

*God and His Ways*

According to Arminianism <sup>2</sup> :	According to Calvinism <sup>3</sup> :	According to Arminianism <sup>2</sup> :	According to Calvinism <sup>3</sup> :
<p>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.</p> <p><u>Free-will or human ability</u> 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 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 in 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>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.</p> <p><u>Total Depravity (Total Inability)</u> The effect of the fall upon man is that sin has extended to every part of his personality – his thinking, his emotions, and his will. The unregenerate man is dead in his sins (Rom. 5:12). Without the power of the Holy Spirit, the natural man is blind and deaf to the message of the gospel (Mark 4:11). The man without a knowledge of God will never come to this knowledge without God’s making him alive through Christ (Eph. 2:1-5).</p> <p><u>Unconditional Election</u> God chose those whom he was pleased to bring to a knowledge of himself, not based upon any merit shown by the object of grace and not based upon His looking forward to discover who would “accept” the offer of the gospel. God has elected, based solely upon the counsel of his own will, some for glory and others for damnation (Romans 9:15, 21).</p>	<p><u>Conditional election</u> 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. Thus the sinner’s choice of Christ – not God’s choice of the sinner – is the ultimate cause of salvation.</p> <p><u>Universal redemption or general atonement.</u> Christ’s redeeming work made it possible for 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.</p>	<p>He has done this act before the foundations of the world (Eph. 1:4-8). This doctrine does not rule out, however, man’s responsibility to believe in the redeeming work of God the Son (John 3:16-18). Scripture presents a tension between God’s sovereignty in salvation, and man’s responsibility to believe which it does not try to resolve. Both are true – to deny man’s responsibility is to affirm an unbiblical hyper-Calvinism; to deny God’s sovereignty is to affirm an unbiblical Arminianism. The elect are saved unto good works (Eph. 2:10). Thus, though good works will never bridge the gulf between man and God that was formed in the Fall, good works are the result of God’s saving grace. This is what Peter means when he admonishes the Christian reader to make his “calling” and “election” sure (2 Peter 1:10). Bearing the fruit of good works is an indication that God has sown seeds of grace in fertile soil.</p> <p><u>Limited Atonement</u> This doctrine is offered in response to the question, “for whose sins did Christ atone?” The Bible teaches that Christ died for those whom God have him to save (John 17:9). Christ died, indeed, for many people, but not all (Matt. 26:28). Specifically, Christ died for the invisible church – the sum total of all those who would every rightly bear the name “Christian” (Eph. 5:25). Christ died</p>

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<p><u>The Holy Spirit can be effectually resisted.</u> The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation. 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) precedes 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.</p> <p><u>Falling from grace</u> 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.</p>	<p>to atone for specific sins of specific sinners. Christ died to make holy the church. He did not atone for all men, because obviously all men are not saved. Evangelism is actually lifted up in this doctrine, for the evangelist may tell his congregation that Christ died for sinners, and that he will not lose any of those for whom he died!</p> <p><u>Irresistible Grace</u> The result is the certain response by the elect to the inward call of the Holy Spirit, when the outward call is given by the evangelist or minister of the Word of God. Jesus taught that all whom God has elected will come to a knowledge of him. Men will come to Christ in salvation when the Father calls them (John 6:44), and the very Spirit of God leads God's beloved to repentance (Rom. 8:14).</p> <p><u>Perseverance of the Saints</u> The saints (those whom God has saved) will remain in God's hand until they are glorified and brought to abide with him in heaven. Romans 8:28-39 makes it clear that when a person truly has been regenerated by God, he will remain in God's stead. The work of sanctification which God has brought about in his elect will continue until it reaches its fulfillment in eternal life (Phil 1:6).</p>

### Spurgeon Quote

I suppose you are all aware that among the old systems of astronomy was one which placed the earth in the centre, and made the sun, and the moon, and the stars revolve around it. "Its three fundamental principles were the immobility of the earth, its central position, and the daily revolution of all the heavenly bodies around it in circular orbits."

Now, in a similar fashion, there is a way of making a system of theology of which man is at the centre, by which it is implied that Christ and his atoning sacrifice are only made for man's sake, and that the Holy Spirit is merely a great Worker on man's behalf, and that even the great and glorious Father is to be viewed simply as existing for the sake of making man happy. Well, that may be the system of theology adopted by some; but, brethren, we must not fall into that error, for, just as the earth is not the centre of the universe, so man is not the grandest of all beings. God has been pleased highly to exalt man; but we must remember how the psalmist speaks of him: "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" In another place, David says, "Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him! Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow which passeth away." Man cannot be the centre of the theological universe, he is altogether too insignificant a being to occupy such a position, and the scheme of redemption must exist for some other end than that of merely making man happy, or even of making him holy. The salvation of man must surely be first of all for the glory of God; and you have discovered the right form of Christian doctrine when you have found the system that has God in the centre, ruling and controlling according to the good pleasure of his will. Do not dwarf man so as to make it appear that God has no care for him; for if you do that, you slander God. Give to man the position that God has assigned to him; by doing so, you will have a system of theology in which all the truths of revelation and experience will move in glorious order and harmony around the great central orb, the Divine Sovereign Ruler of the universe, God over all, blessed for ever.<sup>4</sup>

### References

<sup>1</sup> *God and His Ways Teacher's Edition*, by Layton Talbert, Ph.D., BJU Press 2001, pp. 105-109.

<sup>2</sup> <http://bible-researcher.com/arminianism.html>

### References

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.reformed.org/calvinism/index\\_calv.html](http://www.reformed.org/calvinism/index_calv.html)

<sup>4</sup> *Lectures to my Students – The Art of illustration*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), page 149.