

Religions of the World

Hinduism



Hinduism

- The world's oldest religion: 4,000 years
- About one billion adherents, mostly in India
- Their scriptures are called the Vedas, Upanishads & Bhagavad Gita; Vedas are the ultimate authority
- There are many branches of Hinduism; most call God Brahman, the Universal Cause of All
- Brahman is a trinity of Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Preserver), and Shiva (Destroyer)
- Most Hindus are henotheistic, which means they worship one main God but accept the existence of others
- Avatars: saving forms or incarnations of Vishnu who descend to Earth, e.g. Rama and Krishna

Hinduism

- You can have what you want. But what do you want?
- The Path of Desire: 1) pleasure
2) success
- The Path of Renunciation: 3) duty
4) liberation from the finite

The deepest desire of human beings is to achieve infinite being, infinite knowledge, and infinite joy.

Hinduism

- The soul is called Atman, which is ultimately indistinct from Brahman. The ultimate goal of existence is to achieve moksha, or liberation from bodily life, and to become one with Brahman.
- How to achieve moksha? Four paths of yoga:
 - 1) Jnana – knowledge
 - 2) Bhakti – love
 - 3) Karma – work
 - 4) Raja – contemplation
- Karma means work but is also described as the moral law of cause and effect
- Dharma is a code of conduct for moral living
- Samsara is the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth

Buddhism



Buddhism

- Founded in Nepal by Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha or “Enlightened One”) around 560 B.C.
- About 470 million followers, mostly in East Asia
- The Four Noble Truths are:
 - 1) Life as we know it is suffering (dukkha).
 - 2) Suffering is caused by desire and attachment.
 - 3) Suffering ends when desire is eliminated.
 - 4) Liberation from all desire (nirvana) is achieved by following the eight-fold path
- The eight-fold path consists of:
 - 1) Right View
 - 2) Right Resolve
 - 3) Right Speech

Buddhism

4) Right Conduct

5) Right Livelihood

6) Right Effort

7) Right Mindfulness

8) Right Meditation

- Karma, Dharma, and Samsara
- Key virtues: wisdom, kindness, patience, generosity, compassion
- Moral precepts against: killing of any living thing, stealing, illicit sex, lying, substance abuse
- Scriptures: Theravada Tipitaka, Mahayana Sutras, Tibetan Book of the Dead
- Buddhism has no god; prayer consists of meditation

Islam



Muhammad and Islam

570-632 – Muhammad grew up an orphan, raised by uncle, married wealthy widow Kadijah.

612 – revelation in a cave near Mecca, direct dictation of Koran, gathered followers but incurred local merchants' wrath.

Friday, July 16, 622 – flight to Medina (*hejira*): Year 1 in the Islamic lunar calendar

In Medina, many followed him but Jews refused to recognize him as a prophet in line with theirs.

624 – military conquest of Mecca, slaughter of Jews in Medina

A Very Simple Religion

Five Pillars of Islam:

Creed – There is no God but Allah, and his prophet is Muhammad

Prayer – 5 times a day facing Mecca (“allahu akbar”)

Almsgiving – for poor, orphans, beggars, slaves

Ramadan fast – no food or drink, sunup to sunset

(April 23 to May 23 this year)

Pilgrimage to Mecca – at least once in lifetime

The Spread of Islam

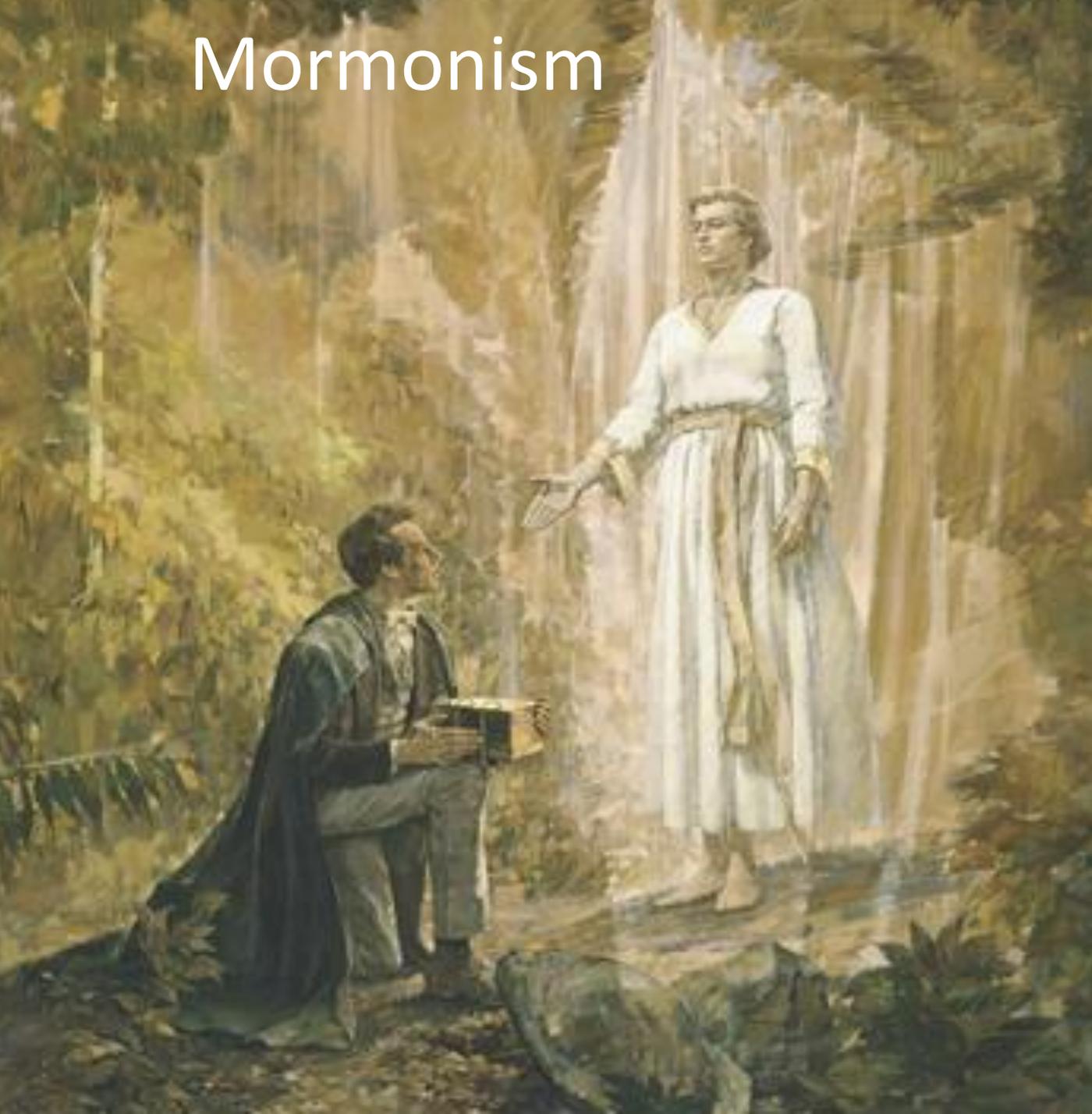
Jihad: holy war vs. infidels – Islam spread with the sword through Arabia, Jerusalem (638), Egypt, Syria, Persia, North Africa, Spain (711).

Contrary to popular belief, most Jews & Christians weren't converted at sword-point; they were taxed heavily and denied civil rights.

Also, the Crusades were wars of self-defense. The Muslims took our land away first, then the Fatimids and Seljuk Turks began to attack Christian pilgrims in the 11th century. We simply tried to take back what had been ours.

Islam today: who are the true Muslims?

Mormonism



Mormonism

- Joseph Smith, Jr. was born in Vermont on Dec. 23, 1805. At 14, he received a vision from Jesus that told him not to join any of the existing Christian churches.
- Three years later, Smith claimed that an angel named Moroni appeared to him. Moroni revealed that Smith had been selected to translate the Book of Mormon, a sacred text that was written around the 4th century and named after Moroni's father, Mormon.
- According to Moroni, this spiritual book contained information about the ancient people who inhabited the Americas. He revealed that the book was inscribed on golden plates near Palmyra, New York, which was close to where Smith lived at the time.
- After several unsuccessful attempts, Smith said he dug up the gold plates on September 22, 1827. The Book of Mormon was translated and published in 1830.

- Smith said that John the Baptist appeared to him while he was translating the Book of Mormon and instructed him to restore the church by preaching the true gospel.
- After the Book of Mormon was published, Mormonism began to spread and grow rapidly. Smith set up Mormon communities in Missouri, Ohio, and Illinois.
- Smith was criticized by many for teaching his new ideas. He and his followers battled Missouri locals in 1838. In 1844, Smith and his brother Hyrum were jailed for destroying a newspaper in IL that criticized their power and polygamy.
- On June 27, 1844, both Smith and his brother were murdered in jail by an anti-Mormon mob in Carthage, IL.
- After Smith died, the church divided. Many Mormons followed Brigham Young, who became Smith's successor.
- Young led a large group of persecuted Mormons from Illinois to search for religious freedom. In 1847, Young and pioneers reached Utah's Salt Lake Valley.

Mormon Beliefs

- Mormons consider themselves Christians, but many Christians don't recognize Mormonism as an official denomination.
- Mormons believe in the crucifixion, resurrection and divinity of Jesus Christ. Followers claim that God sent more prophets after Jesus's death. They say that the original church has been restored in modern times.
- Mormons embrace four different texts: The Christian Bible, The Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and The Pearl of Great Price.
- According to the LDS church, the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve lived, is located in Jackson County, Missouri.
- There are three levels of heaven—celestial, terrestrial and telestial—in Mormonism. Only those in the celestial kingdom will live in God's presence.

Mormon Beliefs

- Repentant sinners go to telestial Heaven. Mediocre Mormons and good non-Mormons: terrestrial Heaven. Good Mormons: celestial Heaven. Only Satan, the demons, and a handful of the worst sinners go to Hell.
- Mormons don't recognize the Christian concept of the trinity (God existing in three persons). Instead, they believe the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three separate gods.
- Mormons follow a strict healthy lifestyle that doesn't allow them to consume alcohol, tobacco, coffee or tea.
- Family life, good deeds, respect for authority and missionary work are important values in Mormonism.
- Mormons practice clothing rituals that include wearing special undergarments that have religious significance. Known as the "temple garment," the attire is worn by adult members who make sacred promises to God.

- Mormons do two-year mission stints, and they practice baptism for the dead.



Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses

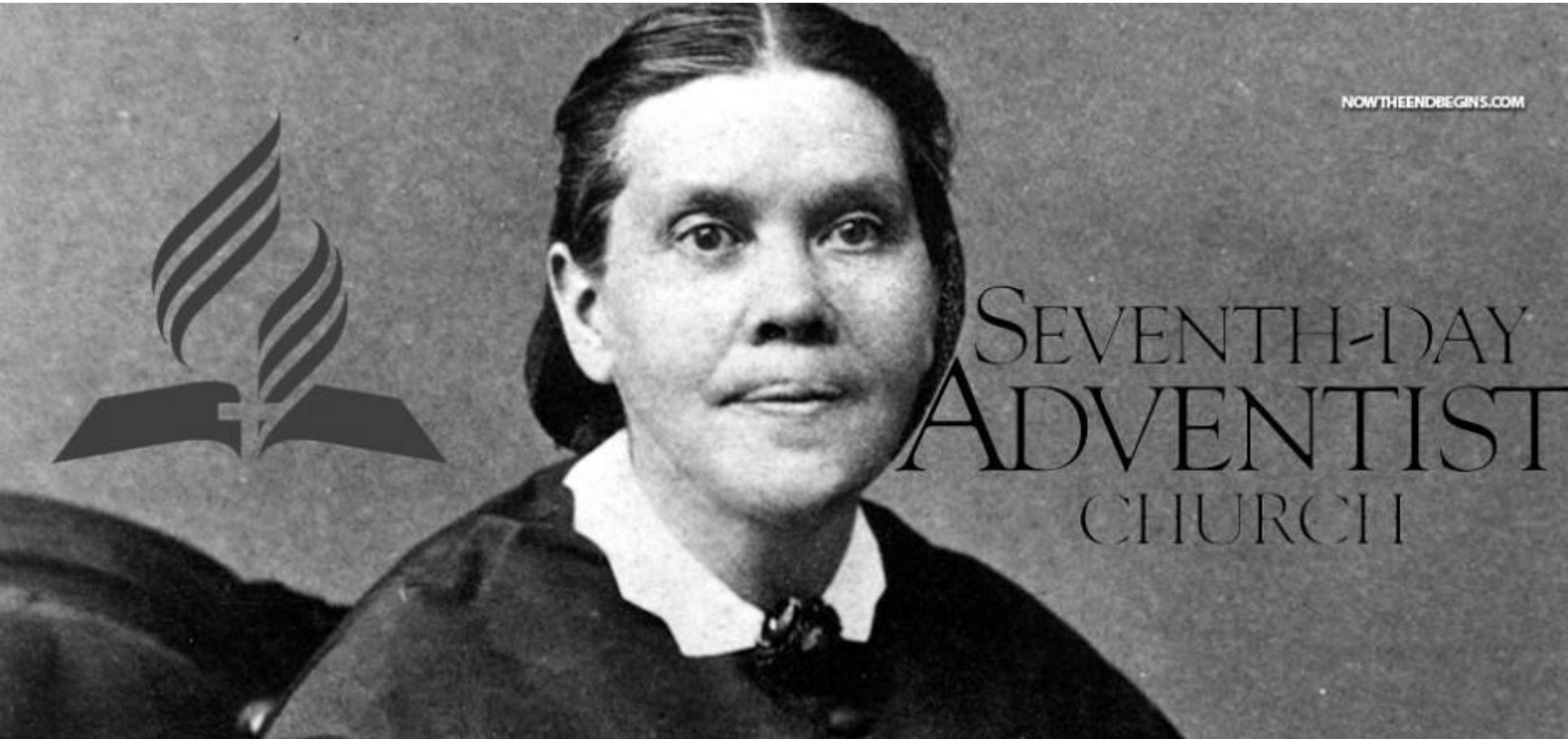
- Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) founded the Watch Tower in 1879 to teach his doctrines.
- These included: the nonexistence of hell and the annihilation of unsaved people, the nonexistence of the Trinity (he said only the Father, Jehovah, is God), the identification of Jesus with Michael the Archangel, the reduction of the Holy Spirit from a person to a force, the mortality (not immortality) of the soul, and the return of Jesus in 1914.
- When Jesus didn't return in 1914, Russell said that his return was invisible in 1914, but would be visible later.
- Joseph Rutherford succeeded Russell in 1916, naming the sect "Jehovah's Witnesses." Rutherford was strongly anti-Catholic.

Jehovah's Witnesses

- Rutherford said the prophets of old would return to Earth in 1925. They didn't.
- Nathan Knorr succeeded Rutherford in 1942, turning the Jehovah's Witnesses into a trained door-to-door preaching force. He also commissioned the New World (Mis)Translation of the Bible.
- Eschatology: at the soon-to-come end of time, which was supposed to happen in 1975 but didn't, 144,000 chosen Jehovah's Witnesses will go to Heaven without bodies, the non-chosen will live forever in a new Earth with resurrected bodies, and everyone else will be annihilated.

- Jehovah's Witnesses have no clergy, forbid blood transfusions, discourage advanced degrees, don't celebrate birthdays or holidays, recognize no government as legitimate, don't serve in the military, don't salute the flag, don't vote and don't recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Famous Jehovah's Witnesses include: Prince, Michael Jackson, Serena Williams, Michelle Rodriguez, and the Wayans brothers.

Seventh Day Adventists



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SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

Seventh Day Adventists

- It all began with William Miller (1782–1849), a Baptist who predicted the Second Coming (New Advent) would occur between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844.
- Disappointed Millerites Hiram Edson (1806-1882), Joseph Bates (1792-1872), and Ellen Gould White (1827-1915) formed the Seventh Day Adventist religion, named in 1860.
- Ellen Gould White is considered an infallible prophetess whose 50-plus books guide every aspect of Adventist faith and worship.
- Adventists are Christian. They accept the Trinity, Christ's divinity, the virgin birth, the atonement, a physical resurrection of the dead, and Christ's Second Coming.

Seventh Day Adventists

- They believe in Original Sin and use a valid form of Baptism.
- They worship on Saturdays, on which all work and sport is forbidden.

Seventh Day Adventist Doctrines

- (a) Catholic Church is the Whore of Babylon (Rev. 17).
 - (b) The pope is the Antichrist (1 John, 2 John).
 - (c) In the last days, Sunday worship will be “the mark of the beast.”
 - (d) There is a future millennium in which the devil will roam the earth while Christians are with Christ in heaven.
 - (e) The soul sleeps between death and resurrection.
 - (f) On the last day, after a limited period of punishment in hell, the wicked will be annihilated and cease to exist rather than be eternally damned.
- Seventh Day Adventism is thoroughly anti-Catholic.
 - Famous Seventh Day Adventists:
Ben Carson, Magic Johnson, Paul Harvey, Desmond Doss.

Protestants and Evangelicals

Denomination	Biblical Inerrancy	Same-Sex Marriage	Sacraments	Calvinist vs Arminian
<i>Baptist</i>	Accepts	Illegitimate	Adult baptism, communion	Varies, usually Calvinist.
<i>Episcopal</i>	Rejects	Legitimate	Confirmation, confession, marriage, ordination, anointing ^[25] , communion, child baptism	Neither, but traditionally closer to Arminian
<i>Lutheran</i>	Rejects	Legitimate	Communion, baptism (often infant)	Neither, but traditionally closer to Arminian
<i>Presbyterian</i>	Varies (does not directly affirm)	Varies	Communion, baptism (usually adult)	Calvinist
<i>Church of Christ</i>	Rejects	Legitimate	Communion, baptism (adult or infant)	Neither
<i>Methodist</i>	Varies, most reject	Denies ordination, but accepts among laity	Communion, baptism (adult)	Usually closer to Arminian

Calvinism vs. Arminianism

God's Sovereignty

The sovereignty of God is the belief that God is in complete control over everything that happens in the universe. His rule is supreme, and his will is the final cause of all things.

Calvinism: In Calvinist thinking, God's sovereignty is unconditional, unlimited, and absolute. All things are predetermined by the good pleasure of God's will. God foreknew because of his own planning.

Arminianism: To the Arminian, God is sovereign, but has limited his control in correspondence with man's freedom and response. God's decrees are associated with his foreknowledge of man's response.

Man's Depravity

Calvinist believe in the total depravity of man while Arminians hold to an idea dubbed "partial depravity."

Calvinism: Because of the Fall, man is totally depraved and dead in his [sin](#). Man is unable to save himself and, therefore, God must initiate salvation.

Arminianism: Because of the Fall, man has inherited a corrupted, depraved nature. Through "prevenient grace," God removed the [guilt](#) of [Adam](#)'s sin. Prevenient grace is defined as the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit, given to all, enabling a person to respond to God's call to salvation.

Election

Election refers to the concept of how people are chosen for salvation. Calvinists believe election is unconditional, while Arminians believe election is conditional.

Calvinism: Before the foundation of the world, God unconditionally chose (or "elected") some to be saved. Election has nothing to do with man's future response. The elect are chosen by God.

Arminianism: Election is based on God's foreknowledge of those who would believe in him through faith. In other words, God elected those who would choose him of their own free will. Conditional election is based on man's response to God's offer of salvation.

Christ's Atonement

Atonement is the most controversial aspect of the Calvinism vs. Arminianism debate. It refers to Christ's sacrifice for sinners. To the Calvinist, Christ's atonement is limited to the elect. In Arminian thinking, atonement is unlimited. Jesus died for all people.

Calvinism: [Jesus Christ](#) died to save only those who were given to him (elected) by the Father in eternity past. Since Christ did not die for everyone, but only for the elect, his atonement is wholly successful.

Arminianism: Christ died for everyone. The Savior's atoning death provided the means of salvation for the entire human race. Christ's atonement, however, is effective only for those who believe.

Grace

God's grace has to do with his call to salvation. Calvinism says God's grace is irresistible, while Arminianism argues that it can be resisted.

Calvinism: While God extends his common grace to all humankind, it is not sufficient to save anyone. Only God's irresistible grace can draw the elect to salvation and make a person willing to respond. This grace cannot be obstructed or resisted.

Arminianism: Through the preparatory (prevenient) grace given to all by the [Holy Spirit](#), man is able to cooperate with God and respond in faith to salvation. Through prevenient grace, God removed the effects of Adam's sin. Because of "free will" men are also able to resist God's grace.

Man's Will

The free will of man versus God's sovereign will is linked to many points in the Calvinism vs. Arminianism debate.

Calvinism: All men are totally depraved, and this depravity extends to the entire person, including the will. Except for God's irresistible grace, men are entirely incapable of responding to God on their own.

Arminianism: Because prevenient grace is given to all men by the Holy Spirit, and this grace extends to the entire person, all people have free will.

Perseverance

Perseverance of the saints is tied to the "once saved, always saved" debate and the question of [eternal security](#). The Calvinist says the elect will persevere in faith and will not permanently deny Christ or turn away from Him.

The Arminian may insist that a person can fall away and lose his or her salvation. However, some Arminians embrace eternal security.

Calvinism: Believers will persevere in salvation because God will see to it that none will be lost. Believers are secure in the faith because God will finish the work he began.

Arminianism: By the exercise of free will, believers can turn away or fall away from grace and lose their salvation.

Bible Translations

Catholic Versions of the Bible

Douay-Rheims

New American Bible Revised Edition*

Revised Standard Version

New Revised Standard Version

Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*

Catholic Study Bible New American

The New Catholic Answer Bible*

New Jerusalem Bible

Contemporary English Bible

Good News Bible

Protestant Versions of the Bible

King James Bible

New King James Bible

New International Version

New International Reader's Version

New American Standard Bible

Christian Standard Bible

English Standard Version

New Living Translation

Holman Christian Standard Bible

God's Word Translation

* recommended