

## EPSOM Module 6 – Week 2

### Calvinism vs. Arminianism (Focus on Arminianism)

#### Overview

This lesson explores Arminianism—its origin, key beliefs, and how it compares to Calvinism. Arminianism was developed by **Jacobus Arminius** as a response to Calvinist theology, offering a different perspective on how God’s sovereignty and human free will interact in salvation.

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#### Review of Calvinism

Before understanding Arminianism, it is important to summarize Calvinism. Calvinism emphasizes **God’s absolute sovereignty in salvation**:

- Humanity is completely unable to come to God due to sin.
- God **unconditionally chooses** who will be saved.
- Christ died specifically for the elect.
- God’s grace is **irresistible**—those He calls will respond.
- True believers will **persevere** and cannot lose salvation.

In this view, salvation is entirely the work of God from beginning to end.

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#### Introduction to Arminianism

Arminianism agrees that God is sovereign but teaches that His sovereignty allows for **genuine human response**. Salvation involves both **God’s initiative** and **human choice**.

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#### The Five Points of Arminianism

##### 1. Conditional Election

God chooses individuals for salvation based on His **foreknowledge** of who will believe in Christ.

- Election is not arbitrary—it is connected to faith.

- Scriptures such as Romans 8:29 and 1 Peter 1:1–2 emphasize foreknowledge before predestination.
- God desires **all people to be saved** (1 Timothy 2:3–4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Salvation is offered to all, but applied to those who respond in faith (“whoever believes”).

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## 2. Unlimited Atonement

Jesus Christ died for **all people**, not just a select group.

- Salvation is universally available but only effective for believers.
- Key scriptures include John 3:16 and Titus 2:11.

This rejects the idea that only a predetermined group can be saved and affirms that God’s grace is extended to all humanity.

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## 3. Total Depravity (with Prevenient Grace)

Humans are completely sinful and unable to come to God on their own.

- However, **prevenient grace** enables people to respond to God.
- This grace restores the ability to choose, making faith possible.

Scriptures like Ephesians 2:1 and Romans 3:10–11 show human inability apart from God, while grace “turns the light on,” allowing a response.

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## 4. Resistible Grace

God’s grace draws people to salvation, but it can be **resisted**.

- The Holy Spirit works through:
  - **Conviction** (John 16:8)
  - **Illumination** (John 1:9)
  - **Drawing** (John 6:44)

However, people can reject God’s call (Acts 7:51; Matthew 23:37). Grace is powerful and necessary, but it does not override free will.

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## 5. Conditional Salvation (Falling from Grace)

Believers can **fall away** from salvation if they turn from God.

- Salvation requires continued faith and obedience.
- Scriptures warn of falling away and the consequences of persistent sin.

This contrasts with Calvinism’s “once saved, always saved” doctrine. Arminianism emphasizes the believer’s responsibility to **abide in Christ**.

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### Key Differences Between Calvinism and Arminianism

Topic	Calvinism	Arminianism
Election	Unconditional	Based on foreknowledge
Atonement	Limited to elect	Available to all
Grace	Irresistible	Resistible
Free Will	Limited	Enabled by grace
Salvation	Cannot be lost	Can be lost

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### Conclusion

Arminianism presents a view where:

- God **initiates salvation** and desires all to be saved.
- Humanity is sinful but enabled by grace to respond.
- Individuals have the freedom to **accept or reject** God.
- Salvation is conditional upon **faith and continued obedience**.

Ultimately, this framework emphasizes both **God’s sovereignty** and **human responsibility**, teaching that salvation is a cooperative relationship between divine grace and human response.