

Unconditional Election

The Doctrine of Election

- **Canons of Dort (1619 A.D.) Article 7 on Unconditional Election** - *Before the foundation of the world, by sheer grace, according to the free good pleasure of his will, he chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race, which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin. Those chosen were neither better nor more deserving than the others, but lay with them in the common misery. He did this in Christ, whom he also appointed from eternity to be the mediator, the head of all those chosen, and the foundation of their salvation. And so he decided to give the chosen ones to Christ to be saved, and to call and draw them effectively into Christ's fellowship through his Word and Spirit.*

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"This is why I am not a Christian anymore. There is this passage in Romans 9. I have real trouble with this. I think this is evil. There is this passage in Romans 9 that talks about this analogy as God as a potter and humans as clay in His hands..... It paints this picture of God willing to show His wrath and make His power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath made for destruction. God created some vessels of mercy in whom He loves, and some vessels of wrath made for destruction, made for the expressed purpose of torturing them in hell for all eternity. God makes you do everything that you do, and blesses some and curses others. Why then does God find fault, for who has resisted His will? If God is making you do it, why is He punishing you for it. You can't resist His will. He makes you do it, then He punishes you for it. And the answer to this is, "you don't get to ask that question."

- How would you respond?
- What is she indirectly doing by saying "God is evil?"
 - Accusing God of being wrong according to her own standard of right and wrong
- **The doctrine of Election** is an important "*measuring rod*" for some-one's theology
- The acceptance or rejection of this doctrine reveals at once where a person stands on other doctrines such as:
 - The nature and extent of sin
 - The bondage of the will
 - The need for God's full grace in our salvation
 - Our hatred of God and rebellion against Him
 - God having the right to do as He pleases with sinful humanity
- The Doctrine of Predestination is broken down into two categories
 - Election – resulting in God saving His elect
 - Reprobation – resulting in God passing over the non-elect
 - Leaving them to continue in their own hatred and rebellion against God
- Predestination's only foundation is the absolutely sovereign will of God.
- He owes no one anything and can justly condemn all humans

- **Romans 9:21** - ²¹ *Has the potter no right over the clay, to make **out of the same lump** one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?*
 - We are all fallen sinners in Adam
 - Out of this lump:
 - God can choose to save some,
 - and choose to let the rest continue in their sinful God-hating rebellion until judgment.
 - The elect receive God's *grace* which is undeserved
 - Do we deserve God's grace?
 - Do we have the right to demand that God blesses us?
 - The reprobate receive God's *justice* which is deserved
 - Does humanity deserve God's justice?
 - Is God perfectly just in reprobating some?
 - Does God have to save anybody?
- **What is meant by "Unconditional" Election**
 - God's choice in salvation is based upon *His good pleasure alone* and nothing that He finds in us
 - **Rom 9:15-16** - ¹⁵ *For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."*
¹⁶ *So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy*
 - God does not simply look down the corridors of time to see what we will do and then react accordingly
 - We do not know exactly what God bases His choice on:
 - But it is not on anything that is in us
 - **Eph 1:5** - ⁵ *he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will***
 - So, on what basis does God elect some?
 - God elects some upon the basis of His will
 - Not through our will by means of foreseen faith
 - God does not see something good in a particular man, something that he does that makes God decide to choose him.
 - **Ephesians 2:8-9** - *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God,** ⁹ *not a result of works, so that no one may boast*
 - There isn't any room for bragging
 - There isn't any room for pride
 - In no way should we think that we are saved and others are not because WE MADE A CHOICE AND THEY DIDN'T*
 - **2 Timothy 1:9** - *who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began*

- **Rejection #4 of the Canons of Dort (1619 A.D.)**– (We reject those) *who teach that in election to faith a prerequisite condition is that man should rightly use the light of nature, be upright, unassuming, humble, and disposed to eternal life, as though election depended to some extent on these factors.*
 - Example: Coming to your senses, and by your own reasoning and abilities, repent and become saved
- **The Arminian Objection – “Conditional Election”** = God decrees based upon what he foresees
 - Many people recoil at the Reformed doctrine of predestination
 - To them it does three things:
 - 1 - It robs humanity of any freewill choice
 - 2 - It makes God look harsh and vindictive because He does not save everybody
 - 3 - It contradicts the fact that God desires all to repent and yet only chooses some for salvation
 - What Arminians deny is not predestination but unconditional predestination;
 - They embrace *conditional predestination* based on God’s foreknowledge of who will freely respond positively to God’s gracious offer of salvation and the prevenient enablement to accept it.
 - In light of Romans 8:29 - God foresees will choose Him
 - **Romans 8:29** - *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son*
 - According to Arminians:
 - God predestines those whom He foreknows will choose Him
 - God looks down the corridors of time to see who would believe and who would not believe
 - It actually means that men and women elect themselves, and God is reduced to a bystander who responds to their free choice.
 - Those whom God foresees who will believe = God predestines
 - Those whom God sees will reject Him = God rejects
 - = Humanity, not God, has the final say in salvation
 - Question: Does Romans 8:29 say “what God foresees” or “those whom God foreknows?”
 - Does God foresee an action the person will take?
 - Or does God foreknow the person He predestines?
 - God is not passively taking notes on what man will do and then adjusting accordingly
 - **Romans 8:28-30** - ²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are **called** according to his purpose.* ²⁹ *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* ³⁰ *And those whom he predestined he also **called**, and those*

whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

- To suppose that God's decrees are conditional, or that they depend on a foresight of something that may or may not come to pass in time, is to suppose that
 - Something finite (us), is the cause of something that is eternal (God)
- The created being cannot be the cause of an action that the eternal God needs in order to save somebody
 - Foreseen faith cannot be the reason why God saves you
 - Because nothing can come to pass unless He decrees it to be so
 - He decrees every one of our actions
 - While at the same time – we freely choose what we do
 - The Arminian has placed the person as the final cause and God as the responder
- Is God sovereign over all things?
 - Yes – **Rom 11:36** - ³⁶ *For from him and through him and to him are all things*
 - The created order is utterly dependent on the providential activity of the Creator for its moment-to-moment existence, ***because it does not have the power of existence in itself to ordain anything to come to pass***
- Humanity is 100% dependent upon God in ALL things
 - If God were to limit His own sovereignty over His creation
 - He would cease from being God because he would then become limited
 - From infinite to finite
 - Can God limit His omnipresence / omniscience?
 - Can God make a stone too heavy for Him to lift?
 - No, because God cannot do anything that is not according to His own nature
- As the Westminster Confession states:
 - **3:2** - *“Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.”*
 - If salvation is by God's grace alone (pure, unmerited favor)
 - Then there is no room at all for works (that is, activity of man as an originating cause).
 - When it is said that God gives grace to certain persons because he foresees that they will do (work) this or that
 - Then we have salvation by works (in this case the foreseen choice of faith) and grace is overthrown