

My Position on Arminianism vs. Calvinism

The following material contrasts the Five Points of Arminianism with the Five Points of Calvinism in the clearest and most concise form. It is taken from *Romans: An Interpretive Outline*, by David N. Steele and Curtis Thomas, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, N.J., 1967, pp. 144-146.

The Five Points of Arminianism	The Five Points of Calvinism
<p>(A1) Free-Will or Human Ability Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does not interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature. The sinner has the power to either cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation.</p>	<p>(C1) Total Inability or Total Depravity Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not - indeed he cannot - choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ - it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation - it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.</p>
<p>(A2) Conditional Election God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do. The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but resulted solely from man's will. It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation. God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner's choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.</p>	<p>(C2) Unconditional Election God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response of obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.</p>
<p>(A3) Universal Redemption or General Atonement Christ's redeeming work made it possible for</p>	<p>(C3) Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the</p>

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everyone to be saved but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe on Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it.

elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, therefore guaranteeing their salvation.

(A4) The Holy Spirit Can Be Effectually Resisted

The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) proceeds and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.

(C4) Efficacious (or Irresistible) Grace

In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.

(A5) Falling from Grace

Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc. All Arminians have not been agreed on this point; some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ - that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost.

(C5) Perseverance of the Saints

All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.

According to Arminianism:¹

Salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond) - man's response being the determining factor. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, "choose" to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace. At the crucial point, man's will plays a decisive role; thus man, not God, determines who will be recipients of the gift of salvation.

According to Calvinism:²

1 Romans: An Interpretive Outline, by David N. Steele and Curtis Thomas, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, N.J., 1967, pp. 144-146.

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Salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. The Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to willingly obey the gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone. Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.

1. CALVINISM

1.1. TULIP-The Five Points of Calvinism:

- T Total Depravity
- U Unconditional Election
- L Limited Atonement
- I Irresistible Grace
- P Perseverance of the Saints

1.2. The Elective Decrees: ST/III.179-182

1.2.1. Of the Supralapsarians (High or Ultra Calvinists):

- 1.2.1.1. Decree to elect some to be saved and to reprobate all others.
- 1.2.1.2. Decree to create men both elect and nonelect.
- 1.2.1.3. Decree to permit the fall.
- 1.2.1.4. Decree to provide salvation for the elect.
- 1.2.1.5. Decree to apply salvation to the elect.

1.2.2. Of the Infralapsarians (Moderate Calvinists):

- 1.2.2.1. Decree to create all men.
- 1.2.2.2. Decree to permit the fall.
- 1.2.2.3. Decree to provide salvation for men.
- 1.2.2.4. Decree to elect those who believe and to leave in just condemnation all who do not believe.
- 1.2.2.5. Decree to apply salvation to those who believe.

1.2.3. Of the Sublapsarians (also called Moderate Calvinists):

- 1.2.3.1. Decree to create all men.

2 Romans: An Interpretive Outline, by David N. Steele and Curtis Thomas, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, N.J., 1967, pp. 144-146.

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- 1.2.3.2. Decree to permit the fall.
- 1.2.3.3. Decree to elect those who do believe and to leave in just condemnation those who do not believe.
- 1.2.3.4. Decree to provide salvation for men.
- 1.2.3.5. Decree to apply salvation to those who believe.

1.3. Meaning of "Election" by the Calvinists:

"The three schools of Calvinists contend alike that divine election is the sovereign choice of God which expresses His grace apart from every form of human works foreseen or actual." Lewis Sperry Chafer/Systematic Theology/III.182

1.4. According to Calvinism:¹

"Salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. The Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to willingly obey the gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone. Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation."

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2. ARMINIANISM

2.1. The Five Points of Arminianism:

Free-Will or Human Ability
Conditional Election
Universal Redemption or General Atonement
The Holy Spirit Can Be Effectually Resisted
Falling from Grace

2.2. The Elective Decrees: ST/III/179-182

2.2.1. Of the Arminians (Identical to that of the Infralapsarians):

- 2.2.1.1. Decree to create all men.
- 2.2.1.2. Decree to permit the fall.
- 2.2.1.3. Decree to provide salvation for men.
- 2.2.1.4. Decree to elect those who believe and to leave in just condemnation all who do not believe.
- 2.2.1.5. Decree to apply salvation to those who believe.

2.3. Meaning of "Election" by the Arminians:

"To be elected is, to be separated from the world ('I have chosen you out of the world'), and to be sanctified by the Spirit ('elect unto obedience'). It follows, then, that election is not only an act of God in time, but also that it is subsequent to the administration of the means of salvation. Actual election cannot be eternal, for from eternity the elect were not actually chosen out of the world, and could not be actually sanctified unto obedience."
Richard Watson, Institutes, II.338

2.4. According to Arminianism:¹

"Salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond) - man's response being the determining factor. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, "choose" to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace. At the crucial point, man's will plays a decisive role; thus man, not God, determines who will be recipients of the gift of salvation."

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3. LLOYDIANISM (WHERE I STAND):

Deut. 29:29 The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

3.1. The Secret Things of the Lord:

3.1.1. Are inconceivable to man because of man's limitations in time and space.

3.1.1.1. Man lives in a four dimensioned universe:

Length
Width
Height
Time

3.1.1.2. Man was created following the creation of time and space:

Some maintain that Time began at the first day (Genesis 1:5).

Gene. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Gene. 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Gene. 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Gene. 1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

Gene. 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Some maintain that Time began at the fourth day (Genesis 1:14-19).

Gene. 1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

Gene. 1:15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

Gene. 1:16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

Gene. 1:17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

Gene. 1:18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

Gene. 1:19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Either way, Time began BEFORE the creation of man on the sixth day (Genesis 1:26-31).

Gene. 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: ?

Gene. 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

The Decrees identified by both the Calvinists and the Arminians were decreed BEFORE the creation of man AND BEFORE the creation of the Space-Time Continuum we know as "the universe".

Ephe. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Ephe. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Ephe. 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Reve. 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

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Therefore; any attempt to make a "time line" of events in the realm and mind of the Eternal God before time or man began is unacceptable.

Roma. 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Roma. 11:34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

3.2. Those Things Which Are Revealed.

3.2.1. God Sovereignly Elects For His Divine Purpose.

Being "elect" does not necessarily mean being "saved" in a New Testament sense.

Isai. 42:1. Behold **my servant**, whom I uphold; **mine elect**, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. **{REFERENCE TO CHRIST}**

Isai. 44:28. That saith of **Cyrus**. He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Isai. 45:4. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: **I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. {REFERENCE TO CYRUS WHO WAS ELECTED TO JUDGE ISRAEL}**

Isai. 65:9. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and **mine elect** shall inherit it, and **my servants** shall dwell there. **{CHRIST ELECTED TO SET UP PROMISED KINGDOM FOR ISRAEL}**

Isai. 65:22. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and **mine elect** shall long enjoy the work of their hands. **{REFERENCE TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN PROMISED KINGDOM}**

Matt. 24:22. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for **the elect's sake** those days shall be shortened. **{REFERENCE TO JEWS LIVING DURING THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE}**

Matt. 24:24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive **the very elect. {IBID}**

Mark. 13:27. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together **his elect** from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. **{REFERENCE TO THE JEWISH DIASPORA}**

Luke. 18:7. And shall not God avenge **his own elect**, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? **{REFERENCE TO BELIEVERS}**

Roma. 8:33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of **God's elect**? It is God that justifieth. **{REFERENCE TO BELIEVERS IN CHRIST}**

Roma. 9:11. (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, **that the purpose of God according to election might stand**, not of works, but of him that calleth;) **{REFERENCE TO JACOB AND ESAU WHO WERE ELECTED TO DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS IN GOD'S PLAN}**

Roma. 11:5. Even so then at this present time also there is **a remnant** according to **the election of grace. {GOD HAS ELECTED TO KEEP A WITNESS TO HIS GRACE, ON EARTH, AT ALL TIMES}**

Roma. 11:7. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but **the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded {ISRAEL, THE ELECT NATION, WERE NOT ALL ELECTED FOR UNDERSTANDING. SOME WERE ELECTED TO REMAIN IN DARKNESS - JUDGMENT}**

Roma. 11:8. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. **{IBID}**

Roma. 11:28. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but **as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. {ISRAEL IS STILL THE ELECT OF GOD, EVEN THE UNBELIEVERS, BECAUSE GOD'S PROMISES TO THEM ARE IMMUTABLE}**

Roma. 11:29. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

3.2.2. God Lovingly Calls All To Salvation.

John. 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

John. 3:15 **That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

John. 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John. 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

John. 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **{NOTE THAT THOUGH THE FATHER DID NOT INTEND FOR CHRIST TO BE THE JUDGE OF THE EARTH, NEVERTHELESS CHRIST WILL JUDGE THE EARTH}**

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John. 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **{NOTE THAT MEN CHOSE TO RESIST THE LIGHT}**

John. 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

John. 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

2Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. **{ALTHOUGH GOD WILLS TO SAVE EVERYONE, HE WILL NOT SAVE EVERYONE}**

3.2.3. God Accepts All Who Willingly Come to Him in Faith.

Acts. 16:30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Acts. 16:31 And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

3.2.4. God Righteously Judges All Who Will NOT Come to Him in Faith.

3.3. Summary of Lloydianism.

3.3.1. God Does What God Does.

God elects a nation to serve Him. He rejects another related nation. The nation that God elects chooses to disobey God. God sends them prophets to call them to repentance. God judges this elect nation and then provides the Messiah to redeem them. God elects some of Israel to believe in Him and others to remain in darkness. Nevertheless, God still honors his promise to the unbelieving nation because God has made promises to them. God doesn't explain or ask our opinion. The only thing we can know is that what is revealed in God's word, and we can't even understand all of that.

3.3.2. My Theology Is The Bible.

I am not obligated to defend either Arminianism OR Calvinism. Each group has their own set of proof texts and rejects the proof texts of the other group. I AM obligated to accept the teaching of the Bible, all of it. I cannot throw out any verses that seem to contradict my theological position. My theological position IS the Bible.

3.3.3. So, How IS a Person Saved according to the Bible?

People are saved by responding in faith to the grace of God.

Matt. 10:32. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Matt. 10:33. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

John. 3:15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John. 3:16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

People are saved because they have been sovereignly elected by God.

Matt. 25:34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Ephe. 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Ephe. 1:4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Ephe. 1:5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Ephe. 1:6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.