

## Calvinist or Arminian?

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by Wayne Goff

*The first time I was asked that question, I really didn't know what to think. I hadn't heard much about James Arminius, but I **knew** I wasn't a Calvinist. Having done a little research, I can now confidently say "I am neither **Calvinist**, nor **Arminian**. I am a Christian!"*

### Five Points of Calvinism

Hopefully you are familiar with the five points of classic Calvinism, articulated with the acronym **TULIP**. It's hard to believe that anyone would accept these points, but notice a brief summary of them from "Grace Online Library" —

- **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...."
- **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 or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc...."
- **Limited Atonement.** "Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a 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."
- **Irresistible Grace.** "...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."
- **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."

### Five Points of Arminianism

James Arminius (1560-1609) became a professor of theology at the University of Leiden. His views led to the Dutch Remonstrant Movement, which opposed the five points of Calvinism. After his death, his followers systematized his teachings into five *contrasting* points, as found at "Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry:"

- **Human Free Will.** "This states that though man is fallen, he is not incapacitated by the sinful nature and can freely choose God. His will is not restricted and enslaved by his sinful nature."
- **Conditional Election.** "God chose people for salvation based on his foreknowledge where God looks into the future to see who would respond to the gospel message."
- **Universal Atonement.** "The position that Jesus bore the sin of everyone who ever lived."
- **Resistible Grace.** "The teaching that the grace of God can be resisted and finally beaten so as to reject salvation in Christ."
- **Fall from Grace.** "The teaching that a person can fall from grace and lose his salvation."

### What's The Difference?

Perhaps from a superficial view of these contrasting doctrines, one would surmise that you have to be one or the other. However, notice why I reject both positions as unbiblical and erroneous:

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