

The Reformation Part 4

Erwin Lutzer

I. Introduction.

- A. Calvin was a boy when Luther posted his theses on the door in Wittenberg.
- B. Calvin was converted through his study of the Scripture.
- C. He wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in Switzerland and it became the standard for Christian theology.
- D. Calvin met Thorell in Geneva, which became a Protestant stronghold.
 - 1. Geneva influenced Scotland through John Knox.
 - 2. Geneva influenced Holland.

II. Calvin's theology.

A. Theology of the church.

- 1. He believed that Christians should reconstruct a theocracy.
- 2. He tried to run Geneva along the lines of a dictatorial Protestant enclave.
- 3. It was believed that the church that was in power had the power of government.

B. Baptism.

- 1. Calvin taught as Luther did that infants should be baptized.
- 2. He believed that it was a sign of the covenant.
- 3. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant in the Old Testament so baptism must be a sign of the covenant in the New Testament.

C. The sovereignty of God.

- 1. Calvin's theology began with God's sovereignty.
- 2. His theology of providence is particularly encouraging.
- 3. He believed in predestination.
- 4. Predestination has been the mark of Protestantism.
 - a. Man is spiritually dead, so he is in no position to make any decision about his salvation.

b. The reason man is saved is because he has been elected to eternal life by God. (Ephesians 2, John 5:21, Matthew 11:26)

c. Election is tied to the security of the believer. (John 6:36)

d. The question is not whether one is saved after committing a sin that is not confessed—the question is whether one has really been born again.

e. Behind every invitation is the sovereign work of God. (II Timothy 2:10)

Application questions:

1. What is the hallmark of Calvin's theology? Why do many find this troubling today?

2. What aspects of Calvin's theology do many disagree with today? How would you respond to them?

3. How is predestination related to eternal security according to Calvin? Explain.
