

## **Unconditional Election**

God in grace and mercy has chosen certain persons for salvation. This election is not based on human merit or foreseen faith, but on the providence of God's own will and purpose. "Not all men are created with similar destinies, but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others."

John Calvin, The Institutes Book 3, Chapter 2

By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of those ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or death.

John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, iii, xxi, sec. 5, 1030-1031

Calvin reasoned:

...Since the arrangement of all things is in the hand of God, since to him belongs the disposal of life and death, he arranges all things by his sovereign counsel, in such a way that individuals are born, who are **doomed from the womb** to certain death, and are to glorify him by their destruction.

Ibid., iii, xxiii, sec. 6, 231

### **The Calvinist's view of election...**

#### **1. is not fair.**

- Then is it merciful, gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness? Ex. 34:6
- Is it loving? I John 4:8
- Does it bring joy and peace? Gal. 5:22
- Is it kind and gentle? Gal. 5:22-23

#### **2. predetermines that the non-elect (the reprobate) will live their entire lives on earth in sin.**

*<sup>4</sup>just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, Eph. 1:4*

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, <sup>2</sup>with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, Eph. 4:1-2

<sup>12</sup>Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; Heb. 3:12

#### **3. makes God's offer of salvation insincere.**

T – God only enables the elect to believe.

I – The elect must believe

L – Christ only died for the elect.

Yet...

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD,  
 "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;  
 though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. *Isaiah 1:18*

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat.  
 Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. *Isaiah 55:1*

*I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death,  
 blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;*  
*Deut. 30:19*

<sup>28</sup>*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* <sup>29</sup>*Take My yoke upon  
 you and learn from Me, for I am <sup>30</sup>gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your  
 souls. <sup>30</sup>For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." *Matthew 11:28-30**

<sup>17</sup>*And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who  
 thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. *Rev. 22:17**

And yet...

John Piper says, "...unconditional election... does not contradict biblical expressions of God's  
 compassion for all people, and does not nullify sincere offers of salvation to everyone who is lost  
 among all the peoples of the world."

John Piper, "Are there Two Wills of God? Divine Election and God's Desire for all  
 to be Saved." *The Grace of God, The Bondage of the Will*, p. 107

The issue is not "whosoever will and whosoever won't." It is "whosoever must and whosoever  
can't."

**4. makes the children's election depend on the parents' election.**

<sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death,  
 blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;  
*Deut. 30:19*

**5. says that for God to demonstrate His grace, He must predestine most of the world to go to hell.**

The omnipotence and foreknowledge of God, I repeat, utterly destroy the doctrine of "free-  
 will"... Doubtless it gives the greatest possible offence to common sense or natural reason, that  
 God, who is proclaimed as being full of mercy and goodness, and so on, should of His own  
 mere will abandon, harden and damn men, as though He delighted in the sins and great  
 eternal torments of such poor wretches. It seems an iniquitous, cruel, intolerable thought to  
 think of God; and it is this that has been such a stumbling block to so many great men down  
 through the ages. And who would not stumble at it? I have stumbled at it myself more than  
 once, down to the deepest pit of despair, so that I wished I had never been made a man.

**(That was before I knew how health-giving that despair was, and how close to  
 grace.)"**  
 Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 217

**6. says that for God to receive the most glory, He must predestine most of the world to go to hell.**

John Piper wrote...

God's will for all people to be saved is not at odds with the sovereignty of God's grace in election. That is, my answer to the question about what restrains God's will to save all people **is his supreme commitment to uphold and display the full range of his glory** through the sovereign demonstration of his wrath and mercy for the enjoyment of his elect and believing people from every tribe and tongue and nation.

John Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy: God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther and Calvin*, p. 73

For the biggest question is: If God could save everyone, why doesn't he? And here Paul seems to say that God's chosen course (to save some and leave others) **will in the end be more fit to show forth God's glory than any other scheme we can imagine.**

T. Keller, *Romans 8-16 for You*

## 7. says the secret will of God contradicts the revealed will of God.

"[The Calvinistic] theories are often so wrapped up in biblical quotations and Christian terminology that many of the clearly unacceptable logical implications of divine determinism are shrouded in mystery – a mystery that we are not allowed to question. It is even held by some that the solution lies in the fact that God has two wills: one is secret, and it is to save only those people He has unconditionally elected to salvation; and the other is revealed, and it is that He wills that all people be saved." John C. Lennox, *Determined to Believe*, p. 63

Where does this idea come from?

"Creatures are so governed by the secret counsel of God, that nothing happens but what He has knowingly and willingly decreed."

John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Book 1, chapter 16, paragraph 3

## 8. limits the extent of God's love.

"For God so loved **the world**..."

Many Calvinists believe that "world" (kosmos) refers only to the elect.

John Owens says concerning John 3:16 that "it cannot be maintained that by 'the world' here is meant all and everyone of mankind, but only men in common scattered throughout the world, which are the elect." John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, p. 328

A. W. Pink says, "When we say that God is sovereign in the exercise of His love, we mean that He loves whomever He chooses to love. God does not love everybody."

A. W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, p. 10

Other Calvinists, such as John MacArthur, believe that God loves everyone. However, He loves the elect in a way He does not love the non-elect.

## 9. is illogical

God decreed, predetermined, that man would sin. R. C. Sproul wrote, "God wills all things to come to pass... God desired for man to fall into sin. I am not accusing God of sinning; I am suggesting that God created sin."

Martin Lloyd Jones wrote:

In verses 6 to 29, (Paul) explains why anybody is saved – it is the sovereign election of God. In these verses he is showing us why anybody is lost, and the explanation of that is their own responsibility... It is God's action alone that saves a man. So why is anybody lost? Is it because they are not elected? No. What accounts for the lost is their rejection of the gospel... We are responsible for our rejection of the gospel, but we are not responsible for our acceptance of it.

Martin Lloyd-Jones, Romans chapter 9, p. 285

### **10. makes God's commands to His messengers meaningless.**

<sup>7</sup> "So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. <sup>8</sup> When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup> Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

<sup>10</sup> "Therefore you, O son of man, say to the house of Israel: 'Thus you say, "If our transgressions and our sins lie upon us, and we pine away in them, how can we then live?"' <sup>11</sup> Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?' Ezekiel 33:7-11

### **11. says the non-elect are predestined to a place not prepared for man.**

<sup>41</sup> "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: Matthew 25:41

**\*Note on Deut 29:29**