

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

Protestant Reformation Doctrines of Salvation

The Heights Church November 3, 2019

Grace: Roman Catholic Catechism (REVIEW)

Source: <http://www.vatican.va/archive> Catechism of the Catholic Church

2000 Sanctifying grace is an habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that **perfects** the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love. *Habitual grace*, the permanent disposition to live and act in keeping with God's call, is distinguished from **actual graces** which refer to God's interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of the work of sanctification.

Grace: Protestant understanding:

- As Protestantism *evolved*, it divided over the understanding of grace.
- Protestant understanding of Grace can be divided into:
 - Martin Luther's understanding
 - Reformed understanding (John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*)
 - Subsequent challenges to the Reformed understanding
 - Articles of the Remonstrance (Arminianism)
 - Methodist understanding (John Wesley)
 - Common Grace

Grace: Protestant understanding: Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)

- The Protestant Reformation reacted against the concepts of grace and merit as they were understood in late medieval Catholic theology.
- Martin Luther's posting of his ninety-five theses on the church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517 was a direct consequence of the treasury doctrines of the medieval church and was precipitated by the arrival of Johann Tetzel, authorized by the Vatican to sell indulgences.

Grace: Protestant understanding: Martin Luther

- The effectiveness of indulgences was predicated on the doctrine of the treasury of grace proclaimed by Pope Clement VI (Papacy 1342 – 1352) The theory was that merit earned by acts of piety could augment the believer's store of sanctifying grace. Gifts to the Church were acts of piety. The Church, moreover, had a treasury full of grace above and beyond what was needed to get its faithful into heaven. The Church was willing to part with some of its surplus grace in exchange for earthly gold.

Grace: Protestant understanding: Martin Luther

- Luther taught that men were helpless and without a plea before God's justice, and their acts of piety were utterly inadequate before his infinite holiness. Were God *only* just, and not merciful, everyone would go to hell, because everyone, even the best of us, deserves to go to hell. Our inability to achieve salvation by our own effort suggests that even our best intention is somehow tainted by our sinful nature.

Grace: Protestant understanding: Martin Luther

- It is by faith *alone* (*sola fide*) and by grace *alone* (*sola gratia*) that men are saved. Good works are something the believers should undertake out of gratitude towards their Savior; but they are not necessary for salvation and cannot earn anyone salvation; there is no room for the notion of "merit" in Luther's doctrine of redemption. (There may, however, be degrees of reward for the redeemed in heaven.) Only the unearned, unmerited grace of God can save anyone. No one can have a claim of entitlement to God's grace, and it is only by his generosity that salvation is even possible.

Grace: Protestant understanding: Martin Luther

- Salvation becomes a declaration of spiritual bankruptcy, in which penitents acknowledge the inadequacy of their own resources and trust only in God to save them. Accepting Augustine's concern for legal justification as the base metaphor for salvation, the believers are not so much *made* righteous in as they are considered *covered* by Christ's righteousness. Acknowledging that they have no power to make themselves righteous, the penalty for their sins is discharged because Jesus has already paid for it with his blood. His righteousness is credited to those who believe in and thus belong to him.

Grace: Reformed understanding: John Calvin (1509 – 1564)

- Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was the foundation for the development of the what became known as Reformed Theology.
 - Belgic Confession 1561
 - Heidelberg Catechism 1563
 - Canons of Dort 1619
 - Westminster Catechisms 1647
 - Westminster Confession of Faith 1647
 - 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith

Grace: Five Articles of the Remonstrance

1. Salvation (and condemnation on the day of judgment) was conditioned by the graciously-enabled faith (or unbelief) of man;
2. The Atonement is qualitatively adequate for all men, "yet that no one actually enjoys [experiences] this forgiveness of sins, except the believer ..." and thus is limited to only those who trust in Christ;
3. "That man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will," and unaided by the Holy Spirit, no person is able to respond to God's will;
4. The (Christian) Grace "of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of any good," yet man may resist the Holy Spirit; and
5. Believers are able to resist sin through Grace, and Christ will keep them from falling; but whether they are beyond the possibility of ultimately forsaking God or "becoming devoid of grace ... must be more particularly determined from the Scriptures."

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – the essential differences

Subject	Reformed	<i>Modern</i> Arminians
Depravity/ Free Will	Free Will was lost in the Fall.	Every natural born person 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 for every person.
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.

The four “Alls” of Methodist Doctrine

- **All** need to be saved - the doctrine of original sin.
- **All** can be saved - Universal Salvation.
- **All** can know they are saved - Assurance.
- **All** can be saved completely - Christian perfection.

Grace: Methodist Understanding: John Wesley – 3 kinds of grace

1. *Prevenient grace* is innate from birth. "Prevenient" means "comes before."

Wesley did not believe that humanity was totally "depraved." He believed everyone is born with a modicum of divine grace—just enough to enable the individual to recognize and accept God's justifying grace.

2. *Justifying grace* today is what is referred to as "conversion" or being "born again." God's justifying grace brings "new life in Christ." Wesley believed that people have freedom of choice—to accept or to reject God's justifying grace.

Wesley defined his term *Justifying grace* as "The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is FREE IN ALL, and FREE FOR ALL."