

Contrasting Calvinism and Arminianism

Within the broad scope of Christian theology, Arminianism and Calvinism share both history and many Biblical doctrines. However, they offer radically different interpretations of Scriptures related to salvation through Jesus Christ. In addition, there are a variety of approaches under the general headings of Calvinism and Arminianism; proponents on both sides are not in universal agreement regarding how they apply these doctrines.

Calvinism, which is built upon the religious teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564), emphasizes the sovereignty of God and the salvation of the elect (those He has predetermined will be saved) by God's grace alone.

Arminianism is based upon the original beliefs of the theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), but can also include teachings of John Wesley and others. The Apostolic Faith subscribes most closely to the Wesleyan view of Arminianism.

In his written works, Arminius quotes from Christian theologians dating back to the first century who taught that grace is extended to all, but that man, by his own free will, may turn toward or away from the faith. He also demonstrated that there were Christian leaders in every age since the time of Christ who taught that man can and should live holy in this life.

Following is a chart that briefly states the five main points of difference between Calvinistic teaching and Arminian teaching.

CALVINISM	ARMINIANISM
<p>Total Depravity: Man is born with a depraved nature and lacks a free will. God draws to repentance only those He has predetermined for salvation.</p>	<p>Free Will: Man is born with a depraved nature but has a free will. God draws all to repentance, but man can choose to repent and be regenerated, or resist and perish.</p>
<p>Unconditional Election: God has chosen only certain individuals for salvation. The elect are those God has predetermined will be saved.</p>	<p>Conditional Election: God has chosen all humanity for salvation. The elect are those who respond to His offer of salvation with repentance and faith.</p>
<p>Limited Atonement: When Christ gave His life upon the Cross, atonement was made available but only for the elect.</p>	<p>Unlimited Atonement: When Christ gave His life upon the Cross, atonement was made available for everyone. However, atonement avails only for those who choose to accept Christ's provision.</p>
<p>Irresistible Grace: Grace is extended only to the elect. God's call cannot be resisted and always results in conversion.</p>	<p>Resistible Grace: Grace is extended to all. Man is free to accept or reject God's call. Conversion results when man believes and receives God's offered grace.</p>
<p>Perseverance of the Saints: Saved individuals retain their salvation to the end because they are preserved by God. No saved person will ever be lost; once an individual is saved, he is always saved.</p>	<p>Assurance and Security: Saved individuals can retain their salvation to the end through continued obedience and faithfulness to God. However, saved individuals can forfeit their salvation by turning away from God.</p>