

Canons of Dort 1st HofD, Article 11 – Election is Unchangeable

Beloved in the Lord Jesus: **All men** from the fall of Adam have been **inherently sinful and under God's just condemnation**, but **God elected some of those under condemnation to save** through his Son, **through the preaching of the Gospel**.

God did this out of **pure grace**, **not because he saw a man might choose** Christ (man couldn't) **or a man might have faith** (only God gives faith).

God's election to salvation is unchangeable! Why is this important? If election were unchangeable, it means your salvation is eternal! So this is a doctrine of comfort, not one of fear. (We have covered Article 10 – **saved by God's good pleasure**- already, so we won't repeat that.)

Our headings are:

God cannot Change

So Your Election Cannot be Changed

Our goals are: **That you will receive comfort from your election, that you will praise God daily with your mouth for your election, and that you will have renewed zeal to spread the Gospel so the elect can be brought in.**

Article 11: Election Unchangeable: **Just as God himself is most wise, unchangeable**, all-knowing, and almighty, so **the election made by him can neither be suspended nor altered, revoked, or annulled; neither can his chosen ones be cast off, nor their number reduced.**

God Cannot Change

1. God cannot change since God is immutable.

God was the same before creation and he will remain the same forever.

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is **no variation or shadow [hint] of turning.**

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, **Nor a son of man, that He should repent.** Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

This is a difficult concept in a world where change is the norm. Remember when your **watch** was for telling time—not a **GPS**, a **compass**, a **voice recorder**, a **TV**, a **phone**, a **pedometer**, an **altimeter**, a **radio**, for **texts**, a **heart monitor**, a source of **weather** and **sports news**, or a **calendar**?

People change too.

A **husband changes his mind** about all the work he promised to do before he was married.

A **boss promises a promotion or a pay raise** and then fails to deliver.

Remember when a man's gender was verified at birth?

Remember when spanking was praised?

Remember when killing babies was wrong?

But God doesn't change. He can't change. *He doesn't want to change.*

2. God is unchangeable – immutable is the big word - in 3 distinct categories.

a. God is immutable in his essence. There was never a time when God was not. God never discovers anything, unlike you! All that he is today, he always was.

Exodus 3:14 And God said to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM.**" And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, '**I AM has sent me to you.**'"

Can that which is perfect improve on perfection if he made a different decision?

No.

Both answers would require that God be, by essence, unchangeable.

If God were to change his mind it would mean he wanted to be better! But that is impossible!!!

b. God is immutable in his attributes.

He never loses his desire for justice – **quite unlike a tired father who might ignore his disobedient kids when he is tired from working.**

God never loses his holiness.

He demands death for sin, always!

He saves the same way - always!

c. God is immutable in his counsel - his decisions.

Many, many Christians deny this, especially when it comes to the issue of election.

But if God says he will do something, you can be sure he will do it.

For example: God **does not want to, nor can he change** the number of the **elect ones** in Jesus Christ.

See how one doctrine is tied to each other!

Romans 8:30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

“No creed but Christ” is just plain silly. You must learn the whole gamut of important doctrines.

3. God does not need to change because he is fully self-contained.

Everything he needs to know, he already knows. Everything he needs to do, he can do it.

Isaiah 41:4 Who has performed and done it, Calling the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.'

4. But how you can explain what appears to be God changing his mind in the Scriptures?

First, consider Jonah.

Jonah 3:10 Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

God did not change his mind and then decide not to punish Nineveh. **The people of Nineveh changed their minds.** God's plan was always to save Nineveh after the Ninevites repented.

Even before Jonah hid in the sinking ship, God planned to “change his own mind” and save the Ninevites. It only appeared to man that God changed his mind. **God willed that Nineveh repented and she did of her own free will.**
God was not surprised by Nineveh's repentance.

Second, consider from the time before the Flood.

Genesis 6:6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

God used language man could easily understand.

If you have to spank your child you are sorry...but you still do it... But God was not unaware of what they would do! He knew it from before the foundation of the world but he permitted it because it suited his purposes.

So Your Election Cannot Be Changed

1. Because God is unchangeable in his essence, his attributes, and his counsels, your election in Jesus, from before the world began, cannot be changed.

2. Your election can never be:

a. Suspended. God will never temporarily suspend you from being his child.

b. Altered. God will never change the sonship contract, like one might secretly change a contract.

c. Revoked. God can never legally toss the elect aside because they didn't obey perfectly. (They have a Covenant Keeper.)

d. Annulled. God will never say, "I never knew you." When a marriage is annulled, it is saying it never really happened. God can never do that.

e. Cast off. God never gets so mad at anyone that he puts the elect out of his family.

f. Reduced. None of the elect call fall through the cracks and get lost.

3. Some Christians who misunderstand this doctrine, try to explain away "God changing his mind" by saying God is immutable only in his ethics, but not in his election.

They mean by this God is always loving, holy, just, etc. only – not in other areas.

But if God were only unchangeable in his ethics, that would make God unpredictable.

He could save a sinner, for example, in some other way or he could just change his mind about saving someone!

But God is **not** unpredictable. If God changed his mind, he would no longer be God...**as it would mean he “improved.”**

4. God does not change so your salvation is secured: Once you are saved, you are always saved.

He does not have a **magic eraser** next to the Lamb's Book of Life.

Isaiah 46:4 Even to your old age, I am He, And even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; Even **I will carry, and will deliver you.**

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

God's immutability is inextricably tied to your salvation. If he weren't immutable, your salvation could be up in the air every second. (He loves me, he loves me not – like kids playing with a daisy!) Imagine the uncertainty!

You would have no finger nails! And when you **think of your sins, you will be overwhelmed – feeling hopeless and being hopeless!**

Romans 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Job 23:13 "But He is unique, and who can make Him change?"

What the Lord promises he will do...because of his unchangeable nature.

Because I did not understand this doctrine of the unchangeableness of God as a child, I lived in fear! I feared Jesus would return and I would be left behind because I had a single unconfessed sin. I had nightmares about this! If only I had been taught better!

I learned of a young assistant pastor who had committed suicide and the church refused to allow his body to be brought into the church because, as the pastor said, he was in hell! But that young Christian was simply overwhelmed by his suffering. God does not cancel his election based on his lack of good deeds...or because he sinned.

Would that pastor and that church not die with unconfessed sin? YES!

5. Because God does not change, those without hope in Jesus will surely face eternity in hell.

Deuteronomy 32:39 'Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.'

Look again:

Ezekiel 8:18 "Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

This means there is no other way of salvation. Muslims won't go to heaven. Hindus won't go to heaven.

So this compels you to share the Gospel with them. If you do, and they believe, they will join us in heaven to sing the praises of God for eternity.

6. Because God does not change, there is a certain predictability in how you live your life as the elect of God.

He holds all things together!

You don't panic when it snows too much, or when there is a wind storm.

You don't hide in your basement and convulse with fear when you hear Covid is coming.

You don't worry if the electricity shuts off.

You don't overreact when you see the government destroying the economy.

You know Vladimir Putin does not control the world!

You don't worry that "global warming" will destroy all life on earth!

Yes, you will use your God-given wisdom, but you don't panic. You know God is near because you are his child and he elected you in Jesus.

Acts 17:28 "for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'

God is stable. He holds all things together.

Atoms don't break off and go flying off in every direction. Randomness of the universe is a lie perpetuated by those who hate Christ.

Isaiah 54:10 For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

This is just as David spoke to Solomon: **You and the people fear God and he will bless you!**

Conclusion:

God cannot change. God doesn't need to change. God does not want to change. God cannot change your election. He does not need to change your election. He does not want to change your election.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Be comforted. You are secure forever through Jesus Christ.

2. Praise God for his election. You hated him. He loved you. He cleaned you up and made you his child!

3. Fight to defend the doctrine of election and show what the implications of this doctrine are. Many weak brothers rob themselves of God's blessings and they rob themselves of this comfort.

4. Spread the Gospel so the elect can hear and be saved.

Finally: **Only God's child can work for and worship him.** So if you are not God's child, I invite you to receive the life and death of Jesus as a substitute for you! How do you get Christ's life and death as yours? Ask him.

After that you can come to God and receive all his benefits...and work for his eternal kingdom.