

Apologetics



*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path...
The entrance of Your words gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple. Psalm 119:105,130*

What is Arminianism? Part 2 of 3

THEOLOGY

- * Mankind is separated from God by sin and is in need of redemption.
 - * *Romans 3:23, John 3:3*

- * Death entered in to the human existence by Adam and Eve's sin.
 - * *Romans 5:12, Romans 6:23*

- * Salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, through Jesus Christ alone.
 - * *Ephesians 2:8, Romans 5:1-2, 9*

DOCTRINE

In the 1st part, ***What is Calvinism?*** of this series of papers dealing with the *Doctrines of Grace* we examined the Calvinist view of the topic, popularized by the teachings of John Calvin. In this 2nd part we will look at the teachings of the major rivaling teachings of **Jacob Arminius**.

The simple difference between the two views are how they deal with the answer to these question.

1. Does man have free will to accept or reject God's provision for salvation?
2. Or does God choose whom He will save and whom He will reject for reasons known only to Him?

With this topic we will not put forth our position until **part 3, *How Are We Saved?*** The purpose here is to briefly cover the two theological schools and their teaching.

What is Arminianism?

Arminian Theology: In short Arminius taught that man had free will to accept or reject the salvation offered to man, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. *John 1:29-36*

Pastor Chuck Smith wrote a very important and concise examination of these two views in a booklet entitled: ***Calvinism, Arminianism & the Word of God***. In it Pastor Chuck had this to say of Arminius:

“Although trained in the reformed tradition, Arminius had serious doubts about the doctrine of "sovereign grace" as taught by the followers of John Calvin. He was a pastor of the Reformed congregation in Amsterdam (1588), but during his fifteen years of ministry there, he began to question many of the conclusions of Calvinism. He left the pastorate and became professor of theology at the University of Leyden. It was his series of lectures on election and predestination that led to a violent and tragic controversy. After his death in 1609, his followers developed the Remonstrance of 1610 which outlined the "Five Points of Arminianism." This document was a protest against the doctrines of the Calvinists, and was submitted to the State of Holland. In 1618, a National Synod of the church was convened in Dort to examine the teachings of Arminius in the light of Scripture.

What is Arminian Theology?

For the position of Arminius we excerpt from Pastor Chuck's booklet.

Arminianism

- 1. FREE WILL:** Arminius believed that the fall of man was not total, maintaining that there was enough good left in man for him to will to accept Jesus Christ unto salvation.
- 2. CONDITIONAL ELECTION:** Arminius believed that election was based on the foreknowledge of God as to who would believe. Man's "act of faith" was seen as the "condition" or his being elected to eternal life, since God foresaw him exercising his "free will" in response to Jesus Christ.
- 3. UNIVERSAL ATONEMENT:** Arminius held that redemption was based on the fact that God loves everybody, that Christ died for everyone, and that the Father is not willing that any should perish. The death of Christ provided the grounds for God to save all men, but each must exercise his own "free will" in order to be saved.
- 4. OBSTRUCTABLE GRACE:** Arminius believed that since God wanted all men to be saved, He sent the Holy Spirit to "woo" all men to Christ, but since man has absolute "free will," he is able to resist God's will for his life. He believed that God's will to save all men can be frustrated by the finite will of man. He also taught that man exercises his own will first, and then is born again.
- 5. FALLING FROM GRACE:** If man cannot be saved by God unless it is man's will to be saved, then man cannot continue in salvation unless he continues to will to be saved.

On the matter of his 2nd point it is the complete opposite of what Calvin taught. Arminius described **Calvin's position**, in, [The Works of James Arminius](#).

“On Predestination,

I. God by an eternal and immutable decree has predestined, from among men, (whom he did not consider as being then created, much less as being fallen,) certain individuals to everlasting life, and others to eternal destruction, without any regard whatever to righteousness or sin, to obedience or disobedience, but purely of his own good pleasure, to demonstrate the glory of his justice and mercy; or, (as others assert), to demonstrate His saving grace, wisdom, and free uncontrollable power.

After 154 sessions, lasting seven months, the Five Points of Arminianism were declared to be heretical. After the synod, many of the disciples of Arminius, such as Hugo Grotius, were imprisoned or banished. When John Wesley took up some of the teachings of Arminianism, the movement began to grow, and it affected the Methodist tradition as well as the beliefs of most Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.”

II. In addition to this decree, God has preordained certain determinate means which pertain to its execution, and this by an eternal and immutable decree. These means necessarily follow by virtue of the preceding decree, and necessarily bring him who has been predestinated, to the end which has been fore-ordained for him. Some of these means belong in common both to the decree of election and that of rejection, and others of them are specially restricted to the one decree or to the other.”

In the same writing Arminius has a section entitled, **My Sentiments on The Preceding Scheme Of Predestination** where he comments using 4 articles for his dissent.

“I. That God has absolutely and precisely decree to save certain particular men by His mercy or grace, but to condemn others by His justice: and to do all this without having any regard in such decree to Righteousness or sin, obedience or disobedience, which could possibly exist on the part of one class of men or of the other.

II. That, for the execution of the preceding decree, God determined to create Adam, and all men in him, in an upright state of original righteousness; besides which he also ordained them to commit sin, that they might thus become guilty of external condemnation and be deprived of original righteousness.

III. That those person whom God has thus positively willed to save, he has decreed not only to salvation but also to the means which pertain to it; (that is, to conduct and bring them to faith in Christ Jesus, and to perseverance in that faith); and that He also in reality leads them to these results by grace and power that are irresistible, so that it is not possible for them to do otherwise than believe, persevere in faith, and be saved.

"IV. That to those whom, by his absolute will, God has foreordained to perdition, he has also decreed to deny that grace which is necessary and sufficient for salvation, and does not in reality confer it upon them; so that they are either placed in a possible condition nor in any capacity of believing or of being saved."

So unlike Calvin, Arminius believed man had free will to choose at the invitation of God. He further states what he feels is the logical conclusion. If God decrees and man has no free will then God must be the one who decrees evil and sinful acts as well.

This is a debate that divides the church today as never before. People are more aware of these differences and are more likely to support one side over another and with genuine zeal.

In the third part, ***How Are We Saved?*** of this examination of the doctrines of grace we will set out the position of Calvary Old Path. We feel that the topic of the sovereignty of God and man's free will is very important, as it forms our doctrine and even our basic understanding of God in His most elementary attributes.



On the Path Discernment Ministry

Discernment is always mentioned in scripture in a favorable light. Discernment was promoted as a way to avoid error and cause the believer to continually be seeking and watching with vigilance. Accordingly, these materials are provided for you in order to assist you in growing in your knowledge and understanding of God's Word. We have taken great care to give a thorough and expansive explanation of the positions of the church.

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These booklets are provided to explain Old Path's teachings on topics of theology and doctrine. Should you have questions on doctrinal matters or would like further clarity on these positions, you can email us and we will assist you by researching the needed matters. However, we do not provide these booklets with the intention of debating.