

## *Arminian Christians*

(Based Upon The Arminian Articles A.D. 1610)

**Human Freedom:** Humans have a sinful nature by which they gravitate to sin (human depravity), but they also have freedom to believe God in regard to the gospel — when the Spirit draws them, their will is not completely enslaved to their sinful nature. With the help of the Spirit, each person possesses the ability to choose God’s way or to reject it (free will). The sinner can either respond to the Spirit, believe the gospel, and be regenerated or they can resist the Spirit, reject the gospel, and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit’s assistance and initiation to believe in Jesus, but with this help, the sinner has the ability to turn to God, respond, and believe the gospel.

**Those Who Will Be Saved:** God’s choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world was based on His foreseeing (God’s Foreknowledge) that they would respond to the pull of the Holy Spirit and believe. Because God can see all of the future, He selected only those whom he knew would freely believe the Gospel. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned on a person’s faith (conditional election). The faith which God foresaw and upon which he based his choice (of who would be saved) was created by the initiating and convicting power of the Holy Spirit, but resulted from a human’s freewill saying “yes” to the Spirit’s working. God, being able to transcend time as humans know it, chose those whom he saw in history, of their own free will, choose Christ. In this sense God’s election is conditional.

**The Effect of Christ’s Sacrifice:** Christ’s redeeming work made it possible for everyone or anyone to be saved (Unlimited atonement). Although Christ died for all people and for every person, only those who believe in him are saved. Christ’s redemption becomes effective only if a person hears the gospel, responds to the Holy Spirit’s initiation and truly believes.

**God’s Free Gift – Resistible:** The Spirit is actively at work when people hear the Gospel invitation; but inasmuch as a human must be willing to believe, he or she can successfully resist the Spirit’s call and become hardened in unbelief. The Spirit will convict and draw people, but will not regenerate the sinner until he or she believes; faith precedes and makes possible the new birth. God wants everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of Him, yet God’s grace can be, and is, resisted and thwarted by men — this is why the world is as it is — people reject God.

**Perseverance in Salvation:** Though it is rare, there are those who believe and are truly saved but then turn and lose their salvation through an ongoing, willful, and persistent repudiation of Christ as Savior and Lord.

Not all Armenians agree on this point; some hold that believers are eternally secure in Christ — that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost.

**For Further Support —** George L. Bryson, *The Five Points of Calvinism*; Robert Shank, *Life in the Son and Elect in the Son*; I. Howard Marshall, *Kept By The Power of God*; and Robert Picirilli, *Calvinism, Arminianism, and The Theology of Salvation*.

## *Calvinistic Christians*

(Based Upon The Council of Dort AD 1619)

**Human Freedom:** Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the Gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is sinful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore he will not— indeed he cannot— choose good over evil

in the spiritual realm (human depravity). Consequently it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ— it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and then gives him the faith by which he believes and is saved. God alone determines who He will regenerate and cause to believe and who He will not.

**Those Who Will Be Saved:** God's choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in his own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom he previously selected. Faith is the result, not the cause, of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned on any thing foreseen in man. God's election of the chosen is unconditional and a mystery (Unconditional election).

**The Effect of Christ's Sacrifice:** Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them alone (Limited atonement). In addition to putting away the sins of his people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith, which God gives to those whom he chose from before the foundation of the world.

**God's Free Gift—Irresistible:** The Holy Spirit extends, but only to the elect (the chosen), a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; though it may take some time, it always results in conversion. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those whom God has chosen to be saved. God's will to save the chosen is never thwarted or ultimately resisted.

**Perseverance in Salvation:** All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end. Only at the end will we fully know those who really were saved (elected) and those who we erroneously thought they were saved (elected) but were not true Christians.

**For Further Support — R.C. Sproul, *Grace Unknown*; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*; Gordon Clark, *Biblical Predestination*, A.W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*; and Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*.**