

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

Protestant Reformation Doctrines of Salvation

The Heights Church February 24, 2019

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Does God Want Everyone to be Saved? (Review)

- At the heart of the Arminian view of Soteriology is a sincere belief that God wants every person to be saved. Usually Arminians object to the Reformed view, not primarily because of disagreements over Scriptural interpretation, but out of a heart-felt, philosophical moral objection that election is unfair and that God must be absolved of blame for not saving everyone. This is primarily why Biblical answers are rarely persuasive for Arminians.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Does God Want Everyone to be Saved? (Review)

- Arminians have solved their philosophical concerns by creating the concept of human autonomy through “Free Will,” God is not unfair because everyone has an equal chance to be saved and God is not responsible for those who choose not to believe or are not told about Jesus.
- Arminians have traditionally grounded their belief in God’s desire to have all people saved on 1 Timothy 2:1 – 4 and 2 Peter 3:9.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Does God Want Everyone to be Saved? (Review)

- If God literally wants each and every person to be saved **BUT** not every person is ultimately saved, then there are four possible explanations:
 1. God wants everyone to be saved but lacks the power to accomplish it.
 2. The Bible is self contradictory because it teaches God wants everyone to be saved and teaches that God does not want everyone to be saved.
 3. God wants everyone to be saved in one sense BUT God has a higher priority than saving everyone.
 4. It is incorrect to interpret 1 Timothy 2:1 – 4 and 2 Peter 3:9 as saying that God literally wants each and every person to be saved.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:1 – 4 and 2 Peter 3:9?

- The great surprise to the first century church was that the gentiles were partakers in the gift of salvation. Paul reveals this mystery in Ephesians 3:1 – 6.

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles-- assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:1 – 4

- The problem before us is if God truly wants everyone to be saved why isn't everyone saved?

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for **all people**, for kings and **all who are in high positions**, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires **all people to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:1 – 4)

- There is no mention of “Free Will” as the reason why everyone is not saved.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:1 – 4

- Paul answers why all people are not saved in 2 Timothy 2:24 -26.

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. **God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth**, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

- If Paul meant to say God's highest priority in 1 Timothy 2:1 -4 is to save everyone, then why did he write so many passages that support the Reformed view previous to 1 Timothy and returned to the Reformed view in 2 Timothy?

NOTE: It is generally agreed that the last three books Paul wrote were in this order: 1 Timothy, Titus, and finally 2 Timothy.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:1 – 4

- As previously argued, the best understanding of “all” in passages like these is: the elect men and women, from all nations, cultures, races, walks of lives, professions and the like. This was the great mystery of the Gospel in the first century church that salvation was not essentially exclusively for the Jews but for all “tribes and tongues.” 1 Timothy 2:5- 7 supports this view.

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for **all**, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the **Gentiles** in faith and truth.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:1 - 4

- It is further supported by 1 Timothy 2:1 - 2 that the Gospel is not only for the Gentiles but all walks of life since Paul mentions government officials. This is particularly significant when one considers Paul wrote 1 Timothy when Nero was the Emperor.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:1 - 4

- Titus was written between 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. It is further evidence that shows Paul had not abandoned what we call Reformed Soteriology.

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior; Titus 1:1 – 3)

- Titus 3:3 – 7 summarizes all five of the Doctrines of Grace.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:1 - 4

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:3 – 7)

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

- The same argument can be made for 2 Peter 3:9 that the “all” applies not to each and every person throughout history, but to the elect men and women, from all nations, cultures, races, walks of lives, professions and the like.
- The case in 2 Peter 3:9 is strong because:
 - 1 Peter is addressed to the “elect exiles,” not every exile.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (1 Peter 1:1)

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 2 Peter 3:9

- The elect exiles probably include Gentiles:

And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. (Acts 8:1)

In Acts 2:9 -10 a similar list of peoples from Asia heard Peter's sermon at Pentecost. Acts 2:11 begins with both Jews and proselytes (namely Gentile converts).

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 2 Peter 3:9

- It is very hard to believe Peter changed his mind about his soteriology.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an **inheritance that is imperishable**, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, **who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.** (1 Peter 1:3 – 5)

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 2 Peter 3:9

- 1 Peter also builds on the “elect exiles” concept in 1 Peter 2:9 by speaking in “Reformed” terminology about **election**, **glorifying God** and **calling** which supports the idea that not everyone in the “exile” group was elect.

But you are a **chosen race**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a **people for his own possession**, that **you may proclaim the excellencies of him** who **called** you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9 – 10)

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – The Reformed interpretation of 2 Peter 3:9

- Therefore, either Peter changed his theology between writing 1 Peter and 2 Peter or else the “all” in 2 Peter 3:9 refers to the elect and not each and every person.

This explains why

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

- The ones who will not perish are each and everyone of the elect.
- **BUT** it is also true, as explained previously, that God has a Moral Will and a Sovereign Will, and the Sovereign Will is not necessarily governed by the Moral will.

Summary of the Reformed vs Arminian Debate

1. Every true believer (the elect) was chosen by God before the foundation of the world by unconditional election.
2. The Fall rendered every person morally unable to believe in Jesus unless they are “drawn”/called/regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
3. Every one of the elect receives the irresistible call of God.
4. Every one of the elect is justified.
5. Every one of the elect will be glorified.
6. Every Arminian who is a true believer is of the elect and the beneficiary of items 1 – 5 above, not based upon their merit because by God’s mercy, grace and love they are/will be glorified despite holding to their soteriology of the superiority of human autonomy over God’s sovereignty.