

# UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

- ▣ **The Arminian Position (Election Based on Foreknowledge)**
- ▣ "[God purposes] to save particular persons and to damn others, which decree rests upon the foreknowledge of God, by which he has known from eternity which persons should believe according to such an administration of the means serving to repentance and faith through his preceding grace and which should persevere through subsequent grace, and also who should not believe and persevere." (Quoted in Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation*, 1971, p. 352).

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- ▣ **The Contemporary Arminian Emphasis (Election Corporate, Not Individual)**
- ▣ The point is that the election of the church is a corporate rather than an individual thing. It is not that individuals are in the church because they are elect, it is rather that they are elect because they are in the church which is the body of the elect One. (R. T. Forster and V. P. Marston, *God's Strategy in Human History*, 1973, p. 136).
- ▣ ...election is a corporate category and not oriented to the choice of individuals for salvation.... [Election has reference to] a class of people rather than specific individuals." (Clark Pinnock, *The Grace of God and the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism*, 1990, p. 20)

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- ▣ **Arminian view of Predestination:**
- ▣ Predestination is not the predetermination of who will believe, but rather the predetermination of the believer's future inheritance.

Source: Pawson, David *Once Saved, Always Saved? A Study in Perseverance and Inheritance* (London: Hodder & Staughton, 1996), 109ff

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- ▣ **Definition From the Westminster Confession of Faith (Unconditional Election)**
- ▣ 3.5 Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto; and all to the praise of His glorious grace.

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*(Westminster continued)*

- ▣ 3.6 As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

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- ▣ On what basis does God elect to save certain people?
- ▣ Is it based on some foreseen act/response from the “elect”? (prescient view)
- ▣ That is, from all eternity, does God look down and see who will believe and therefore elects them?
- ▣ Calvinism= UNconditional election.
- ▣ Rests upon God’s sovereign decision to save whomsoever He is pleased to save.

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Romans 9:

<sup>10</sup> Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. <sup>11</sup> Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad – in order that God's purpose in election might stand: <sup>12</sup> not by works but by him who calls – she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup> Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

<sup>14</sup> What then shall we say? **Is God unjust?** Not at all! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses,

“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,  
and I will have compassion on whom I have  
compassion.”

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<sup>16</sup> It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. <sup>17</sup> For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

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- ▣ Paul anticipates the objection: “God is unjust”
- ▣ If Paul was teaching a prescient view of election, he would not hear that objection.
- ▣ To be sure, God’s purposes in election can never be unjust, but one could understand how such an objection might be raised.
- ▣ Therefore, it seems more likely that Paul himself is teaching a type of unconditional election.

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Is God unjust?



Non-Justice:

- 1) Injustice
- 2) Mercy

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- ▣ Justice: We get what we deserve. (eternal damnation)
- ▣ Mercy: We **don't get** what we **deserve**.
- ▣ Herein lies the beauty of the gospel: God spares us of the punishment that we *do* deserve (mercy) and he gives us his righteousness which we *don't* deserve (grace).
- ▣ He doesn't just forgive us (mercy), but he makes us beautiful (grace).
- ▣ **Some receive mercy, some receive justice. *No one receives injustice at the hands of God.***

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- ▣ What is double predestination?
  - Proper view: If God predestines some to receive mercy, then logically speaking there is a definite group who will receive the just penalty for their sins.
  - Improper view: God works evil in the hearts of the non-elect (reprobate) in order to ensure their condemnation. This view is known as **equal ultimacy**.
- ▣ Jesus says in John 3:18 that we stand condemned already. God does not need to “work evil” in a person for them to be condemned.
- ▣ God doesn’t pour his wrath on you because you reject Jesus; His wrath *remains* on you if you reject Jesus.

# UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

## ▣ Is Election the Effect or the Cause of Obtaining Salvation?

Romans 11:1-8

Do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."

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- ▣ **Is Election Based on Foreknown Faith or Does Faith Happen Because of Election?**

Acts 13:48

When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

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- ▣ **Do We Belong to God Because We Come to Jesus, or Do We Come to Jesus Because We Belong to God?**

John 17:6-9

I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. . . . I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours.

John 6:37-39

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day

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- ▣ **Are We Jesus' Sheep Because We Believe, or Do We Believe Because We Are His Sheep?**

John 10:24-27

The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

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- ▣ **Is Evangelism Making Sheep or Gathering Sheep?**

John 10:16

I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.

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- ▣ **Did God Choose Us Because He Knows We Will Come, or Do We Come Because He Chose to Give Us the Will to Come?**

John 6:44, 65

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. . .” And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.”

Acts 16:14

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.