

How do we believe?

The Theology of coming to Faith in the face of Original Sin

Views on Total Depravity / Original Sin

Not Dead	<p>Denies that the whole man was "changed for the worse" through the offense of Adam's sin.</p> <p>Affirms that we can assent to the preaching of the gospel through our natural powers without the necessity of grace</p>	Pelagianism	Rejected at Council of Ephesus (431)
Mostly Dead	<p>Affirms that man was injured through the sin of Adam and must be assisted by grace so that we may assent to the gospel.</p> <p>Affirms that the beginning and the very desire for faith (the initiative) is made possible without a gift of grace.</p>	Semi-Pelagianism	Rejected at Council of Orange (529)
All Dead	<p>Affirms, because of the Fall and its effects, we can neither think, will, nor do anything that is truly good, such as having faith eminently is.</p> <p>Affirms that God must take the initiative through prevenient, assisting, and co-operative grace so that we may assent to the preaching of the gospel.</p>	Augustinian/ Calvinism Semi-Augustinian/ Arminianism Roman Catholics	



A Classic Blunder



We affirm Original Sin

(4) We believe that Adam was an historical man, created in God's image from the dust of the ground. Through the sin of Adam, all creation was subjected to corruption, and the human race fell and was alienated from God by spiritual death. We believe that all people are sinners and enemies of God in need of a Savior, and that **there is nothing anyone can do to remedy their lost condition apart from God's grace** (Gen. 1-3; Isa. 59:2; Rom. 3:10, 23; 5:6-14; 8:19-22; 1 Cor. 15:21-22).

How are we saved?

For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.

- Ephesians 2:8-9



Let me explain



For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast. (Eph 2:8-9)

- Salvation is of God who graciously saves us thru Christ's death
- God provides His Son into the world to save it (John 3:16-17; 1 John 4:9)
- Reconciled through His death (Rom 5:10; Col 1:22)
- Redeemed through His death (Eph 1:7; Gal 3:13; 1 Peter 1:18-19)
- Justified by His grace thru Redemption (Rom 3:24)
- Forgiven thru Redemption (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14)
- Nailed the debt to the cross (Col 2:13-14)



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- God initiates the process of salvation through grace
 - Sends the Spirit to work in us so we can respond
- Grace is the principle cause of salvation
 - Overcomes the inability to believe & enables us to respond in faith
 - The Spirit draws us so we can come (John 6:44; 12:32)
 - The Spirit convicts us of our need for Christ (John 16:8-11)
 - The Spirit opens us to respond (Acts 16:14; Luke 24:45)



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- God promises to save thru Christ on the basis of faith
 - Faith is possible because God initiates the relationship
- Faith is the instrumental cause of salvation
 - The gospel is the power of salvation to all who believe (Rom 1:16)
 - Whoever believes shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)
 - Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Rom 10:13)
 - We are justified by faith (Rom 5:1; Gal 2:16)
 - We are righteousness through faith in Christ (Rom 3:22; Phil 3:9)

The Theology of Overcoming Total Depravity

We all acknowledge we are saved by grace thru faith...

We (hopefully) agree that some preceding act of God (grace) is required to overcome our inability so we can believe (faith)

But there is a lot of theological debate in how grace overcomes our inability!



The Theology of Overcoming Total Depravity

Different views exist in part because we have different understandings of what these words mean:

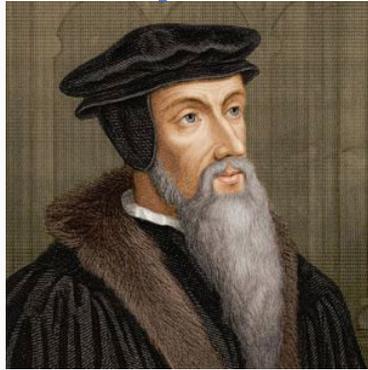
- Grace
- Faith
- Election
- Decree
- Sovereignty



That word, I do not think it means what you think it means.

How does the GRACE of God that overcomes Original Sin work?

Is the initial grace necessary to overcome the inability to respond in faith effectual/irresistible?



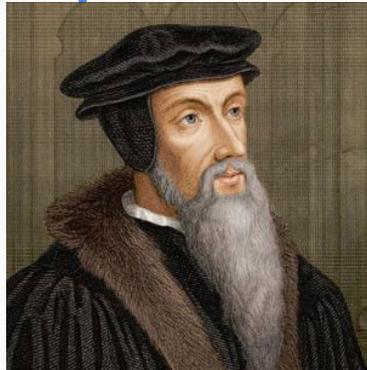
For the whole controversy reduces itself to the solution of this question, "is the grace of God a certain irresistible force?"

Jacob Arminius (Theological Sentiments)

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Yes



[We reject those] who teach that God in regenerating people does not bring to bear that power of his omnipotence whereby **God may powerfully and unfailingly bend the human will to faith and conversion**, but ... [assert] that it remains in their own power whether or not to be reborn.

Synod of Dort (1618-19)

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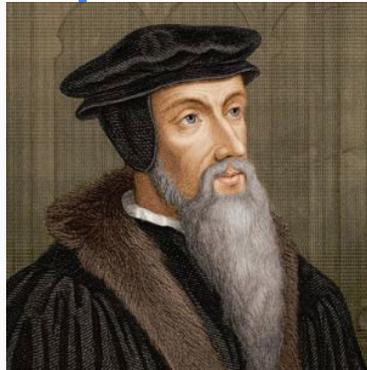
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this grace of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of a good, (such as having faith eminently is) ... But, as respects the mode of the operation of **this grace, it is not irresistible**

Five Articles of the Remonstrance (1610)

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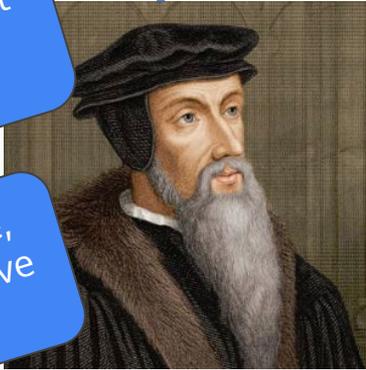
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If grace is irresistible, why does God grant it to some & not others?

If grace is resistible, why do some believe & not others?



If grace is irresistible, how are we to understand faith?

If grace is resistible, isn't faith a work?



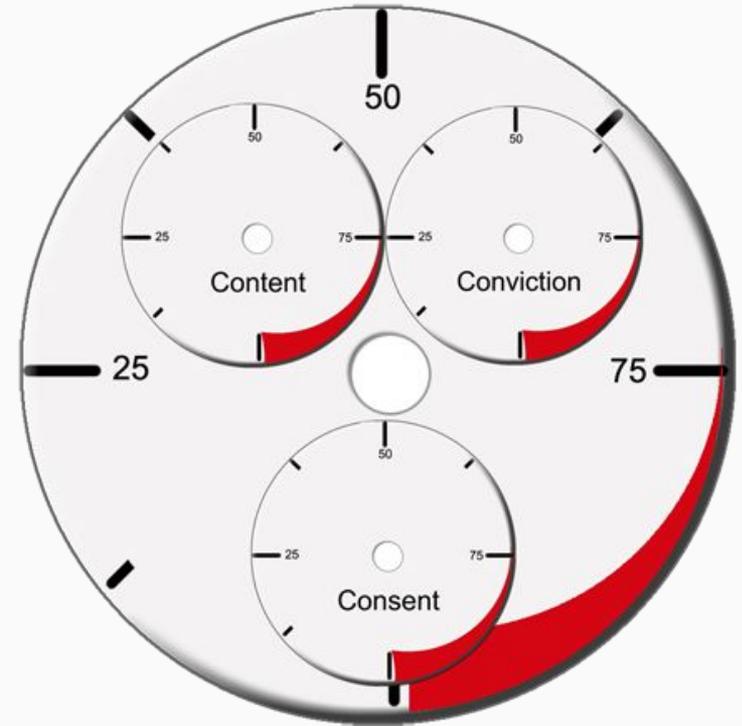
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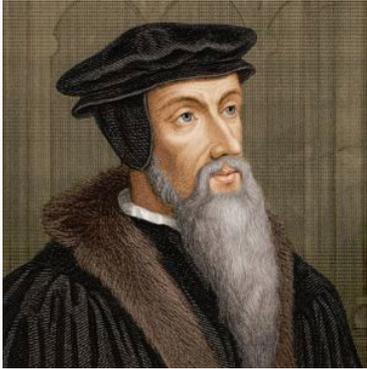


Traditionally Faith has 3 parts

- **Content**
 - The information or propositional truths of Christianity
- **Conviction**
 - The intellectual assent that the content is true based on the evidence
- **Consent**
 - The act of the will in which we trust the content and live according to it



Where is Faith in the Ordo Salutis (Order of Salvation)?



Dead & Condemned → (Irresistible) Grace →
Regeneration → Faith → Justification → Alive & Reconciled

faith is a gift of God ... breathed and infused into them. ... God produces in them both the will to believe and the belief itself - Synod of Dort

effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace (WCF X.1)

Dead & Condemned → (Resistible) Grace →
Faith → Justification → **Regeneration** → Alive & Reconciled

Active participation in faith by the believer means it must be synergistic. Human response cannot be ruled out of faith. Justification and regeneration are monergistic. Each is an act of God, not man. Faith is a human act by divine enablement and therefore cannot be monergistic.

- Forlines



If Faith is an active choice to be accepted or rejected - is it a work?



Since grace can be resisted and faith precedes regeneration, Calvinists tend to view faith as a work in the Arminian system



faith is the assurance
of *things* hoped for,
the conviction of
things not seen

- Hebrews 11:1

But to the one who does not work, but
believes in Him who justifies the ungodly,
his faith is credited as righteousness

- Romans 4:5

Is asking: 'throw me the rope' a work?
Is deciding to hang on to the rope while another pulls you up a work?

We affirm Resistible Prevenient Grace

(5) We believe that Christ's death was sufficient to cover the sins of all people so that God's gracious offer of salvation can be made to the whole world. We believe that **salvation is by grace and through faith. We believe that it is the responsibility of each person to accept the gift of salvation by responding to grace in faith, ...**

(6) ... Upon meeting the condition of faith, the Spirit regenerates

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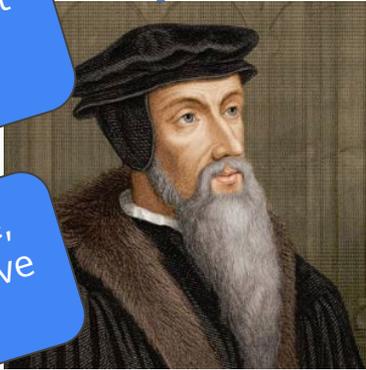
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Election: we are chosen...

For **he chose us** in Christ before the foundation of the world that we may be holy and unblemished in his sight in love. He did this by **predestining us** to adoption as his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure of his will— to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has freely bestowed on us in his dearly loved Son

- Ephesians 1:4-6



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Election Calmly Considered



The equivocation in the word "Election," makes it impossible to answer this question in any other manner, than by distinction.

Election on how to save:

- the decree to justify & save believers (& not unbelievers)
- the decision to make faith the means of obtaining salvation
- the elect (corporate) are those who are in Christ by faith

Election on who to save

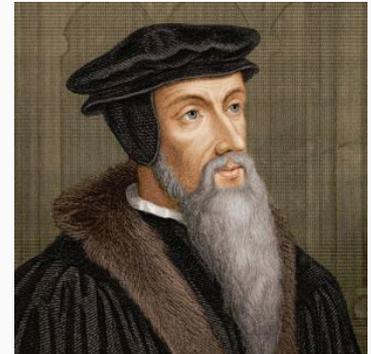
- the elect (specific individuals) are elect based on foreseen faith as only believers are predestined to salvation

Before the foundation of the world, ...God chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race ... (unconditional)

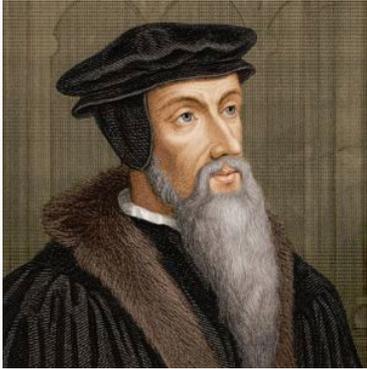
The fact that some receive from God the gift of faith within time, and that others do not, stems from his eternal decree ... (who gets effectual grace)

election took place, not on the basis of foreseen faith ... but rather for the purpose of faith

Based on Arminius' Nine Questions



The relationship between decrees and foreknowledge?



- 1) God ordains/decrees whatever comes to pass
- 2) God has not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future
- 3) By the decree of God ... some men are predestined to eternal life & others to eternal death
- 4) All whom God elected are effectually called

Decrees concerning salvation

- 1) To appoint Christ as Savior
- 2) To save those who have enduring faith
- 3) To administer the means necessary for faith
- 4) To save and damn individuals based on foreseen faith

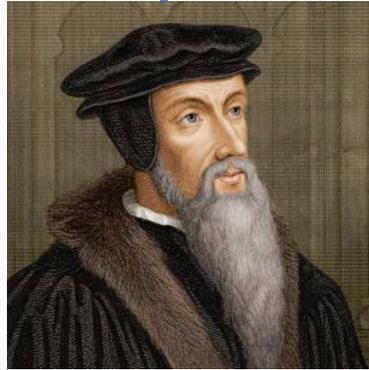


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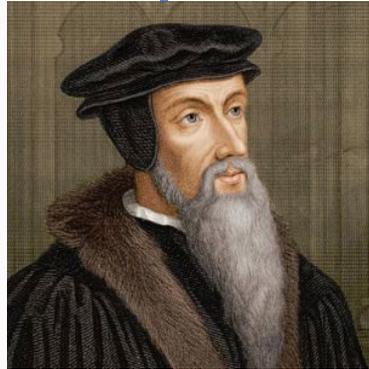
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Faith is the result of effectual grace given only to the elect.

The elect are those who are found in Christ. As individuals they are identified through foreseen faith.

Faith is enabled through grace but can be accepted or rejected by the individual.

Have fun storming the castle!

