

Canons of Dort 1st Head of Doctrine, Articles 1-3
Election: Based on God's Love; Worked Through God's Word

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Most people, when they hear of canons, they think of big guns – c-a-n-o-n-s. But they are very different. “C-a-n-o-n-s” does not mean big guns, “canons” means standards or rules. The Canons of Dort are the standards God established in his Word.

Now the Canons of Dort (1618-1619) is not equal to the Bible, but it is a **summary of 5 major doctrines about salvation in the Bible – 5 doctrines that were being attacked by false teachers of that time.**

These 5 major errors were promoted by one notable teacher, Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), a minister from Amsterdam. Arminius borrowed some ideas from Pelagius, a heretic, of the 4th century, **who did not believe in original sin, predestination, or man's total estrangement from God.** While Arminius was not as extreme as Pelagius, he minimized the greatness of God's salvation. And when men cannot see the full greatness of God and his work, he cannot not worship as he should. So you see the problem. Our greatest work is to worship God properly!

Since **Arminianism** (the system established by Arminius) **has revived and has been spreading in the last 200** years, it is most appropriate to **keep exposing their errors** by revealing the truth of God's Word. **In doing so, you can cause men to worship God in a better way.** (It is not to show you are better!)

The first doctrine in the Canons of Dort is the doctrine of the Unconditional Election of man.

Our headings are:

Your Election is based on God's Love
Your Election is Worked through God's Word

Our goals are: **That you will love the fact you were loved by Christ, and in turn, you will faithfully love him and share the message of his love so the elect might hear and believe.**

Your Election is based on God's Love

Article 1: God's Right to Condemn All People: Since all people have sinned in Adam and have come under the sentence of the curse and eternal death, **God would have done no one an injustice** if it had been the divine will to **leave the entire human race in sin and under the curse**, and to condemn them on account of their sin. As the Apostle says: "The whole world may be held accountable to God," "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and "The wages of sin is death."

Article 2: The Manifestation of God's Love: But this is how God showed love: "God gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

1. Adam and his descendants were wicked and justly condemned by God.

God would have been just to leave every single man in sin with no hope of ever

enjoying salvation.

What a striking way of starting to teach about election: You don't deserve to be elected. You and your ancestors were sinful from birth and lawfully condemned. God was just to hate you, your grandmother, your cousin, your best friend, your baby, the poorest girl in Africa, and every handicapped child.

Romans 3: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Not some...not most...but all deserved to be sent to hell. In fact, God hated sinners...all sinners and was righteous to do so!

Malachi 1: 2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; 3 But Esau I have hated..."

Psalm 5: 5 The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity.

Psalm 11: 5 The LORD tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.

Romans 9: 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."
14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

When the Bible says, "God so loved the world," it meant that God loved all kinds of people; he doesn't love every single person. Let the clear passages speak.

2. But God, acting from love, chose (elected) to save some, not all.

It was a particular love! This is special election.

God did not choose because of the color of one's skin, ethnicity, or gender. Not too long ago a religious counsel said that their God taught them women were useless. But the one true God does not say so. He loves all. There was a time when the color of one's skin made him subject to slavery, as the Blacks were. There was a time when nationality cause people to be treated as slaves, as the Irish were. But look at the basis of God's election!

Deuteronomy 7:7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 "but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage..."

3. Some Arminians (followers of Arminius) believe God did not elect any to salvation but salvation is purely a human choice.

So they believe that, without assistance from God, a man could do good things and make

the right choice to trust in Christ.

This contradicts the Bible, as man can only choose to do evil. His will was corrupted by the fall.

4. Some Arminians, seeing the Bible teaches election, say God did elect, but he did so based on the foreseen faith of the individual.

In other words, they argue that **because God knew the ones who would be “good enough” to choose Christ, he chose them.** In doing this, Arminians **emphasize man’s superior choice over God’s election.**

But note the teaching of the Bible in the Covenant of Redemption – the agreement made before the world began that the Father would give the Son a definite number whom he would redeem.

John 17:6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, **You gave them to Me,** and they have kept Your word.

Surely this does not emphasize human ability and choice first. **Man cannot and man will not choose God in his unregenerate state because he is wholly unable and unwilling to choose God.** Consider this other verse that makes this even clearer.

Acts 13:48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. **And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

Does this make man the 1st chooser or the 2nd chooser? This passage teaches man is the 2nd chooser. He chooses God **because** God chose him first.

Arminians are robbers of God’s glory. How do you think God views robbers of him?

Why do Arminians get into so much trouble with this doctrine? They interpret “foreknew” (Romans 8:29) in the Word of God as “foreknowledge.” But “foreknew” simply means to fore-love. There are different words for “love” in the Greek. “Gynoskoh” means “to know in an experiential way” and is often used in the place of “love.” For example, Adam “knew” his wife and she conceived. This meant that he knew his wife intimately – or, he loved her. Genesis 4:1. See also Numbers 31:18, Psalm 1:6, Amos 3:3, Matthew 7:23, Timothy 2:19, and 1Cor 8:3. “Gynoskoh” is different from knowing something as a fact.

This is why you need to know God’s Word well. This is why you need to compare passages with other passages?

5. Some Arminians teach God elected, not for salvation, but he elected to give faith, and man could do whatever he wanted with it.

But if God only elected you to have faith, you could then refuse to use that faith and

therefore never be saved. **This means you could toss God's gift aside. No one can believe unless God regenerates his heart.** Further, once regeneration starts, glorification is certain. God always goes all the way through. It is a Golden unbreakable Chain!

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.

In acting like God's election is conditional, Arminians **rob God of the full glory of his work in Jesus Christ.** The Lord's coming to die and save the predestined was part of the unchangeable counsel of God. Nothing is outside of the control of God.

Your Election is worked through God's Word

Article 3: The Preaching of the Gospel: In order that **people may be brought to faith,** God mercifully sends **messengers of this very joyful news** to those whom God desires and where God desires it. By this ministry **people are called to repentance and faith** in Christ crucified. For "how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear **without someone to proclaim him?**"

1. God shows his love to the elect through the preaching of his Word.

God was not anxiously waiting to see who would believe. Rather, God, out of pure love, chose and saved a people for himself, and he actively **revealed that love to them through his Word.** (A positive act!) You would never be saved without the Gospel!

Since salvation is for the glory of God it is never at the mercy of his creation – even his best creation. God took the initiative in election. And by receiving **the Word of God, faith comes. When faith comes, the sinner responds to his election. Look again:**

Romans 8: 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Even the one who is already a Christian, when he reads God's Word and believes it, he is strengthened in his faith. The Bible is a book of reassuring love.

What a shame that some don't even read the Word of God in their home! If you are careless about this, your family will suffer. This is a guarantee I can give you.

2. Some Arminians don't agree that it is purely by faith (which comes through the Word) that you reap the benefits of election.

So they try to mix faith and obedience to be saved. How? They argue this was how people were saved in the Old Testament– living good lives and repenting.

The cry of the Arminians is, "Repent, repent, repent!" They forget repentance **must** be

accompanied by faith. **They do not believe it is only by receiving Christ's death as their own they are saved.** So they **take partial credit from God.** Of course, they are charging the Apostle Paul with lying.

2Timothy 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, **not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,**

Apostle Paul reiterated that everything you need to be saved was given to you and was put in place before you were born!

Ephesians 2:3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.** 4 But God, who is **rich in mercy,** because of **His great love with** which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and **raised us up** together, and made us **sit together in the heavenly places** in Christ Jesus, **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Do you see why the Word of God must be preached so faith can come...and the elected person might believe? Look again.

Romans 9:11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, **not of works but of Him who calls,**

3. Because the Arminians argue you must participate in your salvation (which is a work), they are, in effect, removing grace as the grounds for your salvation.

Romans 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But **if it is of works, it is no longer grace;** otherwise work is no longer work.

Would God be pleased if you rob him? If you are Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, or some Baptist, this is what your church teaches. You need to find a better church. Don't stay in one that robs God.

Conclusion:

All men are sinners and deserve to be condemned to hell forever! But what a thing to behold! God does not send some deserving sinners to hell. Rather, he puts their punishment on his own Son. **Election is amazing love.** You learned about this love through God's love letter – the Word of God. You received this message and you were saved – saved for eternity.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: How must you respond to your election?

1. Be humble, knowing that your salvation did not depend upon you. It was all the work of a gracious God.

2. Praise God for what God has done for you. Praise him in the morning, noon time, and evening!

3. Be diligent in your service to the Lord. Be diligent in how you live and how you love others.

4. Proclaim the Gospel so the elect might be saved. Proclaim it yourself and support others who are doing it.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, don't wonder if you are elected or not. Instead, come to God for your spiritual needs. He promised he will turn none away but will save all who come. He assures you he will work in your heart and give you the assurance he has saved you. His love is great. If you reject him, know his judgment is fierce.