

7 Yes or No Questions For James White

Ten minutes to answer 7 questions "yes" or "no."

I realize you may think these answers require further discussion, but for now, would the best overall answer for each of these questions be "yes," or "no"? We can have further discussion as time allows, but my intent here is to get an overall best *big-picture* answer to each of these 7 questions.

1. Did John Calvin hold to Progressive Justification?

A. Possible discussion: Calvin Institutes 3.14

a. "The Beginning of Justification. In What Sense Progressive"

a1. CI 3.14.11

a2. "Daily we sin, daily we are continually justified."

*Luther's Works: American ed.; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955, vol. 34, p. 163

2. In one of three classes of election, the non-elect, the called, and those who persevere, did Calvin teach that the "called" are temporarily elected/illuminated and then fall away to a greater damnation as predetermined by God?

A. Possible discussion: CI 3.24.8 (Calvin states such in no uncertain terms).

B. "...calling and faith are of little value without perseverance, which, however, is not the gift of all."

a. CI 3.24.6

3. According to Calvin, does the present sin of believers remove them from grace requiring a return to the same repentance that saved them which can only be found in the institutional church?

A. Possible discussion: CI 3.14.11

B. "...by new sins we continually separate ourselves, as far as we can, from the grace of God... Thus it is, that all the saints have need of the daily forgiveness of sins; for this alone keeps us in the family of God" (John Calvin: Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles; The Calvin Translation Society 1855. Editor: John Owen, p. 165 ¶4).

4. Does Sola Fide also apply to sanctification as well as justification?

5. According to the Reformed doctrine of mortification and vivification, does the Christian relive their original Spirit baptism throughout their lives as a result of practicing the same repentance that originally saved them?

A. Possible discussion:

“Progressive sanctification has two parts: mortification and vivification, ‘both of which happen to us by participation in Christ,’ as Calvin notes....Subjectively experiencing this definitive reality signified and sealed to us in our baptism requires a daily dying and rising. That is what the Reformers meant by sanctification as a living out of our baptism....and this conversion yields lifelong mortification and vivification ‘again and again.’

a. (Michael Horton: *The Christian Faith; mortification and vivification*, pp. 661-663 [Calvin Inst. 3.3.2-9]).

6. Does total depravity, the “T” in TULIP, also apply to believers? According to the Reformers, do Christians remain totally depraved?

A. Possible discussion: CI 3.14.11

7. Can a Christian do any work pleasing to God?

A. Possible discussion: CI 3.14.11

B. Luther’s *mortal and venial sin*.

a. Heidelberg disputation: the belief that ANY person can do a good work is unpardonable sin.

Notes:

1. It is my contention that Protestants are able to fly under the radar on issues like progressive justification, pastoral absolution, baptismal regeneration, etc., by keeping people distracted with residual issues like election.