

Soteriology: Seeking Common Ground

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Arminianism

The Soteriological Spectrum

Calvinism

1. Mankind is not so depraved that he cannot seek God.
2. Because of God's foreknowledge, He can see who will exercise faith. These are the ones He has chosen.
3. Christ died for everyone, whether or not they believe.
4. People can resist the offer of the gospel. No one is compelled to believe.
5. Even though a person believes in Christ and is saved, that person may fail to persevere (if that happens, they may lose their salvation)
6. There is no assurance of salvation, since one must persevere in faith to the end of their life.
7. Corporate election is a variation of Arminianism.

1. Mankind is totally depraved and unable to seek God. God must initiate *and* draw them to Himself.
2. God has elected certain individuals to salvation apart from any foreseen faith on their part.
3. Christ only died for the elect, not for everyone.
4. God gives irresistible grace to the elect. At some point, His elect will believe the gospel and be saved.
5. The elect will persevere in a life of faith & godliness (if not, this shows they are not really one of the elect).
6. There is no assurance of salvation, since one cannot know if they are one of the elect until they have persevered to the end of their life.

What The Bible is Clear About and What We Can and Should Be Able to Agree On

1. All men & women are sinners before God, born with a sin nature, and unable to save themselves (Rom 3:23).
2. God has provided a way of salvation for lost sinners based on the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross for all people of all time (Eph 1:7).
3. God uses the message of the gospel to bring people to faith in Christ (Eph 1:13; 2 Thess 2:14).
4. The gospel reveals that salvation is based on the unmerited grace of God, and this salvation can only be received as a gift by faith alone in Christ alone (Eph 2:8-9).
5. God the Father and the Holy Spirit are involved in illuminating the mind of the sinner to understand and respond to the gospel (Jn 6:44; Acts 16:14).
6. Repentance is not a separate act from faith but a necessary part of faith in which the guilty sinner acknowledges God's existence, his own sinfulness, and his need of forgiveness based on Christ's atoning work on the cross (Lk 24:47; Acts 11:15-18; 17:30; 26:20; 2 Pet 3:9).
7. Once a person believes, God declares him righteous (justified), forgives all his sin forever, and gives him eternal life (Rom 5:1; Acts 10:43).
8. The person who is justified by God is eternally secure in Christ and can never lose his salvation (1 Cor 1:30-31; Jn 10:27-29).
9. However divine election and predestination take place, those who trust Christ as their Savior are the elect (chosen ones) of God (2 Thess 2:13).
10. From the moment of faith in Christ, a redeemed sinner can have the full assurance of his salvation based on the promise of God's Word (1 Jn 2:25; 5:11-13).