

VARIOUS NON-SCRIPTURAL TEACHINGS (HERESIES)

Donatism

Donatism (Latin: Donatismus, Greek: Δονατισμός Donatismos) was a Christian sect within the Roman province of Africa that flourished in the fourth and fifth centuries among Berber Christians.

Donatism was the error taught by Donatus, bishop of Casae Nigrae, that the effectiveness of the sacraments depends on the moral character of the minister.

TRUTH: We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2) and every person who is truly saved is a king and a priest by the work of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1). The Bible does not teach any sacraments, and therefore any teaching regarding the effectiveness of a sacrament is against the New Testament.

Pelagianism

Pelagianism received its name from Pelagius and designates a heresy of the fifth century, which denied original sin as well as Christian grace.

Pelagianism is the belief that original sin did not taint human nature and that mortal will is still capable of choosing good or evil without special Divine aid.

TRUTH: Romans 5 teaches that by Adam's transgression all became sinners by nature, choice, practice, and free will. The only way to receive forgiveness is through faith in Jesus Christ.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism (from Ancient Greek: γνωστικός *gnostikos*, "learned", from γνῶσις *gnōsis*, knowledge) is a modern term categorizing a collection of ancient religions whose adherents shunned the material world – which they viewed as created by the demiurge – and embraced the spiritual world. Gnostic ideas influenced many ancient religions that teach that *gnosis* (variously interpreted as knowledge, enlightenment, salvation, emancipation or 'oneness with God') may be reached by practicing philanthropy to the point of personal poverty, sexual abstinence (as far as possible for hearers, entirely for initiates) and diligently searching for wisdom by helping others. However, practices varied among those who were Gnostic.

Gnosticism was a prominent heretical movement of the 2nd-century Christian Church, partly of pre-Christian origin. Gnostic doctrine taught that the world was created and ruled by a lesser divinity, the demiurge, and that Christ was an emissary of the remote supreme divine being, esoteric knowledge (gnosis) of whom enabled the redemption of the human spirit.

TRUTH: Salvation is only through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2, John 3, John 14). Man cannot obtain salvation through wisdom (I Corinthians 1).

Arianism

Arianism, a Christian heresy first proposed early in the 4th century by the Alexandrian presbyter Arius. It affirmed that Christ is not truly divine but a created being. Arius' basic premise was the uniqueness of God, who is alone self-existent and immutable; the Son, who is not self-existent, cannot be God.

Arianism is a nontrinitarian belief that asserts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but is entirely distinct from and subordinate to the God the Father.

TRUTH: The New Testament teaches plainly Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3). Jesus is the Word (John 1) and is one with the Father (John 10). Jesus is the image of God (John 14; Hebrews 1; 2 Corinthians 4; Colossians 1).

Nestorianism

Nestorianism is a Christological doctrine that emphasizes the disunion between the human and divine natures of Jesus. It was advanced by Nestorius (386–450), Patriarch of Constantinople from 428–431, influenced by Nestorius' studies under Theodore of Mopsuestia at the School of Antioch.

Nestorianism is basically the doctrine that Jesus existed as two persons, the man Jesus and the divine Son of God, rather than as a unified person.

TRUTH: Jesus is all God and all man in one person (John 1). The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Calvinism

Calvinism (also called the Reformed tradition, Reformed Christianity or the Reformed faith) is a major branch of Protestantism that follows the theological tradition and forms of Christian practice of John Calvin and other Reformation-era theologians.

Basically, Calvinism is known by an acronym: T.U.L.I.P.

Total Depravity (also known as Total Inability and Original Sin)

Unconditional Election

Limited Atonement (also known as Particular Atonement)

Irresistible Grace

Perseverance of the Saints (also known as Once Saved Always Saved)

Total Inability or Total Depravity

Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not - indeed he cannot - choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ - it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation - it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.

Unconditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response of obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement

Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, therefore guaranteeing their salvation.

The Efficacious Call of the Spirit or Irresistible Grace

In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.

TRUTH: The New Testament contradicts every point of Calvinism. Man, though lost, is able by his free will to accept Jesus Christ (Acts 17). Whosoever can be saved (John 3). God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3). Grace can be resisted (Acts 7). God's salvation is a gift, not based on works (Ephesians 2).

Arminianism

Arminianism is based on theological ideas of the Dutch Reformed theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609) and his historic supporters known as the Remonstrants. Free-Will or Human Ability

Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does not interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature. The sinner has the power to either cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation.

Conditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do. The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but resulted solely from man's will. It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation. God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner's choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

Universal Redemption or General Atonement

Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe on Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it.

The Holy Spirit Can Be Effectually Resisted

The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.

Falling from Grace

Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc. All Arminians have not been agreed on this point; some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ - that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost.

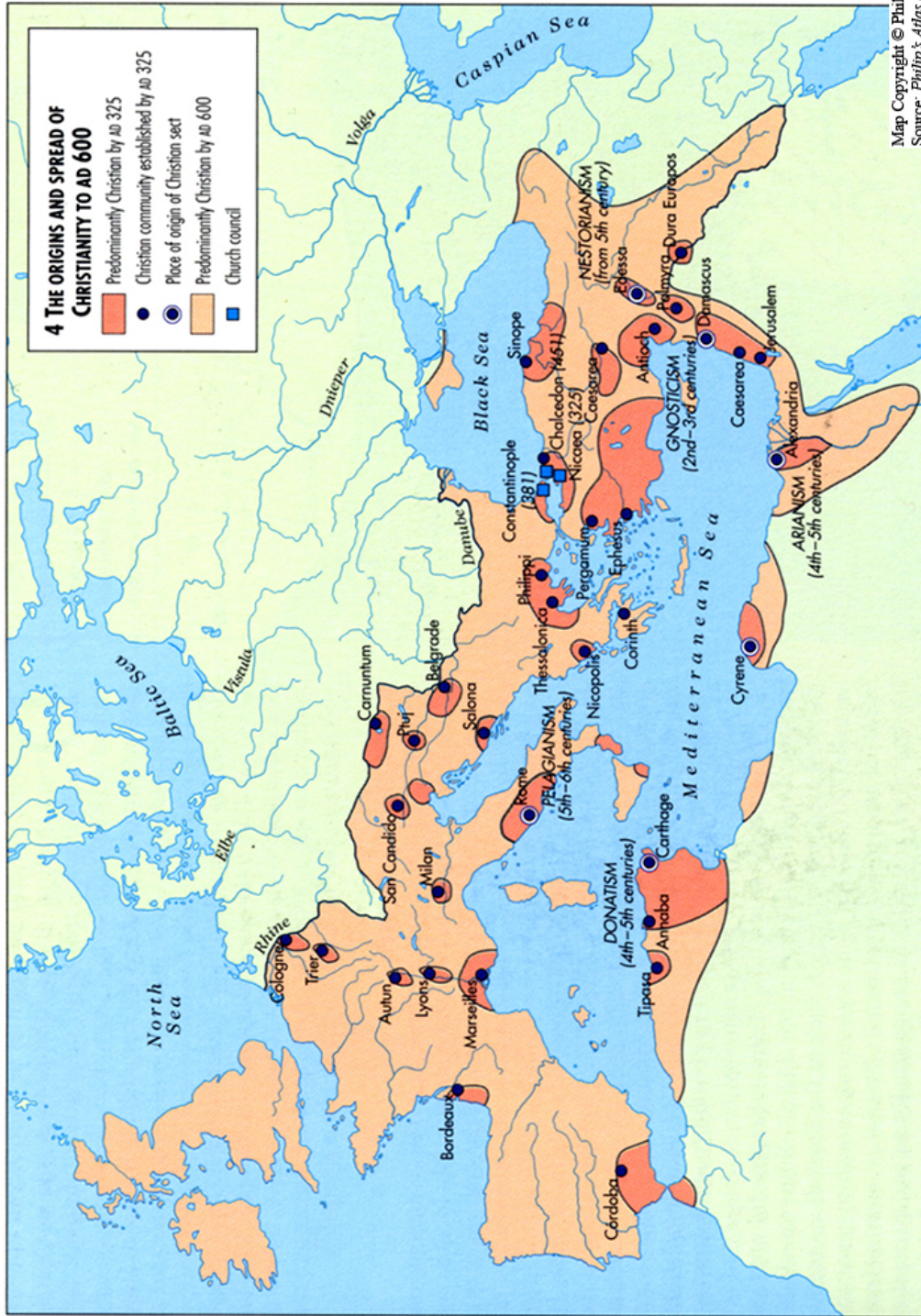
TRUTH: Jesus promised those who believe in him would never perish (John 3). Nothing can separate a believer from the love of God (Romans 8). Jesus knows his sheep (John 10), where he says to those that perish "I never knew you" (Matthew 7).

Darwinism

The theory of the evolution of species by natural selection advanced by Charles Darwin. Darwinism is a theory of biological evolution developed by Charles Darwin and others, stating that all species of organisms arise and develop through the natural selection of small, inherited variations that increase the individual's ability to compete, survive, and reproduce. Also called Darwinian theory, it originally included the broad concepts of transmutation of species or of evolution which gained general scientific acceptance after Charles Robert Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, including concepts which predated Darwin's theories, but

subsequently referred to specific concepts of natural selection, of the Weismann barrier or in genetics of the central dogma of molecular biology.[1] Though the term usually refers strictly to biological evolution, creationists have appropriated it to refer to the origin of life, and it has even been applied to concepts of cosmic evolution, both of which have no connection to Darwin's work. It is therefore considered the belief and acceptance of Darwin's and of his predecessors' work - in place of other theories, including divine design and extraterrestrial origins.

TRUTH: Genesis chapter 1 – 3 show God's account of creation. Romans 1 makes it clear that men reject the true God when they reject his creation.



◀ Early Christians were often persecuted by the Romans, who saw them as a threat to the stability of the empire because they refused to acknowledge the divinity of the Roman emperor. By AD 64 Nero used Christians as victims in the imperial arenas, and in the early 4th century Diocletian organized campaigns against them. However, Diocletian's successor Constantine legalized Christianity, and at the first "Ecumenical Council" (held at Nicaea in 325) he brought church and state together. Constantine had converted to Christianity after a key victory over his rivals in 312, a victory he ascribed to the power invested in him as the servant of the Highest Divinity, which he equated with the Christian god. Many sects emerged during this early spread of Christianity, and councils were periodically held to discuss the doctrinal disagreements raised – with some sects declared heretical as a result.