

Q. What is the essence of Arminianism?

A. The fundamental features of Arminianism are twofold: universalism and natural ability in man.

Regarding universalism, this is evidenced in the following:

- The claim that God's love is universal; God loves everybody.
- The claim that the atonement is universal; Christ died for everybody.
- The claim that grace is universal: this has to be broken down into two sections. Historic, continental Arminians, who followed Jacob Arminius, believed in a single grace that was sufficient for everyone but this grace could be resisted by men. Evangelical Arminians (followers of John Wesley) believe in two types of grace; prevenient grace that is given to all and may be resisted which enables sinful men to believe the Gospel (who could not otherwise do so); plus saving grace which operates when a man chooses to submit to prevenient grace.
- The claim that the call of God is universal; the Gospel message goes out equally powerfully to all men; instead of effectually to some.

Regarding man's ability: again this is twofold.

Continental Arminians are more Pelagian believing that natural man is not so fallen that he cannot do good works or believe in the Gospel. Men are not guilty for the sin of Adam (original sin) and are only sick with sin and not dead in sins. [Charles Finney held a similar Pelagian view of man.] Men can believe the Gospel in their own strength; free will reigns.

Evangelical Arminians (Wesleyans) have a more Biblical view of the fall and the depravity and inability of all men. This is why they require a novel doctrine of prevenient grace. This unbiblical grace gives all men the ability and opportunity to believe the Gospel if they so choose. Free will reigns again.

The combination of the ability of man to choose the Gospel along with the sufficiency of grace for all men and the value of the atonement for all men means that man initiates salvation and co-operates with God in it. This denies many Biblical doctrines; all the doctrines of Grace and God's sovereignty. This is a synergistic system (man and God working together in salvation). However, the Bible teaches a monergistic system; God is sovereign in salvation; salvation is of the Lord. Thus men are dead in sins and can do no good work at all. God chooses some from mankind to be saved by his good pleasure in eternity and not by any reference to the future works of these people. God must draw people to Christ and must reveal Christ to the elect. God then gives the Spirit to these elect, via the Gospel message, and they are empowered to repent and believe.

The Scriptures required to back all this up would occupy several pages and we have referred to these in many other works. We will just give a small sample here:

Man's problem: complete inability due to sin

As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.' **Rm 3:10-11**

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins. **Eph 2:1**

The power of salvation is God's and not man's

The salvation of the righteous *is* from the LORD; *He is* their strength in the time of trouble. **Ps 37:39**

Salvation *is* of the LORD. **Jon 2:9**

The choosing (election) of some and the reprobation of others.

The LORD has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom. Everyone proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD. **Prov 16:4-5**

'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.' So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. **Rm 9:15-16**

Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honour and another for dishonour? *What* if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, *even* us whom He called. **Rm 9:21-24**

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. **Eph 1:4-5**

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. **2 Thess 2:13**

Therefore God loves some and hates others

As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.' **Rm 9:13**

The wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Upon the wicked He will rain coals; fire and brimstone and a burning wind *shall be* the portion of their cup. **Ps 11:5-6**

Jesus only saves his people

You shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins. **Matt 1:21**

The church of God which He purchased with His own blood. **Acts 20:28**

God gives faith and grace to the elect

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. **Jn 1:12-13**

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins ... But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ ... For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship. **Eph 2:1-10**

God draws his chosen people to Christ

No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*. **Lk 10:22**

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out. ... No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. Jn 6:37, 44

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