

**Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics**

Protestant Reformation Doctrines of Salvation

The Heights Church February 3, 2019

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – the essential differences (Review)

Subject	Calvinists	Arminians
Depravity/ Free Will	Free Will was lost in the Fall.	Everyone (but Jesus) was corrupted by the Fall but Free Will was not lost in the Fall.
Election	God elected a remnant of people based on his love/grace/mercy and not based upon any merit of each individual elect person.	God elected those he omnisciently foresaw would come to faith by their own Free Will .
Atonement	Christ's atonement was only for the elect.	Christ's atonement was SUFFICIENT for everyone but effective only for those who by their Free Will choose to believe.
Grace	The Holy Spirit changes the heart of the elect so that it is impossible for them to not believe in Christ.	The Holy Spirit tries to woo every person to believe in Christ but leaves the final choice up to each person's Free Will .
Eternal Security	The elect cannot lose their salvation.	A true believer can lose their salvation because of Free Will .

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Preservation of the Saints

- The “5th point of Calvinism” concerns eternal security. The Remonstrance at Dort said that a “true believer” could lose their salvation by exercising their “Free Will” and then possibly later regain it by exercising their “Free Will.” This cycle could theoretically be repeated many times in a believer’s life.
- The Reformed position is that the elect cannot lose their salvation because ultimately God will act to “Preserve” their salvation by enabling them to “Persevere” in their faith until the end. This does not mean they will obtain perfect sanctification, or that there may not be times of doubt or even backsliding, but ultimately every elect person will be glorified.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Preservation of the Saints

- We have already seen that there is a very strong case for the Reformed position through our study of the other four points. For example:

All that the Father gives me (*the elect*) will come to me, (*irresistible grace/call*) and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.** For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:37 – 40)

- Every one of the elect comes to faith that ultimately results in their glorification (persevering, preserving faith to the end) in “heaven.”

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Preservation of the Saints

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will **raise him up on the last day.** (John 6:44)

but you do not believe because you are not part of **my** flock. **My** sheep (*the elect*) hear **my** voice, and **I** know them, and they follow **me**. **I** give them eternal life, and **they will never perish**, and **no one will snatch them out of my hand**. **My Father**, who has given them to **me**, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the **Father's** hand. (John 10:26 – 29)

- It is all about what the Father has done through election, what Jesus has done through the atonement of the elect and what the Holy Spirit has done through *regeneration* not what the elect somehow accomplish on their own.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Preservation of the Saints

- Paul makes it clear in his opening prayers to the Corinthians and Philippians that the elect can be confident they will be sustained to the end and not left with the uncertainty of the Roman Catholic or Arminian.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the **grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus**, that **in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge--** even as **the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you--** so that **you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.** (1 Corinthians 1:4 – 9)

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Preservation of the Saints

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that **he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.**

(Philippians 1:3 - 6)

- These promises are a great incentive to godly living. There is a fight for faith to be won BUT by God's sovereignty the elect will win it.
- However, all professions of faith are not equal. Those who make professions of faith and then fall away do not show that "true" faith can be lost BUT that there are false professions of faith.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Preservation of the Saints

"Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and **does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart.** This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, **this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.** As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but **the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.** As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." (Matthew 13:18 – 23)

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Preservation of the Saints

- True believers can have times of doubt in the promises and goodness of God.

...But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us. And Jesus said to him, "If you can"! All things are possible for one who believes. Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "**I believe; help my unbelief!**" (Mark 9:22 – 24)

- Is there an unpardonable sin? (Matthew 12:22 – 32; Mark 3:22 - 30; Luke 11:14 – 23)
- Many suggestions have been including murder and adultery. However, David was guilty of both and yet clearly saved.
- A modern Christian who fears they have committed this sin probably hasn't because someone who did commit such a sin would be so hardened as to not care.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Preservation of the Saints

- Because of the clear teaching that every elect person is enabled by God to persevere in “true” faith to the end, it is certain that the elect could not commit this sin.
- However, Scripture does teach that a person can become so hardened that they cannot be saved:

15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; **16** that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. **17** For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. (Hebrews 12)