I was doing everything with cash, they could not run the profile. See that? So that is why there is always this perpetual move to get us away from cash—because once you move everybody away from cash, the potential for running profiles, and ultimately global control, is in full swing.

So China has this social credit score system. And you have to ask yourself at some point, "How is the Chinese Communist Party able to micromanage their massive population?"

And the answer is that they use a social credit score system, in which if you post something online that is politically incorrect, your score goes down. If you do not recycle the way you should, the camera picks you up and your social credit score goes down.

And the more your social credit score is negative, the more your opportunities in life shrink. So you cannot get the loan for your business. You cannot put your kids into the best schools.

Your traveling privileges start to shrink. You cannot get a passport. All of these kinds of things happen to you because you do not have the proper score.

And the state is able to run this social credit score system because they have digitized everything. This video that I saw just shocked me. I guess it should not shock me, but it did shock me.

It showed all these people in China living on the streets now. They are basically homeless. They are basically cut out of society. Why? Because their behavior was not PC (politically correct) enough or whatever, according to the Chinese Communist Party.

So buttons were pushed. Their opportunities in life shrunk to the point at which it is almost like they are in an electronic ghetto—really an electronic concentration camp.

And I am looking at that saying, "Well, that is exactly what the Book of Revelation says. This is the kind of thing that is coming."

So you can imagine somebody in the Tribulation Period living under those circumstances. They are going to need all the help they can get. And that is why there is an exhortation for them to persevere.

Revelation 13:10 is not "Oh, no, your salvation is in doubt," the way the Perseverance of the Saints doctrine teaches it. It is "You are going to need all the help you can get."

So there is this exhortation to persevere. So Revelation 13:10 has nothing to do with the Perseverance of the Saints, the way it is used in Reformed theology.

You cannot use Revelation 13:10 to teach that doctrine. If you want to teach the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints, find another verse, but do not use Revelation 13:10, because that verse, like all of these, has a specific context.

Look over at Revelation 14:12. This is the same stuff written to the same group. It says in Revelation 14:12,

"Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

This is an exhortation to endure during that time period (the Tribulation), because if you take the mark of the beast, once the beast is in place and the system is operational, it is damnation, because you are rejecting Jesus.

If you go back to the prior verses, beginning in Revelation 14:9, it says,

"Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever;...' (Revelation 14:9-11).

How does a passage like that fit into "Your best life now"? It does not really fit in, does it?

"And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:11).

"Do not take the mark. Put up with economic deprivation, but do not take the mark. Because if you take the mark, that is eternal."

So you can imagine someone in that situation needing help—needing perseverance. And that is what the exhortation is, for this group to do: to persevere.

These are not Church Age saints. These are Tribulation saints, people who are converted subsequent to the Rapture of the church.

Revelation 14:12 flows right out of that.

"Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

So Revelation 14:12 has a context. It is speaking of Tribulation Period saints. They are the people on the earth who are converted after the Rapture of the church.

Not all of them, but many of them, will lose their lives, because they are laboring under all these judgments that we see described in the Book of Revelation: seals, trumpets, bowls.

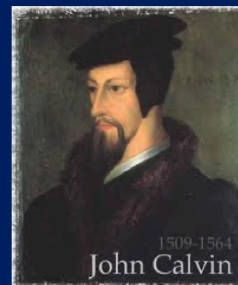
And this is the crowd that is being coerced into this sort of mark of the beast system. And they are trying to survive economically as a believer. That is basically what is happening. So they need to persevere.

Revelation 13 and 14 has nothing to do with "I hope the good works outweigh the bad works to determine if you are one of the elect."

So all that I have really done here is taken Revelation 13:10 and 14:12 and just put them back into their context, seeing that they do not support this Perseverance of the Saints idea.

Out of Context Verses Used to Support the Perseverance of the Saints

1. Matthew 24:13
2. John 15:5-6, 8
3. 2 Corinthians 13:5
4. Ephesians 2:10
5. Hebrews 12:14
6. Revelation 13:10
7. Revelation 14:12
8. **Revelation 22:14-15**



Now, we were going to stop there and move on to another subcategory, but I wanted to include number eight. This passage has to do with the vice lists in Scripture that are very confusing to people.

Vice Lists

1. Galatians 5:19-21
2. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
3. Ephesians 5:5
4. Revelation 22:14-15



1509-1564
John Calvin

One of the vice lists in Scripture is Revelation 22:14-15. That is the last of the four. The first one is in Galatians 5:19-21, as you can see from the screen.

The second one is in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, as you can see from the screen. The third one (three of these lists are from Paul's writings) is Ephesians 5:5, which you can see there on the screen.

And then the last one is in Revelation 22:14-15. I did not think that a teaching on the Perseverance of the Saints, critiquing the Perseverance of the Saints, would be complete without taking a look at these vice lists.

So what are vice lists? Basically they are statements that at first glance look as though they are aimed at Christians, and list a bunch of vices—sins—and say very clearly that those who live like this will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Let me give you an example of one of these vice lists. I just put these in the order in which they were written. The first one we have in Galatians 5:19-21, in which Paul says,

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions," (Galatians 5:19-20).

Sounds like a good congregational meeting, doesn't it?

"envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those..." (Galatians 5:21).

And that is one of the keys to understanding this, as I will show you: there is a switch from "you"—second person—to "those"—third person.

That is what most people who preach and teach on this do not show you. I am going to try to show you that.

"...of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21).

So people look at this and they say, "Oh my goodness, does that mean that if I, as a Christian, go back to any of these things—I have an angry day or something like that, or I am very jealous of somebody—

"—if I go back to these things and I indulge these things, does that mean I am not a Christian, because it says right there in the Bible that if these things characterize a person's life, they will not get into the kingdom of God?"

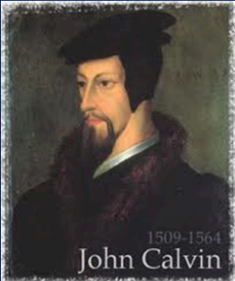
So these are verses that just terrorize people unless they are explained rightly. So there is a vice list in Galatians.

There is another one that reads just like that in 1 Corinthians. There is another one in Ephesians. And there is one at the end of the Bible.

These are called the vice lists. So how do we handle those? Well, what you will discover amongst Bible teachers is that there are four basic views. What a lot of people do is just hammer their own view and do not tell you the other options.

Interpretive Options

1. Calvinism – unsaved
2. Arminianism – loss of salvation
3. Extreme free grace – millennial exclusion
4. Classic grace – switch of subject from saved to unsaved to exhort Christians to live according to their new identity.



1509-1564
John Calvin

The Calvinistic view, which is why I am bringing this up, is that if you go back to these sins and they are a part of your life in regularity, you were never saved.

And that always bothered me, because how much is regularity? What if I only indulged in these twice a week instead of six times a week? So you are left with this question mark in your mind.

"Have I done these and proven that I am not going to get into the Kingdom?" And you could see how this flows right into the Perseverance of the Saints idea.

We will say that if these things characterize your life, then you never were one of the elect, meaning that you are unsaved. You had a profession of Christ, but you never had a possession of Christ.

Arminius comes along the Arminian view and he says, "Yeah, you are saved. But if these things characterize your life, you lost your salvation and you need to get saved again."

Now, I consider myself a free grace preacher and teacher, but that does not mean that we just blanketly endorse everything that free grace preachers and teachers teach.

There is a view within the free grace movement called "millennial exclusion." I would put it this way: it is like a Protestant purgatory.

You are saved, but you are not going to be in the Millennium, and you are going to go somewhere—they never really tell you where you are going to go, but it does not seem like it is a fun place.

You are not in hell, but you are just not in the Kingdom. And that is how the extreme free grace teachers interpret "inherit." They interpret "inherit" as a reward.

A reward is something different from what is legally yours. The Bible never calls your inheritance a reward. Rewards are different. They are something to be received or not received at the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ.

But your inheritance is legally yours, regardless of how you act or behave as a Christian—if you indeed have trusted in Christ.

An inheritance is something that is coming to you that you are not yet experiencing. It is something that is coming to you legally. It is in the will, but it is not yet yours in terms of enjoyment.

You own it, but you are not enjoying it. For instance, if you are going to inherit a house one day, that house is yours. It is in your name. You are just not yet living in the house, because the will has not been read yet, and the property has not been divided yet.

So these teachers are interpreting the inheritance as some kind of reward when the reality is that your getting into the Kingdom is not a reward. It is your birthright.

Now, your role in the Kingdom could be a reward. But your getting into the Kingdom or not is not a reward. It is part of your inheritance.

It is like the Rapture. People teach that you had better be on your "p"'s and "q"'s, because the Rapture could happen. And if you are not on your best behavior, then you are not going to go in the Rapture.

No. You just took something that is a birthright, an inheritance, and you changed it into a reward. The Rapture is not a reward.

Paul is very clear when he says, "We will all be changed"—to the carnal Christians—"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52, paraphrase).

Now, after the Rapture, there is the Bema Seat Judgment of rewards—some are rewarded, some are not. It is not punitive, just deprivation of rewards.

The rewards given at the Bema Seat are rewards, based on behavior now. But participation in the Rapture itself is not a reward. That is your inheritance.

So what I call "extreme free grace" is taking something that is an inheritance, admission into the Kingdom, and turning it into a reward.

So as I am going to try to show you, I do not think that the Calvinistic understanding of these lists is right. I do not think that the Arminian understanding of these vice lists is right.

I do not think that the extreme free grace millennial exclusivism view is right. The view that we teach here is the classic grace position: Paul is switching subjects.

He is switching from second person to third person. He is switching from addressing the saved, to talking for a minute about the unsaved. Why would he do that?

To exhort Christians to live according to their new identity. That is what Paul is doing. What he is saying is, "Why in the world would you entertain these vices in your life? That is what unsaved people do.

"And those unsaved people are not going to get into the Kingdom, whereas you are. Your calling in life is different. Your destiny in life is different. Your spiritual identity is different.

"Why in the world would you imitate an unsaved person who has a totally different destiny from you?" That is what Paul is saying.

So because he is switching subjects from second person to third person, he switches from "you," plural, to "they," "them," and "that person," which are third person.

Paul is not, in the way that this is interpreted by Calvinism and Arminianism, saying that God has this carpet underneath you, and He is going to rip it out the moment you indulge in any of these vices.

That is a topic that is foreign to Paul's thinking here. So that is my perspective on it. And that is what I am going to try to show you as we work through some of these vice lists, or all of the vice lists.

So go over to the Galatians 5:19-21. We are presenting these vice lists in the order in which they were written.

The first New Testament epistle to be written was Galatians. This is the first time Paul brings this up in an epistle. He says,

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these,..." (Galatians 5:19-21).

In other words, this is not an exhaustive list, but this is how the flesh operates.

"...of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21).

Now, your first reading of this is, "Oh my word, I just had a sin pattern last week, or yesterday, or something. So I guess I lost my salvation. Arminius taught me that."

"I guess I never had salvation. Calvinism taught me that." Maybe I am part of the free grace extremism so that I am thinking, "Well, I guess I am going to a Protestant purgatory."

And in fact, none of those things are true if you just pay attention to the switch in pronouns. Look at what Paul does here. Let's back up to Galatians 5:16.

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you [second person plural—these are Christians] will not carry out the desire of the flesh.... But if you [that is the Christian] are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law" (Galatians 5:16, 18).

Well, I am supposed to obey the Holy Spirit inside me and reckon dead the deeds of the flesh, the manifestations of the sin nature, which are apparently there to still tempt me.

And so I say, "Paul, I have a question. Can you tell me about the flesh, or the sin nature?" And Paul says, "I am glad you asked. Here is what it is."

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you,..." (Galatians 5:19-21).

Then Paul switches to "those." He does not say "you." He does not say, "If you live like this, you will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Suddenly you get to Galatians 5:21 and Paul says "those." He went from second person to third person.

He is saying, "Why would you, as a Christian, ever imitate an unsaved person, although you have the potential to do that?"

"Why would you go down that road? If you imitate an unsaved person, you are imitating somebody who is not going to the same place you are going."

*"...that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God"
(Galatians 5:21).*

And if that is all Paul is saying, that would fit beautifully with everything else he says in Galatians.

If you go back to Galatians 5:17, Paul says,

"For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please..." (Galatians 5:17).

So here I am as a Christian. I got saved. I have new desires. I have the Holy Spirit inside me. But do you know what happened to me when I got saved in 1983?

I went home and I had the exact same temptations to sin that I had before I got saved. In fact, it was worse. Do you know why it was worse?

Because something inside of me was putting a magnifying glass on that sin. So I became more aware of sin after I got saved than before. And I had the exact same pull to sin.

In fact, the pull seemed even stronger. And I thought to myself, "Well, what is wrong with me? I am not a new creature in Christ Jesus the way they taught it to me. I am not born again."

So if you are not taught correctly at that point, you will start to second guess whether you are a believer. You will second guess—"Maybe I did not believe the right way, or maybe it was just superficial, or maybe it was this or maybe it was that."

Yet Paul is saying that this tension is the natural walk of the Christian. The Spirit wants you to go one way, and the sin nature, which is still with you until your dying day, or until the Rapture of the church, whichever comes first, wants you to go the opposite way.

The difference is that I have resources in Christ. And I would have never known this unless someone had explained these things to me. Because if you are just left to your own devices as a newborn, you cannot make heads or tails of this.

This is where being discipled and being in the Word becomes such a critical thing. I have resources in Christ so that I am able to tell the sin nature, "No."

It does not mean that the sin nature does not pull, or yank, or invite, or say, "Come back." The sin nature does that all the time. It has not been annihilated, but it has been disabled.

Now, feelings cannot tell you that, because the sin nature seems so strong to go backward. The only way you could know that the sin nature has been disabled is by reading Romans 6.

Romans 6 tells you that the sin nature has been disabled. So at that point, I have to make a decision when I am tempted to go back to the sin nature. I am going to reckon it dead (Romans 6:11).

The word "reckon" (or "consider") in Romans 6(:11) is "logizomai" (λογίζομαι). It is an accounting term. You are looking into the books as an accountant, and the books are not lying to you (assuming that you are not a politician).

You are looking in the books. The books are not lying to you. This is what they say. It is a financial statement. It is objectively true. That is what "logizomai" (λογίζομαι) (Romans 6:11) means: "reckon" (translated into Texan, right?).

So here I am as a Christian, and the sin nature is saying, "Come back, come back, come back." And I say, "You know what? I do not have to come back."

My feelings are telling me to go back, but I am not running life here based on feelings. You do not run your life as a Christian based on how you feel.

It is like being a pilot in an airplane. You are looking at the compass. The compass is not going to lie to you. Your feelings tell you all kinds of things, but the moment you take your eyes off the compass and move to subjective feelings is the moment you have a potential fatality.

So here I am as a Christian and the sin nature is saying, "Come back, come back, come back." And then I look at Romans 6 and it says, "Reckon this true: the power of the sin nature has been broken."

And I say, "You know what? I am not a slave to it. I do not have to go back to it." And why would I go back to it for some momentary pleasure?

What did the sin nature ever get you? It did not give you anything but trouble. So you know what? I am just going to tell it, "No." And so you accept that by faith.

You make a decision at that moment not to let sin reign in your mortal body (Romans 6:12). And as you start doing this consistently, what is happening is that you are growing as a Christian.

If you just keep going back—keep going back—keep going back—it does not derail your Christianity, but it certainly can stagnate your growth and your development and the way the Lord wants to reward you at the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ.

Paul says in Galatians 5:22,

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

So what I am saying here fits with the rest of the book, in which Paul is saying, "Do not go back to the sin nature. Obey the new nature.

"And why would you go back to the sin nature and imitate unsaved people who are not going to the same place you are going to?"

You become sensitive to this interpretation when you just watch the pronouns—the switch from the second person to the third person.

Now, I think it is clearer in the 1 Corinthians passage. So let's slip over there, if we could, to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, vice list number two.

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

So at first reading, I look at that and I say, "There are a lot of sins there. I guess that means that if I am a Christian and I go back to these, and there is some pattern in my life (and how long the pattern stays is never defined)—then I guess I am not going to heaven, because the Calvinistic system taught me that if I am one of the elect, I am going to overcome, and I am not overcoming today, Lord."

So I am reading my Bible and thinking, "I guess I am not going to heaven. I guess I am not one of the elect."

Or if you are under the Arminian brand of it, they are telling you, "Well, you lost your salvation. You need to go get saved again, because obviously you did not get saved right the first time."

I have been in churches where they gave altar calls, and I started to notice that the same people were walking the aisle every single week.

And I am like, "Well, what is she doing here? She was up here like a month ago." Well, what happened is that he or she was not under good teaching, explaining these truths to them.

And they are not understanding the difference between a break in fellowship versus loss of salvation. They do not have that concept yet.

So because they had a bad week or whatever, they think, "Well, I need to get saved, because apparently I lost salvation."

According to Calvinism, I never had salvation. According to Arminianism, I lost salvation. According to free grace extremism, I am saved, but I am going to the Protestant purgatory.

But the whole thing is resolved when you look at the *"you"* versus *"the unrighteous"* (1 Corinthians 6:9). Do you see how Paul switched from *"you,"* second person plural, to *"the unrighteous"* (1 Corinthians 6:9)?

Let's talk about the "you" (1 Corinthians 6:9) first.

"Or do you not know [look at the switch here] that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?..." (1 Corinthians 6:9).

Well, first of all, who is the "you" (1 Corinthians 6:9), second person plural? We know who the "you" is. The "you" is the Christian.

And we know that because that is how Paul has consistently used the word "you" earlier in the book—quite frankly, all the way through the book.

You might remember 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.

"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as spiritual people but as to carnal,..." (1 Corinthians 3:1).

You mean a Christian can be carnal? That is what Paul is saying.

"...as to babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1).

That phrase, "in Christ," never applies to an unsaved person. It is referring to an immature Christian.

"I fed you with milk..." (1 Corinthians 3:2).

Do you think an unsaved person can absorb milk? They cannot absorb anything.

"I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;" (1 Corinthians 3:2).

So the Corinthians were in this place of carnality for a long time—far longer than appropriate. It was not age-appropriate anymore.

When a newborn sucks their thumb, that is cute. When a child sucks their thumb at the age of sixteen, you say, "There is something wrong here. There is a developmental problem."

And it is not that the child had not been born. The child is born. Nobody is questioning that. What we are questioning is the maturity of the child. That is what Paul is dealing with here.

"...for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For..." (1 Corinthians 3:2-3).

How do you recognize carnal Christianity? You recognize it because it manifests the works of the flesh. It is a life in which decisions are made that are fleshly.

"...For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you,..." (1 Corinthians 3:3).

This is the same stuff Paul talked about in Galatians 5, and the same stuff Paul talked about in 1 Corinthians 6.

"...are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?" (1 Corinthians 3:3).

Look at that. Are you telling me that a carnal Christian can out-sin, and look just like, an unbeliever? Absolutely. That is not some private, personal doctrine that I am trying to promote. It is what the Bible says.

So it is very clear in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 that the word "you" is referring to saved people. But notice what Paul does in 1 Corinthians 6. He switches from "you" (1 Corinthians 6:9) to a different group.

"Or do you not know..." (1 Corinthians 6:9).

Now, Paul does not say, "Do you not know that you will not inherit the kingdom of God?" This is just like the Galatians passage. What he says is,

"Or do you not know..." (1 Corinthians 6:9).

Now he brings in another group:

"...that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?..." (1 Corinthians 6:9).

So I say to myself, "Well, Lord, who are the unrighteous? 1 Corinthians 6:9 is talking about the unrighteous. Who are the unrighteous?"

And the Lord says back to me, "Read the whole chapter. Don't just look at this piece of it. Read what Paul said a few verses earlier in the same chapter. He tells you who the unrighteous are. It is not rocket science."

The unrighteous are unbelievers. That is how Paul used the word "unrighteous" a few verses earlier, when he is dealing with lawsuits among Christians being settled in front of an unsaved magistrate (1 Corinthians 6:1-8).

Paul is saying, "You are destroying your testimony in front of an unsaved judge, because you cannot work out your differences within the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 6:1-8, paraphrase).

And in the process, Paul calls the unsaved judge, the unsaved magistrate, who probably will want nothing to do with Christianity now that he sees these misbehaving Christians, "unrighteous" (1 Corinthians 6:1, 6).

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:1,

"Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?" (1 Corinthians 6:1).

"Why in the world are you allowing your litigation to be resolved by someone who is unregenerate? Why not in-house?"

"Because the moment you cannot get your disputes worked out and it goes before an unsaved person, is the moment that unsaved person is going to want nothing to do with Christianity."

Didn't Jesus say, "All men will know you are my disciples by your love for one another" (John 13:35, paraphrase).

And if 1 Corinthians 6:1 were not clear enough, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:6,

"but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?" (1 Corinthians 6:6).

So the unrighteous are unbelievers. Now keep that same meaning in mind and reread 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

"Or do you [believers] not know that the unrighteous [unbelievers, as in 1 Corinthians 6:1, 6]..." (1 Corinthians 6:9).

You know what you should do in your Bible if you are a note taker? Right beneath or around or beside—or however you do it—the word "unrighteous," put "unbeliever." And once you do that, the whole mystery is resolved.

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous [unbelievers, as in 1 Corinthians 6:1, 6] will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you;..." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Now Paul is going back to "you." See how the pronouns just switched?

"Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

And it is obvious that towards the end Paul is talking to saved people, because he is saying here,

"This is what some of you used to be like. You were that way, and now you are not that way anymore" (1 Corinthians 6:11, paraphrase). And now the conversation goes back to the second person.

So Paul switched from second person plural (1 Corinthians 6:9) to third person (1 Corinthians 6:9, referring to a totally different category of people called *"the unrighteous,"* which is what Paul called unbelievers earlier in the chapter), and then when Paul has finished the vice list, he goes back to "you" (1 Corinthians 6:11), dealing with the believers, second person plural—"you," "you," "you."

So what is Paul saying? He is not saying, "Your salvation is in doubt because these sins are showing up in your life." That is not what he is saying.

Calvinism says that. Arminianism says that. But that is not what Paul is saying. Paul is just using a point of logic:

"Why in the world would you, as a Christian, who have the Holy Spirit inside of you, act fleshly? All you are doing is imitating unsaved people, because you have the potential to act like mere men.

"Why would anybody who has the mind of Christ, the life of Christ, want to do that? You are imitating people who are going to a different place from where you are going.

"They have a different locale that they are going to. You are going into the Kingdom. They are not. It does not make any sense from a logical basis to go back to the sin nature."

Paul is not sitting there holding a carpet under you saying, "If you go back to these sins, you are out." That is not what he is doing.

And one way to test an interpretation is to see if that same concept is mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. "Do not imitate unbelievers." Does Paul talk about that elsewhere in 1 Corinthians?

Go back to 1 Corinthians 5:1.

"It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife [incest]" (1 Corinthians 5:1).

The immorality in Corinth was so bad that Paul was saying,

"You guys look like unsaved people. Don't do that. Don't imitate people that have a terrible sense of morality. Don't even go beneath their sense of morality, what little they have. Don't you know who you are?"

That is Paul's point. It is an exhortation to get them to live holy, without a threat of insecurity related to their salvation.

And you will see this the moment you start watching the switch from "you" to "they." Paul does the same thing in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. "Do not imitate unbelievers." he says.

"Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

Paul does not say, "You are bought with a price, but you might lose it. Or maybe you never had it." He does not say that at all. He says,

"For you have been bought with a price:..." (1 Corinthians 6:20).

"Don't you know that? Don't you know that when you take your body and join it to sin, you are bringing the Holy Spirit with you into that sin?"

"So don't imitate an unsaved person. Because when you imitate an unsaved person, you are imitating someone who has a different value system than you have, someone who can sin at will and suffer no real internal guilt about it for the most part.

"And you are imitating someone who is not even going to the same place that you are going to. You are going into the Kingdom. They are not."

We will stop here with this. First Corinthians 6:7-8 says,

"The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means that you have been completely defeated already..." (1 Corinthians 6:7).

"You have wrecked your testimony before this unsaved judge."

"...Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?" (1 Corinthians 6:7).

Instead of fighting with another Christian, why not just acquiesce and get ripped off?

If you want to fight about it in front of an unsaved person, the only thing you are really doing is driving a wedge between them and their potential conversion.

"Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters" (1 Corinthians 6:7-8).

So it is a general thrust of "Do not imitate unbelievers because of temporal consequences. And why would you imitate unbelievers? They have a different destination from you." As Paul says,

"...the unrighteous [unbelievers, as in 1 Corinthians 6:1, 6] will not inherit the kingdom of God?..." (1 Corinthians 6:9).

So that is more the classical free grace position—not the Calvinist position—not the Arminian position—not the millennial exclusion position. And you just see that by monitoring the switch in pronouns.