

Jean Calvin and Calvinism

A Unificationist introduction

Introduction

- Recently, Holy Mother Han frequently refers to the French Reformer Jean Calvin (1509-1564). She suggests that Calvin played a pivotal role in God's Providence, especially in the critical year 1543, i.e. 400 years before the birth of the begotten daughter in Korea.
- Calvinism definitely influenced modern Korea, either directly or indirectly (through the Presbyterian church and its various branches).
- Calvin's hometown in France is mostly visited by Korean protestants. They grasp the impact of the Calvinist legacy in the rise of modern Korea.
- True Mother praised the American Puritans, she cherishes *Pure Water*. Her passionate, yet calm and serene quest of purity refers to notions that were very dear to Jean Calvin, even if he did not explain them always with a loving, caring and embracing attitude. Holy Mother Han advocates a mind/body purity which embraces everyone and can save every soul, whereas Calvin defended an idea of purity where only some predestined souls can be saved.
- In this presentation, we try to understand the man Jean Calvin, his life and teachings, his goals and his influence.

Frequently asked questions

Who was Jean Calvin? What kind of man was he?

What did Calvin contribute to Christianity?

Why did Calvinism appear?

What goals did Calvin and Calvinism try to achieve?

How does Calvinism work?

When did Calvin live? The development of Calvinism

Where did Calvinism flourish the most?

1. Who was Jean Calvin? What kind of man was he?



“There is nothing healthy in you ... except your mind.”



Jean Calvin, his role and character

Profile and role

- An important actor in the emergence of the modern world
- A major figure of Christianity
- A pillar of the early stages of Reformation or Protestantism
- Pastor, theologian, writer
- The father of huguenots (French protestants)
- The founder of the Republic of Geneva. Today, Geneva is the “Vatican of Protestantism” and keeps a legacy of Calvin

Character

Metaphors

“a bow that is always strung”,
a tortoise, carrying a heavy burden
Calvin lived all his life in a state of
uneasiness.

- Saw himself as meek, shy, introvert, stubborn, and limited person, who should make constant effort
- Living in constant physical and spiritual tension, Calvin was a strict, ascetic, hard working, persevering person, trying to reach heavenly patience.
- Sought goodness and purity through discipline, but his relationship with God and with others is tormented.
Jean Calvin is a model of extreme puritanism in his life, doctrine, and action

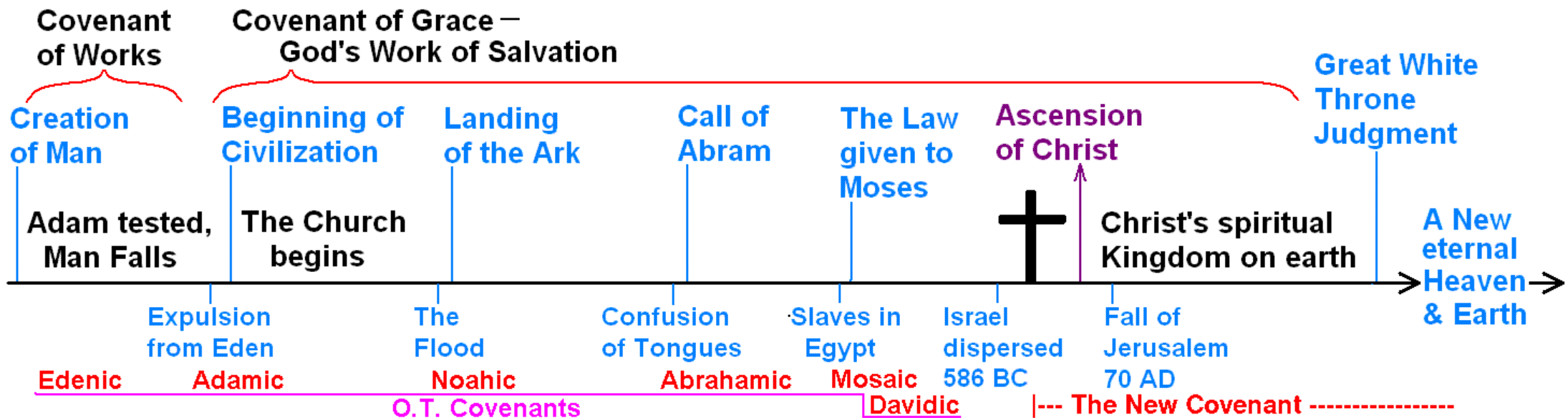


2. What did Calvin contribute to Christianity?

- largely represented by the Continental Reformed, Presbyterian, and Congregational traditions, as well as parts of the Anglican (known as "Episcopal" in some regions) and Baptist traditions.



Covenant theology



Five Points of Calvinism

TULIP

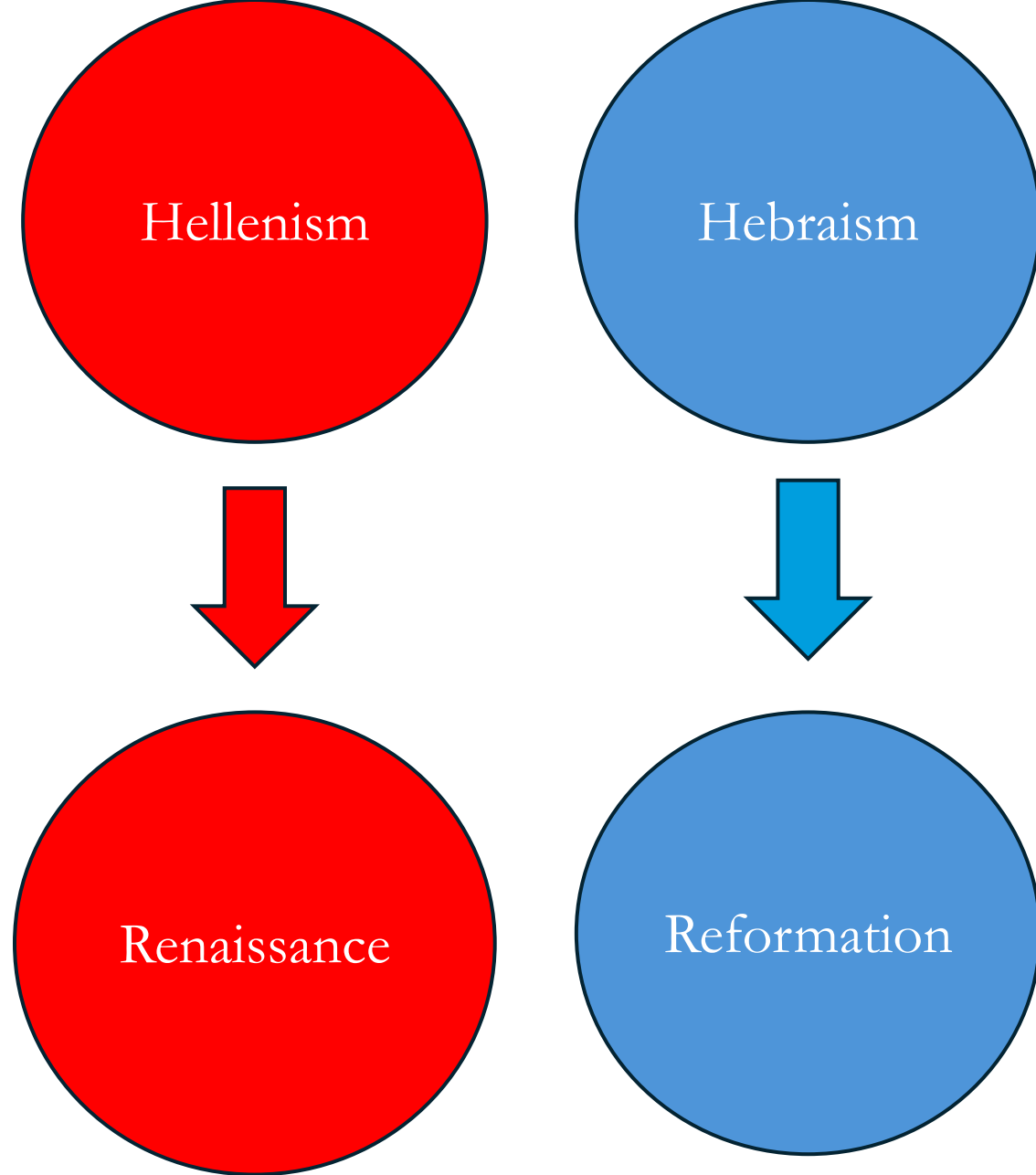


Five Points of Calvinism (TULIP)

- **Total Depravity:** through Adam and Eve's fall, every person is born sinful
- **Unconditional Election:** God "saves" those he wishes; concept of predestination
- **Limited Atonement:** Jesus died for the chosen only, not for everyone.
- **Irresistible Grace:** God's grace is given freely; it cannot be earned or denied
- **Perseverance of the "saints":** those elected by God have full power to interpret the will of God

Why did Calvinism appear?

- The French reformer Calvin appeared almost 30 years after Martin Luther. It is a second wave of the Reformation
- According to the Divine Principle, the Reformation emerged in God's Providence to prepare the second coming of Christ
- Just like Martin Luther, Calvin reacted and protested against the failure of Catholicism to guide the faith of Christians. It brought a major reformation in the church, based on the 5 solae (see next slide)



per tunc primam de p[er]tinenti[is] et de d[omi]ni[is] cap[itu]l[is] ad quatuordecim
methodos: et de tunc iam magis accussione et prop[er]tione op[er]is
necesse haberi possit.

IOHANNES CALVINO AVTHORE.



Oliua Roberti Stephani.

GENEVAE.
M. D. LIX.



Jean Calvin's main contribution was to organize the structure of the new church. Calvin was concerned to make the Reformation institutional and constitutional based on the Bible

4. What goals did Calvin and Calvinism try to achieve?

Calvinists are purpose driven, with a strong sense of being chosen and elected for a mission and responsibility. Described a “a bow that is always strung”, Calvin was weak and aware of his limitations. Yet he had an ardent **passion to bring a radical transformation of the Christian life and of the human condition.**

According to some thinkers, Calvinism had a revolutionary impact in the birth of the modern world. He became a leading figure in the birth of the Abel-type view of life. How?



The impact of Calvinism

- Rooted deeply in Calvinism are the virtues of diligence, thrift, and self-discipline, as an act of gratitude and obedience to Yahweh.
- These values often pave the way for economic prosperity, but never at the cost of ethics or societal welfare.
- They also favor a strong respect for honesty and frankness, the rule of law, the respect of institutions, a strict accountability and transparency of public figures.
- Implicit in Calvinism is the belief that conscientious, God-fearing Christians who practice self-control, and “habits of the heart” will naturally become good and enlightened citizens

5. How does Calvinism work?

- Calvinism is rather austere and very strict.
- Its teaching about the total depravation of human beings, their sinfulness may instill dread and anxiety
- On the other hand, it inspires people seeking a virtuous and pure life to believe that they may have been selected and chosen
- The next slide tries to explain what may be attractive in Calvinism.

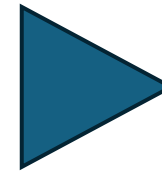
1. Calvinism offers a **God-centred approach to everything**. It is not seeker sensitive. It is not pop-psychology. It is all about God, his power and authority.
2. Calvinism lowers the position of man – It seems like some Christians want to focus solely on our value and esteem. Calvinism is focusing on our own lowliness. They say we are nothing.
3. Calvinism offers **certainty** – Because God is so sovereign there is a solid foundation to live on. There is no wishy-washyness here. Hansen says, when John Piper speaks, he speaks with certainty
4. Emphasis on scripture – these guys love scripture, love study, and aren't afraid to dive in deep.
5. Passion – There is a sense of passion here because we often tend to get passionate about ourselves and that is all pretty shallow. When you passionate about the greatness of God and his overarching sovereignty...that is a passion that goes beneath the surface.
6. **Calvinism recognizes the control is in God's hands, not ours. That is a liberating thought.**
7. **It is a non-institutional institution. What I mean by that is they are less about church and more about God.** That doesn't mean church is emphasized less but in emphasizing our depravity and God's election, grace and sovereignty they are putting God over church. They are moving outside the building
8. Worship that is more all about God and not about us – Emphasizing God's sovereignty and our depravity comes out in their worship. **It is God-centered.**

6. When did Calvin live? The development of Calvinism

Major Dates

The call of Jean Calvin, his golden years, and decline

- Calvin was precocious: by age **12**, he was employed by the bishop as a clerk
- **At the age of 21, Calvin converted to Protestantism**
- At the age of **27**, he published *Institutio Christianae Religionis* or *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
- During his 33rd year, he published 4 major texts (1543). Holy Mother Han considers this year to be of utmost important.
- As he approached the age of 40, Calvin saw the obstacles to his political project of building the Promised land in Geneva, and its failure
- The rest of his short life was not remarkable

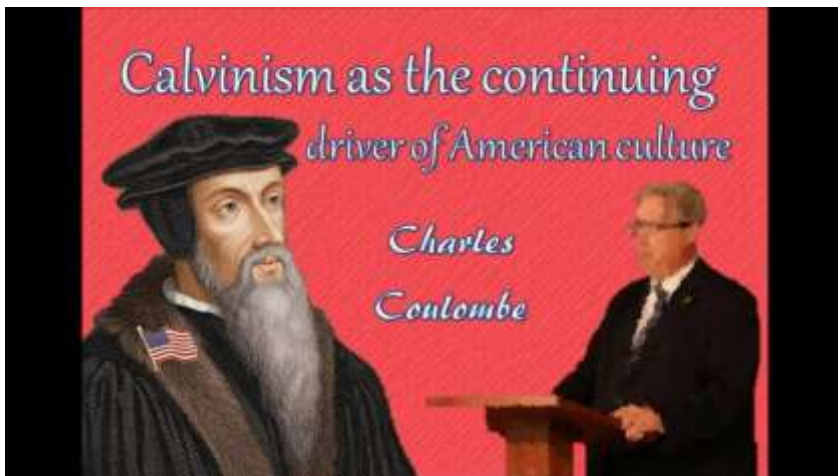
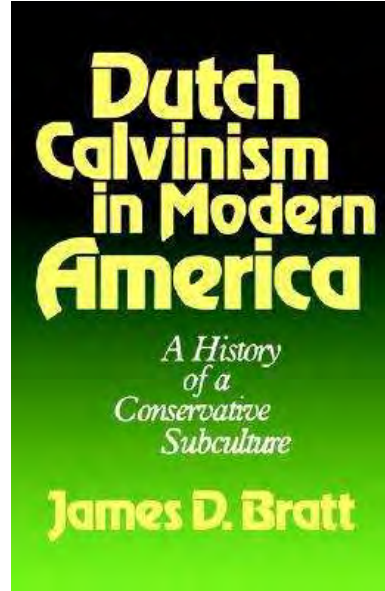
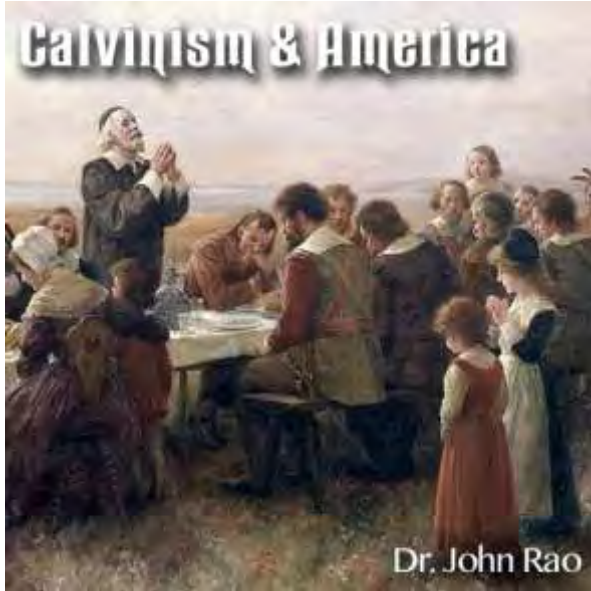


Being exceedingly alarmed at the misery into which I had fallen, and much more at that which threatened me in view of eternal death, I made it my first business to betake myself to your way, condemning my past life, not without groans and tears. And now, O Lord, what remains to a wretch like me, but instead of defense, earnestly to supplicate you not to judge that fearful abandonment of your Word according to its deserts, from which in your wondrous goodness you have at last delivered me.

7. Where did Calvinism flourish the most?

- According to various sources, the Reformed churches (including Presbyterians) would amount to almost 80 million people worldwide.
- Calvinism strongly shaped the history of Switzerland, Netherlands, South Africa and modern Korea.
- Calvinism also had a strong impact in France, Hungary and a few other nations.
- In the next slides, we give insights on the impact of Calvinism on the USA and on South Korea

Calvinism and America



- In the 18th century United States, Calvinism played a substantial role during the Great Awakening, a period of religious revitalization and mass conversions.
- Calvinist preachers, including Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, were among the leading figures of the Great Awakening
- Its influence on the United States is obvious in puritanism, but also in some of the American political institutions and economic practices (American capitalism). The notions of a **covenant between God and the American People** (*City on a Hill, Manifest Destiny, one nation under God*), of a possible election of the American people make much sense in the Calvinist worldview.

Calvinism and Korea

- Calvinism's influence has been unusually strong in Korea; its representative and democratic polity has had a profound impact on Korea's long process of democratization
- its conservative Biblicism has been the theological foundation of the Korean Presbyterian Church. The church's Calvinistic Biblicism has been a decisive cause not only for the church's spectacular growth during the Japanese colonial period, but also for its notorious schisms after Korea's liberation from Japan in 1945. The four major Korean Presbyterian Churches (two relatively conservative and two relatively progressive) which originated from the schisms have had their own Calvinistic theologies that are somewhat different from one another. But overall, the four Korean Presbyterian Churches have been at least constitutionally conservatively Calvinistic, accepting the Westminster Standards as their doctrinal criteria.
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