

Are You An Amyraldian?

Is there really such a thing as a 4-point Calvinist? I was reading a book by a man who thinks he understands Calvinism but does not, and this author calls himself a “4-point Calvinist”, a “Calminian”, and a “moderate Calvinist” and pretty much uses the 3 terms interchangeably. Shouldn’t Calvinists be calling people like that “fake Calvinists” or “counterfeit Calvinists” or “Arminians in disguise”? - because isn’t saying you are a 4-point Calvinist akin to saying that you are Christian but you just don’t believe that God does what He says He does? Well, there are other terms for 4-point Calvinists as you will see below. A theological term for a 4-point calvinist is an “Amyraldian”.

What is Amyraldianism?

“Amyraldism developed historically following the Synod of Dort as a compromise between Calvinism and the early Arminianism by giving up some aspects of Calvinism which some found hard to embrace. The Amyraldian view, named after French Theologian Moses Amyraut, 1569-1664, is associated with Calvinism because it retains a particularistic element by acknowledging God’s distinguishing grace in the election of individuals.

Amyraldians, however, place divine election after the decree to provide an atonement. This makes the atonement universal in nature and the application of the atonement particular in nature through divine election. This view is sometimes referred to as Four-Point Calvinism since it gives up the Calvinist doctrine of limited atonement in favor of a universal atonement. It is also known, perhaps more descriptively, as Hypothetical Redemptionism. Although Amyraldianism may be a recognizable form of Calvinism because it retains the principle of particularism in election, it is not necessarily a good form of Calvinism. According to B. B. Warfield, “it is a logically inconsistent and therefore unstable form of Calvinism. For another more important reason, it turns away from a substitutionary atonement, which is as precious to the Calvinist as his particularism,” (Plan, p. 98).

*This view maintains that Christ died for all men alike, making all men savable, with actual salvation conditioned on individual faith. Then God, seeing that no one would respond because of their depravity, chose (or elected) some to receive the grace to believe. ... the primary characteristic of the Amyraldian scheme is the placement of election after the atonement. However, opponents contend that Scripture indicates Christ came in order to execute the purpose of election. He came to die for and give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. See John 10:15 and 17:2, 9. If this point is true, then the decree to elect some of mankind should necessarily precede the decree to provide an atonement. The Amyraldian scheme assumes the reverse to be true.” - **Source: Theopedia***

Most people who say they are a four point Calvinists usually mean they do not believe in limited atonement. By stating they believe the other points of

Calvinism but not this 5th point they are failing to realize the inconsistencies they will eventually run into. All 5 points work in perfect harmony within themselves. When 1 point falls, they all fall. Four point Calvinists don't typically have enough of a systematic understanding of the Doctrines of Grace to understand the giant hole of inconsistency that is opened up, when they leave out the "L" in TULIP (a.k.a. Limited Atonement). Something like the atonement cannot be universal in its application (i.e. it cannot apply or be efficacious for everyone in the entire world) when everything else regarding salvation is limited in nature (election, imputed righteousness, etc....).

The idea of God giving an unregenerated sinner the grace to be able to make a choice to believe "of his or her own free-will" is an unbiblical invention of man. It is termed "prevenient grace" which is a false doctrine that was heavily promoted (as truth) by John Wesley and many others. True salvation occurs when God sends a preacher. The preacher then preaches the Word of God to the sinner to show the sinner that they are lawbreakers against the laws of a Holy God and that Christ's atoning sacrifice is the only remedy for their sin. Without Christ, their punishment will consist of eternity in Hell. That preaching combined with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit converts the sinner from a spiritually dead rebel against God to a willing follower of the Lord Jesus Christ- *without any cooperation or decision from the spiritually dead sinner.*

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