

Epsom Module 6

Calvinism vs. Arminianism

Workbook Overview

This module explores the five points of Calvinism (TULIP), their biblical foundations, and the challenges raised against them. The goal is not to force agreement with one system, but to examine Scripture carefully and develop conviction based on truth.

1. Total Depravity

Total Depravity teaches that humanity is completely affected by sin due to the fall. Every part of our nature—mind, will, and desires—is impacted, leaving us unable to come to God on our own. This does not mean people are as evil as possible, but that sin has touched every part of who we are. Because of this, humanity is in need of regeneration and divine intervention.

2. Unconditional Election

Unconditional Election teaches that God chose who would be saved before the foundation of the world, based solely on His will. It is not dependent on human effort, decision, or foreseen faith. Key scriptures include Ephesians 1:4–5, Romans 9:15–16, and John 6:44. This doctrine strongly emphasizes God's sovereignty, but also raises questions about human responsibility and free will.

3. Limited Atonement

Limited Atonement teaches that Christ died specifically for the elect rather than for every individual. This aligns with the idea that God has chosen certain individuals for salvation. However, other scriptures suggest a broader scope of salvation, such as 1 John 2:2, John 3:16, and 1 Timothy 2:4. These passages emphasize a universal offer of salvation and a genuine invitation for all people to respond.

4. Irresistible Grace

Irresistible Grace teaches that when God draws someone to salvation, that grace will ultimately result in their response. It does not mean people are forced, but that God changes the heart so the person willingly comes. Supporting verses include John 6:37 and Acts 13:48. However, other passages such as Acts 7:51 and Matthew 23:37 show that people can resist God, creating tension in interpretation.

5. Perseverance of the Saints

Perseverance of the Saints teaches that those who are truly saved will continue in faith until the end because God sustains them. Scriptures like John 10:28–29 and Philippians 1:6 support this idea of divine preservation. Calvinists often argue that if someone falls away permanently, they were never truly saved. However, warning passages such as Hebrews 6:4–6 raise questions about the possibility of falling away and the role of human choice.

Reflection Questions

- Which doctrines seem most clearly supported by Scripture?
- Where do you see tension between God's sovereignty and human free will?
- How do these teachings shape your understanding of salvation?