Sovereignty-Responsibility chart

Chart and Glossary

Calvinism, Arminianism, Restoration, Catholicism

Point	Calvinism (TULIP)	Classical Arminianism	Typical Restoration / churches of Christ	Catholicism (Trent / CCC)
Human condition	Total inability; regenerating grace produces faith.	Total inability apart from prevenient grace that restores ability to respond freely.	No inherited sin, guilt or total inability. Born innocent (Adam's effect is a cursed natural realm including mortality). Free response possible.	Original sin inherited (guilt and wounded nature). Free will weakened but not destroyed. Cannot turn to God without prevenient grace.
Election / Predestination	Unconditional; based solely on God's will. Double predestination often held.	Conditional on foreseen faith and perseverance.	Conditional on response. Generally avoids personal eternal election language.	Predestination to glory includes each person's free response to grace (CCC 600). God predestines no one to hell (CCC 1037; Trent Canon 17). No double predestination.
Atonement	Limited/particular: effectively secures the elect.	Unlimited: died for all; effective for believers.	Unlimited.	Unlimited in intent and sufficiency: Christ died for all (1 Tim 2:4–6). Application depends on free cooperation.

Grace / Response	Irresistible/effectual for the elect.	Resistible prevenient grace enables genuine free choice.	Grace through the gospel offer; free response without a formal "prevenient grace" restoring ability.	Prevenient grace necessary and resistible. Free will, moved by God, freely cooperates or can refuse (Trent Canons 3–5). Synergistic.
Justification	Forensic imputation of Christ's righteousness by faith alone.	Justification by faith (enabled by grace).	Faith + repentance + baptism for remission of sins + faithful obedience.	Infused righteousness: remission of sins **and** sanctification/renewal of the inward person. Faith is the beginning/root; free cooperation and charity are required. Not by faith alone in the sense that nothing else cooperates (Trent Canon 9).
Perseverance	Certain for the elect.	Often conditional (possible to fall away).	Strongly conditional ("remain faithful").	Conditional. Justification can be lost by mortal sin; recovery possible through repentance/penance. No absolute certainty of final perseverance in this life without special revelation.
Baptism	Sign and seal of the covenant (for infants of believers in many Reformed traditions).	Varies; often important but not the precise point of justification.	Essential (faith, repentance, and immersion for remission of sins, Acts 2:38).	Sacramental regeneration: remits original and personal sin; necessary for salvation (ordinarily).

Brief Notes on Distinctives

- Calvinism emphasizes monergistic regeneration and the certainty of the elect's final salvation. Grace is effectual only for those unconditionally chosen.
- Classical Arminianism affirms that prevenient grace restores free response without guaranteeing it. Election is conditional on foreseen faith.
- Restoration / churches of Christ typically stress that humans retain (or have restored to them) the capacity to respond to the gospel, with faith, repentance and baptism as the point of remission of sins and perseverance as essential.
- Catholicism (as defined at Trent and in the Catechism) holds both the necessity of prevenient grace and the reality of free cooperation. Justification is an interior transformation, and grace can be lost through mortal sin.

Glossary of Key Terms

For clarity in the context of the Calvinist / Arminian / Catholicism / Restoration discussion.

1610 Remonstrance (also called the Five Articles of Remonstrance) A formal protest written in 1610 by Dutch followers of Jacobus Arminius and presented to the civil authorities of Holland. It outlined five points of disagreement with the strict Calvinist views then current in the Dutch Reformed Church: conditional election (based on foreseen faith), universal atonement, human inability apart from grace, resistible grace, and the possibility that believers might fall away. It was later rejected by the Synod of Dort (1618–1619). The name "Remonstrants" comes from this document.

Arminian A person or system following the teachings of Jacobus Arminius or the Five Articles of Remonstrance. Classical Arminianism affirms total inability apart from prevenient grace, conditional election, unlimited atonement, resistible grace, and (in many forms) the possibility of falling from grace. It is not the same as Pelagianism or semi-Pelagianism.

Arminius (Jacobus Arminius, 1560–1609) Dutch Reformed theologian and professor at Leiden. Trained in Calvinist theology, he came to question unconditional election and related doctrines. His followers produced the 1610 Remonstrance after his death. He did not reject the Reformation emphasis on grace; he rejected certain interpretations of how grace and election work.

Augustinian Referring to the theology of Augustine of Hippo (354–430), especially his later writings on original sin, human inability, the priority of grace, and predestination. Both Calvinists and many Catholics claim Augustinian roots, though they develop them differently. Calvinism is sometimes described as a more consistent or radical Augustinianism on the issue of election and grace.

Double predestination The view that God actively decrees both the election of some to salvation **and** the reprobation (damnation) of others. Most Calvinists hold some form of this (often distinguishing between active election and passive reprobation or "passing over"). Catholics, classical Arminians, and most non-Calvinists reject it, affirming that God predestines no one to hell and that reprobation is the result of human rejection of grace.

Forensic imputation A Protestant (especially Reformed and Lutheran) understanding of justification in which God **declares** or **credits** (imputes) the righteousness of Christ to the believer as a legal status. The righteousness is "alien" (outside the person) and is received by faith alone. It is contrasted with the Catholic view of infused righteousness. The term "forensic" emphasizes the courtroom/legal declaration rather than an internal transformation at the moment of justification.

Infused righteousness The Catholic understanding (formalized at the Council of Trent) that justification involves God pouring or infusing grace into the soul so that the person is actually made righteous (transformed inwardly). Justification is not merely a legal declaration but a real change that includes the beginning of sanctification. Protestants typically distinguish justification (forensic) from sanctification (transformative).

Monergistic regeneration The view (characteristic of Calvinism) that the new birth (regeneration) is the work of God alone. The Holy Spirit unilaterally gives new life to the spiritually dead person; faith is the result of regeneration, not its cause. Contrasted with synergism (human cooperation with grace). From Greek **mono** ("one/alone") + **ergon** ("work").

Pelagian Referring to the teachings of Pelagius (c. 354–418), who denied original sin in the strong Augustinian sense and held that humans retain the natural ability to choose the good and obey God without special enabling grace. Condemned by several early councils. Modern critics sometimes loosely label certain free-will views "Pelagian," though classical Arminians and Catholics explicitly reject Pelagianism.

Prevenient grace Grace that "comes before" (Latin **praevenire**) and enables a fallen person to respond to God. In classical and Wesleyan Arminianism, it is given to all people and restores the ability to freely accept or reject the gospel, without guaranteeing the response. Catholics also affirm prevenient grace as necessary for the first movement toward God (Council of Trent). Calvinists generally do not use the term in the Arminian sense; they speak of effectual/irresistible grace given only to the elect.

Soteriology The branch of theology that deals with salvation (**soteria** in Greek). It covers questions of grace, faith, election, atonement, justification, regeneration, perseverance, and the human response. The Calvinist–Arminian debate is primarily a debate within soteriology.

Suggested Additional Terms a Common Christian Might Be Unfamiliar With

These frequently appear in the same discussions and are often confusing or assumed:

- **Synergism / synergistic** — The view that salvation involves cooperation between God's grace and human free response (typical of Arminianism and Catholicism). Contrasted with monergism.
- **Effectual call / irresistible grace** — The Calvinist teaching that the Holy Spirit's internal call to the elect always succeeds in bringing them to faith.
- **Limited atonement (particular redemption)** — The Calvinist view that Christ's death was intended to actually secure the salvation of the elect only (though sufficient for all).
- **Unconditional election** — The Calvinist view that God chooses individuals for salvation based solely on His will, not on any foreseen faith or merit.

- **Total depravity / total inability** — The teaching that sin affects every part of human nature so thoroughly that, apart from grace, no one can or will turn to God. (Arminians and Calvinists often agree on the diagnosis but differ on the remedy.)
- **Perseverance of the saints** — The Calvinist doctrine that those truly regenerated will inevitably continue in faith to the end (sometimes summarized as "once saved, always saved," though the full doctrine is more nuanced).
- **Semi-Pelagian** — A middle position (condemned at the Council of Orange, 529) that fallen humans can take the first step toward God by their own free will, after which grace assists them. Distinct from both full Pelagianism and classical Arminianism.
- **Canons of Dort** — The official response of the Synod of Dort (1618–1619) to the Remonstrance; the source of the five points later summarized as TULIP.
- **Council of Trent** — The major Catholic council (1545–1563) that defined the Church's response to the Protestant Reformers on justification, grace, free will, and the sacraments.
- **Compatibilism vs. libertarian free will** — Philosophical distinctions often used in the free-will debate. Compatibilists (many Calvinists) say free will is compatible with divine determination; libertarians (many Arminians) say genuine freedom requires the ability to have chosen otherwise.
- **Mortal sin** — In Catholic teaching, a serious sin that destroys the state of grace and, if unrepented, leads to loss of salvation.
- **Reprobation** — The counterpart to election; the decree or state of those who are not saved. Calvinists debate how active or passive this is.

These terms cover most of the technical vocabulary that arises when people move from casual Bible discussion into historical theology on grace and salvation.