

---

**THE DOCTRINE OF PREVENIENT GRACE IN  
THE THEOLOGY OF JACOBUS ARMINIUS**

Name of researcher: Abner F. Hernandez  
Name of adviser: Jerry Moon, PhD  
Date completed: April 2017

*Topic*

This dissertation addresses the problem of the lack of agreement among interpreters of Arminius concerning the nature, sources, development, and roles of prevenient grace in Arminius's soteriology.

*Purpose*

The dissertation aims to investigate, analyze, and define the probable sources, nature, development, and role of the concept of prevenient or "preceding" grace in the theology of Jacobus Arminius (1559–1609).

*Sources*

The dissertation relies on Arminius's own writings, mainly the standard London Edition, translated by James Nichols and Williams Nichols. However, I also frequently consulted the original Latin edition of his works when needing to clarify some translations. Secondary sources played an important role in the narrative of Arminius's world, life, and ministry, as well as for the background of prevenient grace. I also consulted secondary sources to check, balance, and support my own reading of Arminius on prevenient grace.

*Conclusions*

Arminius placed prevenient grace rather than human free will at the center of his soteriology and developed this doctrine primarily in continuity with Reformed and Protestant theological precedents and frameworks rather than uniquely Catholic sources and views. For Arminius, prevenient grace is the working of the Holy Spirit that precedes any kind of human participation or acceptance in salvation. Prevenient grace works unavoidably, restoring, and healing human freedom of will; only then does it work in a resistible way in the working of salvation. Although there is a special connection between the internal working of the Holy Spirit and the external preaching of the Word, prevenient grace as the working of the Holy Spirit is not limited to this event. The Holy Spirit works apart from the preached word, in ways inscrutable to the human mind. The role of prevenient grace in regeneration and faith, and the relation between prevenient grace and divine foreknowledge also support the conclusion that prevenient grace is the organizing principle of Arminius's soteriology.