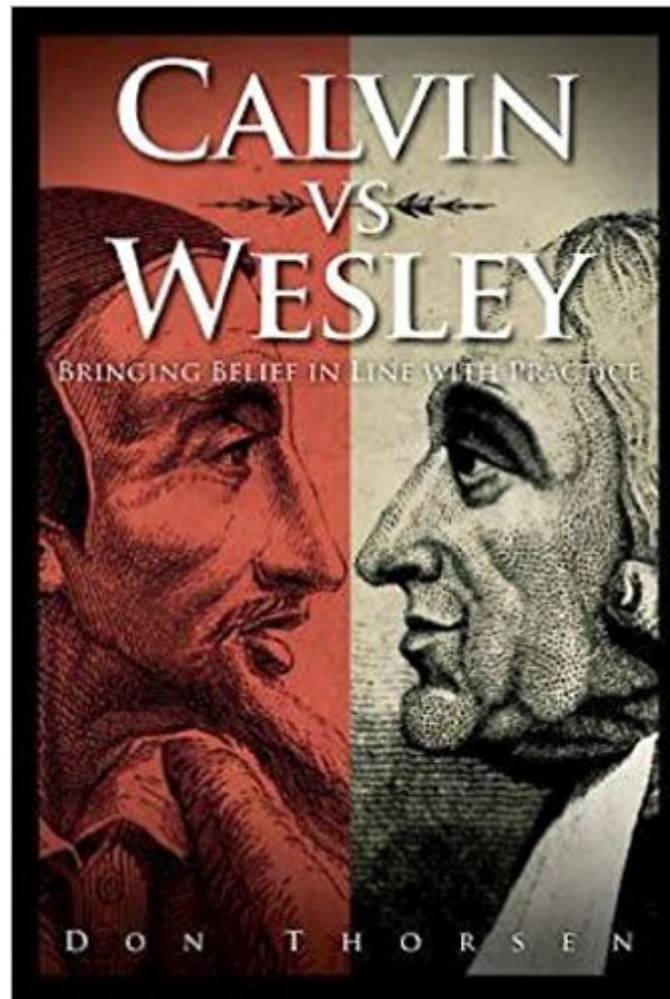


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# Calvin Vs. Wesley: Bringing Belief In Line With Practice



## Synopsis

The theology "de jour" originates with John Calvin, with an emphasis on the elect and "sovereign will of God." So much Calvinism saturates our air that Christians may not know there is another way of thinking about their faith, one well represented by Wesley. But no matter what people think, many act in ways that promise to change the world by offering grace and hope but also by helping to provide food and shelter to hurting people. In other words, they believe like Calvinists but they live like Wesleyans. This book is not intended to put down Calvin but to point to significant differences between Calvin and Wesley. Each wrote about major tenets of the church: who God is and what God's will is for us; the place of Scripture; the atonement of Christ; the role of human responsibility; the work of God's grace, the relation of the church and world; and how these beliefs can connect to how people practice their faith. But Calvin and Wesley were different, and following their prescriptions will lead us down different paths.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a great book. One thing I learned in graduate school when arguing against another view is to state your opponent view better than your opponent and then dismantle it. Wow. I tip my hats to Don Thorsen for having done this with much grace. I learned much about Calvin and was a good introduction to Wesleyan 'thoughts' (!). I read this book in about two day in about 4 sittings. Well-written. Note, I grew up in South Asia where Wesleyan influence is the ONLY influence in the town(s) I grew up. So, as Providence would have it, I have known the benefits of Wesleyan practice

for sure and can attest for it. The crux of Don's argument is: He asks us to examine how much our lives are in line with our theory (or beliefs). Now, Don does an interesting spin on this question. He gently asks us again that if there is a mis-match, why not change our theory? This was a very valuable point for me. There have been parts of my life not resolved under the writings of Calvin (that I know worked well when I was inside Wesleyan tradition or may have not risen in the first place). Here is my top line for this book: This is a rare pleasure to study a comparative literature of Calvin and Wesley with such a respect for both of them or more important you know who the center of this book is? Yes, you and me. The Church. Don has an eye for the Church that I learned so much. He clearly acknowledges (several times!) Calvin as the titan in Protestant theology without missing a beat. Let me say why I took one star from this book: 1. While the representation of Calvin is clear and the thesis that Wesley's teaching can better explain the practice of a Christian, yes, even a Calvinist is well presented and argued for, there is still much critical thinking lacking.

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