

EXAMINING CONTESTED REFORMED THEOLOGY BELIEFS

Part III: Examining The Five Points Of Calvinism (And Arminianism) In Light Of Scripture

E. Examining Calvinism's Doctrine Of Perseverance Of The Saints In Light Of Scripture

I. Introduction

- A. The theology of John Calvin, the main formulator of "Reformed Theology," rests on five "pillars" of belief: Total Inability, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the saints, doctrines that spell **T-U-L-I-P**, Boettner, The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, p. 1, 59f.
- B. These **beliefs** and their **spiritual effects** on believers besides the **opposing beliefs** of **Arminianism** and its respective **spiritual effects** are **critiqued** by **Christ** in **respective order** in Revelation 3:17 as follows:

II. Examining Calvinism's Doctrine Of Perseverance Of The Saints In Light Of Scripture, Rev. 3:17.

- A. Calvinism teaches the "Perseverance of the Saints," that **since** God (allegedly) gives the elect the faith to believe, of necessity they will **persevere** in that faith and salvation until they reach heaven, Ibid., p. 182.
- B. Arminianism has held as man **contributes** a human-authored faith to his salvation, the **failure** of that **faith** means one **loses** his salvation, Ibid., p. 193; The Assemblies of God bylaws, Art. VIII, section 1.
- C. Yet, **Jesus Christ** prophetically **criticized both** views and their errant **spiritual results** in Revelation 3:17:
 1. Jesus claimed the Laodiceans were **fifth** of all "**naked**" (NIV & KJV). The Greek word for "naked" is **gumnos** (UBS Grk. N.T., p. 845), and we define what Christ means by it through the Scripture context:
 - a. In Rev. 3:18, Christ said the **solution** to this Rev. 3:17 "naked" state came by way of donning white garments acquired from Christ Himself to hide the shame of the afflicted party's "naked" state.
 - b. Well, elsewhere in the book, **only** in Rev. 16:15 does a warning exist for (Tribulation era) believers not to let others see their "nakedness" in like manner (Moult. & Geden, Conc. to Grk. Test., p. 179).
 - c. That **context** reveals the need for believers to **avoid abandoning** godly works (white garments are godly works, cf. Rev. 19:8 NIV) by not yielding to demonic deception to join the kings of the earth in the doomed effort to fight Christ at Armageddon, Rev. 16:14-16. (similarly see 2 Chr. 18:1-19:3)
 - d. Hence, the "naked" state of Rev. 3:17 is the **failure** of the believer to **persevere** in godly works and doctrines by **ecumenically uniting** with the ungodly in vain beliefs or pursuits that God must judge!
 2. This **counters both Calvinist and Arminian** views of the believer's **salvation security** as follows:
 - a. Though Calvinism holds the believer **will persevere** in a godly faith and life by God's efficacious grace directed to him at justification, as these **true sons of God** (Rev. 3:19 in view of Heb. 12:6-8) were **also** "naked" means they had **not persevered** in godly works and beliefs opposite Calvinism!
 - b. Then, as Arminians hold the believer can **lose** his salvation by a **lapse** of **faith**, thus showing him **not to persevere**, these Laodiceans were **still true sons of God** though having **failed to persevere** in godliness (Rev. 3:19 in view of Heb. 12:6-8). Thus, one is still saved though failing in godly living!
 - c. Rather, the believer is **SEALED** by the **HOLY SPIRIT** at justification to **KEEP** him **SAVED** **regardless** of the believer's **SUBSEQUENT** earthly spiritual life, Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30.
 3. Spiritually, these errant views of salvation security have led to lifestyle problems in both groups:
 - (a) Calvinism has led its adherents to trust God's predestining work to keep them persevering in godliness, leading to failure to trust God to sustain doctrinal and ministry holiness.
 - (b) Arminians have leaned on a supposed strength of a futile human faith for perseverance in doctrine and life, leading them to fail to rely on God to stay separate from pressures to be seduced by Satanically false doctrines and errant, ecumenical church unions. Thus, Evangelicals from both groups have had their beliefs and ministries leavened with even demonically-influenced error and unions with dire spiritual results.

Lesson: (1) *Doctrinally, (a) Calvinism errs in holding God's predestination will KEEP believers persevering in godliness, and (b) Arminianism errs in saying one's salvation is built on the power of one's own faith. (c) Rather, when one trusts in Christ, he is SEALED by the HOLY SPIRIT so GOD UNCONDITIONALLY and ETERNALLY KEEPS him SAVED.* (2) *Spiritually, (a) BOTH systems have led believers to fail to lean on GOD for the preservation of godly doctrine and works, leaving them open to Satanic deception and pressures toward errant ecclesiastical unions! (b) Rather, Christians must lean on the Spirit's power for doctrinal and ministry holiness, 2 Timothy 1:13-14; Galatians 5:16.*