

**Podcast: Confessing the Faith**

**Episode 7: Calvinism - Unconditional Election**

Participants: Mike Thezier, Joe Anady

Published: 12/31/2015

**Q1: Why are we beginning with the doctrine of unconditional election? Shouldn't we be begin with total depravity given that we are working our way through TULIP?**

1. Unconditional election is the first thing that happened.
2. It is the source of our salvation in Christ Jesus.
3. See how the Canons of Dort begin - "First Head of Doctrine - Divine Election and Reprobation"

**Q2: What does the doctrine of unconditional election assert?**

1. I would like to a read a definition from Dort, but first a Pastoral word.
  - a. This doctrine is a high mystery and must be handled with great care.
  - b. I noticed that Dort takes 6 articles before getting the definition.
  - c. Notice Dort 1.14
    - i. "As the doctrine of divine election by the most wise counsel of God was declared by the prophets, by Christ Himself, and by the apostles, and is clearly revealed in the Scriptures both of the Old and the New Testament, so it is still to be published in due time and place in the Church of God, for which it was peculiarly designed, provided it be done with reverence, in the spirit of discretion and piety, for the glory of God's most holy Name,<sup>3</sup> and for enlivening and comforting His people, without vainly attempting to investigate the lsecret ways of the Most High."
  - d. LBC 3.7 (Of God's Decree)
    - i. "The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel. (1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5; 2 Peter 1:10; Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33; Romans 11:5, 6, 20; Luke 10:20)"
  - e. Thought it is true that these doctrines are to handled with great care, it is also true that these doctrines are to be preached/taught.
    - i. Some (or many) may scoff at these doctrines no matter how carefully or clearly they are presented. The pastor should not shrink back because of this reality.
2. A Definition
  - a. Canons of Dort - First Head of Doctrine - Article 7
    - i. "Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby,before the foundation of the world, He has out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His own will, chosen from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault from their primitive state of uprightness into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom He from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect and the foundation of salvation. This elect number, though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others, but with them involved in one common misery, God has decreed to give to Christ to be saved by Him, and effectually to call and draw them to His communion by His Word and Spirit; to bestow upon them true faith, justification, and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of His Son, finally to glorify them for the demonstration of His mercy, and for the praise of the riches of His glorious grace..."
  - b. Simply put: Election is God choosing whom to save. It is unconditional, meaning that this choosing is not based (conditioned) upon something deserving within man.

### Q3: Where does this idea come from?

1. The Bible teaches us about the fact of election.
  - a. ἐκλέγομαι: to make a choice of one or more possible alternatives—“to choose, to select, to prefer.” (Louw-Nida 30.86)
    - i. Ephesians 1:1-6 - “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:1–6, ESV)
    - ii. John 15:16 - “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.” (John 15:16, ESV)
    - iii. 1 Corinthians 1:27-28 - “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,” (1 Corinthians 1:27–28, ESV)
    - iv. James 2:5 - “Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?” (James 2:5, ESV)
  - b. προορίζω; προαιρέομαι: to come to a decision beforehand—to decide beforehand, to determine ahead of time, to decide upon ahead of time.
    - i. Ephesians 1:11 - “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,” (Ephesians 1:11, ESV)
    - ii. Romans 8:28-30 - “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 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. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” (Romans 8:28–30, ESV)
    - iii. Ephesians 1:6 - “he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:5–6, ESV)
    - iv. Ephesians 1:11 - “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...” (Ephesians 1:11, ESV)
  - c. John’s Gospel
    - i. John 6:36-40 - “But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:36–40, ESV)
    - ii. John 6:35 - “Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35, ESV)

iii. John 17:6–20 - 6 “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 8 For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. 20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word...”

2. The Bible makes it clear that election is *unconditional*.

- a. Romans 9:11 (ESV) 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—
- b. Romans 9:14–16 (ESV) 14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! 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.
- c. Think of the choosing of Abraham and Israel. Was it that they were more worthy than all the others? Bigger and better?
- d. Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV) 8 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.
- e. “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 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,” (2 Timothy 1:8–9, ESV)

**Q4: I know that some talk about election, or predestination, as if God chooses those whom he foresees choosing him. What are we to think about this view?**

1. Nowhere do the scriptures teach such a thing.

- a. Meaning of “foreknew” in Romans 8:29
  - i. Louw Nida 30.100 - προγινώσκω: to choose or select in advance of some other event—‘to choose beforehand, to select in advance.’
  - ii. See the use of this word in 1 Peter 1:20
  - iii. See the use of it in Romans 8:29. Not all or foreknown. It is those who are foreknown who are predestined, called, justified, glorified. In other words, the same group of people foreknown are glorified. If all were *foreknown* (as if foreknowledge were the same thing as omniscience) then all will be glorified - we would have to be universalists.

2. In fact the scriptures directly forbid such a view.

- a. See the texts above which speak of our *unconditional* election.
- b. He elected based upon the purpose of his will

- i. 2 Timothy 1:8–9 (ESV) - 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 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,
  - c. Were he to look down the corridors of time and, this is what he would see:
    - i. Ephesians 2:1–4 (ESV) 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
  - d. Here is the gospel:
    - i. Ephesians 2:4–7 (ESV) 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
3. The so called foreknowledge view makes man the active and controlling agent and God the reactive and passive agent. Everything we know to be true about God and man presses back against this view.
- a. God is active
    - i. God gave some to the Son (see above).
    - ii. He is the one who chooses or predestines.
  - b. Man is passive
    - i. We are the elect, or chosen ones (not the ones who have chosen). Note, some of these passages refer to the Christ, who is God's chosen one. We are chosen *in* Christ.
      1. 30.93 ἐκλεκτός, ἡ, ὄν; ἐκλογήb, ἡς f: (derivatives of ἐκλέγομαιb and ἐκλογήa 'to choose, choice,' 30.92) that which has been chosen—'chosen.'
      2. Matthew 22:14 - "For many are called, but few are chosen."
      3. Matthew 24:22 - "And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short."
      4. Matthew 24:24 - "For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."
      5. Matthew 24:31 - "And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."
      6. Mark 13:20 - "And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days."
      7. Mark 13:22 - "For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect."
      8. Mark 13:27 - "And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven."
      9. Luke 18:7 - "And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?"
      10. Luke 23:35 - "And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!'"
      11. John 1:34 "And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the [elect] Son of God."
      12. Romans 8:33 - "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies."

13. Romans 16:13 "Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well."
14. Colossians 3:12 - "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience..."
15. 1 Timothy 5:21 - "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality."
16. 2 Timothy 2:10 - "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."
17. Titus 1:1 - "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness..."
18. 1 Peter 1:1 - "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia..."
19. 1 Peter 2:4 - "As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious..." (Concerning Jesus)
20. 1 Peter 2:6 - "For it stands in Scripture: 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.'"
21. 1 Peter 2:9 - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."
22. 2 John 1 - The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth..."
23. 2 John 13 - "The children of your elect sister greet you."
24. Revelation 17:14 - "They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."

**Q5: Is it arrogant to claim to be chosen by God?**

1. Not if you understand that election is *unconditional*.
2. Again, I think LBC 3.7 is helpful.
  - a. "The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel. (1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5; 2 Peter 1:10; Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33; Romans 11:5, 6, 20; Luke 10:20)"