

## CALVINISM

## ARMINIANISM

### ORIGINAL SIN

Both affirm the doctrine of original sin and total depravity of man's nature: man is as bad off as he can be and desperately needs a Saviour. Both believe he cannot save himself.

Affirms the *ACTUAL* condition of total depravity:

Man's plight is so great he cannot even desire God without God's working in his life.

Unless God redirects the heart of a person, he will never seek God.

A whole new nature must be formed to have ANY desire for Christ

Affirms the *HYPOTHETICAL* condition of total depravity.

The heart of every person would be desperately wicked, apart from the grace of God working in their lives.

*PREVENIENT GRACE* supersedes the condition of Man's heart.

This allows them to be free from the total wickedness of their hearts.

### REGENERATION

Both agree that Man must be born-again to have any desire for Christ and his kingdom. It is necessary for man to become a whole new creature that God might reign in his life.

Man must experience regeneration before he can begin to desire intimacy with Christ.

Man's hearts are so wicked and inward-focused that a total ethical change must occur in order for them to truly seek God to any degree.

Man WILL resist the Holy Spirit without regeneration.

Regeneration (new birth) logically precedes conversion.

Man must experience regeneration to desire intimacy with Christ.

Regeneration is split into a two-part process: pre-conversion and post-conversion.

*PRECONVERSION*: partial regeneration. Takes place in the heart of every individual through prevenient grace. Man is free from bondage of a wicked heart. They are able to not resist the Holy Spirit.

*POSTCONVERSION*: If they receive the gift of faith God is offering, conversion occurs and regeneration is completed.

### ATONEMENT

Both affirm that atonement involves the satisfaction of God's wrath against sinners, that they might become reconciled to God. Each addresses this as having aspects both limited and universal.

Atonement is *UNIVERSAL in VALUE*: Christ's death is sufficient for the salvation of all people.

Atonement is *LIMITED IN SCOPE*: God never intended to save all people, but only those He set forth to save from the beginning of time.

Limited atonement asserts God has intended the atoning work of Christ for certain men, but not all of mankind.

Atonement is *UNIVERSAL in INTENT*: God has intended that the atoning work of Christ be received by all people, willing that none should perish.

Atonement is *LIMITED in EFFICACY*: Because of the resistance of men's hearts the work of Christ will not be efficient for all.

Unlimited atonement asserts that God has intended the work of Christ for all men, but it will only save those who receive the gift of faith.

### SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Both agree that God has providential power over all creation through preserving, sustaining, and governing all things. The disagreement involves the degree to which God controls creation: meticulously or with freedom.

God's governing is *METICULOUS*: nothing occurs outside of His determination.

This is called *de facto*: His governing is fully *accomplished* in a detailed and deterministic manner.

At any point in time, all things are part of God's intentions, down to the smallest detail.

He orchestrates every detail by the counsel of His will for His glory.

God's governing gives man *FREEDOM*: while He could govern meticulously, He chooses not to.

This is called *de jure*: by right and by power.

God has every right and power in His governing, but chooses to permit events.

Everything that happens is being worked into God's will, providing him with partial "de facto" until the end of this age when all things are restored and "de facto" is completed.

## DECREES OF GOD

In order to reconcile God's sovereign will (in bringing all things to His glory) and His will that humans can thwart, both groups understand there are two modes of God's will which function in harmony.

These two modes are called the *PRECEPTIVE* and *DECRETIVE* wills of God.

*PRECEPTIVE WILL*: moral, involving the commands which God has given to Man. Man CAN thwart God's perceptive will, by disobeying his commands and refusing to worship Him.

*DECRETIVE WILL*: His hidden will, unknown in its fullness to mankind. This involves God's determining all things to pass for His glory; all things which He speaks will happen. Man CANNOT thwart this will.

These two modes are called the *ANTECEDENT* and *CONSEQUENT* wills of God.

*ANTECEDENT WILL*: involves God's decision to produce good from evil, and preserve man's free choice, rather than not allowing evil.

*CONSEQUENT WILL*: God's decision to permit man's freedom with regard to decision-making, cooperating with him to work all things he does out for greater good.

## MAN'S FREEDOM

Both agree that men have freedom, but differ on extents. Either Man's freedom is limited by God; or God limits His freedom for Man.

Man's freedom is limited that God might prevail at all times.

Man still HAS freedom in that he is not coerced or forced into any decision-making by God.

Man always acts according to his own nature, and every decision will come from the desires and impulses of his heart.

Therefore, it is impossible for man to freely choose to honor God, unless God moves in his heart.

This is *COMPATIBILISM*: a reconciliation between God's determinism and man's freedom. Man's freedom is ALWAYS compatible with God's decrees, because men always act out of their nature: fallen or renewed.

God limits his freedom with making that man can make decisions and be fully responsible.

Freedom means men always have the ability to choose contrary.

While God is working all of these decisions for greater good through His consequent will, He limits Himself that men might be free.

This is *LIBERTARIAN FREEDOM*: rejects any reconciliation between determinism and free will, believing that any attempt would negate true freedom on behalf of Man.

## GRACE

Both affirm the necessity of God's grace in the hearts of men. If God did not work in men's hearts, there would be no inclination whatsoever toward God or His testimonies. Disagreement is over whether God's working automatically causes a person to follow God, or whether he is able to resist God.

When God's grace is applied to the heart of a man, it inclines him in such a way that the glories of God become irresistible to him.

This is *IRRESISTIBLE GRACE*.

When God's grace works in men's hearts through the Holy Spirit, they become regenerated with a new nature which desire God.

This causes them to see the truth of Christ, and be captivated in such a manner they cannot resist.

God's grace needs to be applied to the heart of men in order for them to desire him.

However, this grace doesn't automatically cause them to desire God.

Through *PREVENIENT GRACE* they are freed from bondage to wickedness and can either worship God or the gods of this world.

This grace is FREEING not CONSTRAINING.

## ELECTION/PREDESTINATION

Both assert an element of election/predestination in their theology.

Election and predestination are both *CORPORATE* and *INDIVIDUAL* in their application.

*Individuals* are elected/predestined before the foundation of the world to be children of God.

Those individuals are part of the *corporate* body of Christ.

Each person in this group is chosen by God, for the pleasure of His will, not based on anything within the individuals.

This is *UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION*: not based on anything someone can do.

Election is *CORPORATE*. It involves the body of Christ in its fullness— all who receive the gift of faith are of the "elect."

Predestination concerns the *INDIVIDUAL*. It involves God foreknowing who would not resist the gift of faith— and predestining them unto salvation.

The greatest emphasis is Christ— predestination comes through Him as He was the first "predestined" one. Therefore, it is through knowledge of Him and accepting the gift of faith through prevenient grace that evidences whether an individual is predestined.