

## Canons of Dort – 1<sup>st</sup> Head., Art:6-7

### Election is Part of Predestination and Purely of Grace

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The first 3 articles of the first head of doctrine of the Canons teach that **all men from the fall of Adam and Eve, have been inherently sinful** and under the just condemnation of God. The next 2 articles teach that **election was grounded upon the love of God**, not on any good in man, and that **God reveals his love through his Word**. Today we will open up the doctrine of election some more and consider 2 more topics, which are our headings.

**God elected whom he would save and whom he would reject.**

**God elected you out of pure grace and for his pleasure.**

Our goals are: **That seeing the richness of God's love in electing you, you will rejoice in your election and you will endeavor to be used by him to call the elect into God's kingdom.**

**God elected whom he would save and whom he would reject**

**Article 6: God's Eternal Decree:** The fact that some receive from **God the gift of faith within time**, and that others do not, **stems from God's eternal decree**. "Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things known from long ago." In accordance with this decree **God graciously softens the hearts**, however hard, of the chosen ones and inclines them to believe, but by just **judgment God leaves in their wickedness and hardness of heart those who have not been chosen**. And in this especially is **disclosed to us God's act—unfathomable**, and as merciful as it is just—of distinguishing between people equally lost. This is the well known decision of election and reprobation revealed in God's Word. The wicked, impure, and **unstable distort this decree to their own ruin**, but it provides holy and godly souls with comfort beyond words.

**1. God eternally decreed (predestined) before the world began whom he would elect to eternal salvation in Jesus Christ.**

Ephesians 1: 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 **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, 5 **having predestined us to adoption as sons** by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will...

But it is important to note **you were not saved by election**. Rather, **you were elected to be saved**. (Election is just one of the many things God predestines.)

**2. God prepared the way for the salvation of the elect; even the minutest details he predestined.**

**He decided who your parents would be**, in which country you would be born, which church would be near your house, which missionary might come to your area, what language you would have to read and understand, and who your minister would be...

He also prepared the Lord Jesus with the covenant of redemption. He gave you to his Son to redeem as his possession forever.

**3. God softened the heart of the elect and gave them faith at a certain point in life in order to work the effects of their election.**

It does not matter how hard the hearts of sinners are, as long as they are elect, God is able, and indeed does soften them – when he is ready.

Sometimes he softens the heart of sinners quickly, sometimes he takes longer.

Sometimes he does so when they are old, sometimes when they are young. Sometimes he does so when they are sick or sometimes when they are well. Sometimes he even softens their heart just before they die.

**4. God decreed from all eternity to leave alone wicked hearts in their hardness.**

These are the ones he did not elect to help or save. This is the doctrine of reprobation.

Reprobation is God decreeing to leave some wicked people to their own desires and he does not give them eternal life.

It is his choice to give his gift to whomever he wishes.

It is also true he does not give them eternal life because they neither desire it nor ask for it.

Romans 9: 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

The phrase “he hardens,” simply means God left some to their own devices. And when man is left to his own devices, he becomes hardened against God. God did not go into their hearts and harden them. That would be sinful. God does not sin!

**5. Now how do you respond knowing that God elects some to life and leaves some in death?**

**a. Find joy in the doctrine of election.** Know that salvation is in Christ alone who shed his blood for the complete remission of all your sins. Left to yourself, you would be lost. Yes, Sing God’s praises. Of course, you can’t fully praise God for your election because you cannot fully grasp the greatness of your election and because you want to take some credit for believing, but the credit must be at the feet of the Savior. Sing of his electing love. You could have been justly left in death!

**b. Be patient when you take the Gospel to someone who does not immediately believe.**

Be faithful and wait for God. Don’t think someone is not elect because they reject the truth a few times. For most people, salvation is a long process.

**c. Reprobation is also God glorifying.** When a wicked person dies and goes to hell, you can still praise God for his justice.

**d. You must not brush God's truth aside because you don't like it. This doctrine of reprobation is difficult to accept, but God is just, even as he is merciful.** But remember, a man is condemned because he doesn't believe. He is not condemned because he was not elected. The fault is with him!

**God elected you out of pure grace and for his pleasure**

**Article 7: Election: Election is God's unchangeable purpose by which God did the following:** Before the foundation of the world, by **sheer grace**, according to the **free good pleasure** of God's will, God chose in Christ to salvation a **definite number of particular people** out of the entire human race, which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin. Those **chosen were neither better nor more deserving than the others**, but lay with them in the common misery.

**1. God elected condemned sinners, out of grace, to give them eternal life.**

And since it was from "grace" –which is an unearned gift – it is evident he didn't have to elect anyone.

**Those chosen were not better or more deserving than Adolph Hitler or Pol Pot or Idi Amin.**

**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...

**God doesn't reject people because of the color of their skin, ethnic origin, or nationality.** In history, at times most Christians were people of color and in North Africa and the Middle East, while some whites were cannibals. Now whites are in the minority again.

**2. God elected out of grace because of his good pleasure.**

Notice it wasn't a random thing! It was a choosing. No one says, "The first man I see will be my husband." A woman chooses the one whom she will marry. She picks one from many. And then consider:

**Ephesians 2: 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves...**

You will see more of this reason later.

**3. God elected through grace and for his pleasure a definite number.**

The number of the elect is so precise that none can be added or removed. Do you see how this implies security...the preservation of the saints?

**4. God elected through grace and for his pleasure some who were no better than those he did not choose.**

This is quite hard for many to accept because **many think they are morally less troublesome** than others and that is why God chose them. But they don't know the

Scriptures. All were wretched and blind! None knew the way to God. God had to open their eyes first. So some elect could be more sinful than non-elect.

**God did this in Christ**, whom God also appointed from eternity to be the mediator, the head of all those chosen, and the foundation of their salvation. And so God decreed to give to Christ those chosen for salvation, and to **call and draw them** effectively into Christ's fellowship **through the Word and Spirit**, that is to grant them true **faith, to justify them, to sanctify them, and finally, after powerfully preserving them in the fellowship of God's Son, to glorify them.**

**5. God elected through grace and for his pleasure in Christ.**

There is no other way of salvation. Christ merited salvation for the people the Father had given to him.

**There are some who reject this and say they have to choose Jesus for themselves.** But in doing this they put themselves above God, not realizing that God is the First Mover and God must give them the ability to choose him. They choose him because God regenerated their hearts first.

**There are some who say they feel cold and hard and can't come to Jesus!** Well, that is precisely when you need to come to him. You need to have a sense of helplessness to cry out for help.

**Then there are those who use election as an excuse not to exercise faith because they are in covenant families and have been raised in the church.** Wrong!!! All men, before they are converted are heading to hell. Every man must call on the name of the Lord to be saved! Your children too!

**6. God elected through grace and for his pleasure to call and to draw those he elected in Christ.**

**God draws them to himself by his Word and Spirit** – giving them faith to receive his Word, which taught about the work of their Covenant Keeper (living and dying for the elect)!

**He adopts them. He saves and sanctify them. He preserves them throughout this life.**

**One day he will glorify them.** You will remember election is the first link in the Golden Chain of Salvation. Once one is elect, he must be called, and he must be justified, and he must be sanctified, and he must be glorified.

**7. The question them comes, "How do I know if I am elected?"**

Wrong question. Instead, ask yourself, "Do I believe in Jesus." **If you believe in Jesus, you are elected.** Case closed. If you don't believe, learn about Jesus so you might believe. There is no "elect" birthmark.

**8. As a Christian, then, don't go around asking people if they "feel elected."**

Tell them to repent and believe in Jesus so they could have eternal life, and that if they

reject Jesus it is certain eternal death.

God did all this in order to **demonstrate God's mercy**, to the **praise of the riches of God's glorious grace**. As Scripture says, "God chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." And elsewhere, "Those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified."

**9. God elected through grace and for his pleasure, that seeing God's mercy, the redeemed might praise him.**

God did not do this just to prove his power, though his power is seen in election.

He did this because **he wants man's praises**.

And in fact, **man's election shows his need to praise** God even more!

**Conclusion:**

God worked all the details of election, every single detail, and he did so before the foundation of the world. God did this wonderful work of election out of pure grace (you did not deserve something good you received) and out of his own pleasure (he gets praises out of his work) in God's time in history.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Humble yourself before the one who graciously elected you!** God chose you when you couldn't choose him and when you didn't want to choose him, and he did everything you needed to be saved, even giving you faith, the hand and mouth of your souls, so you could receive salvation.

**2. Rejoice in the blessed hope you have as a Christian! Worship him. Sing like you were chosen from a dung heap, cleaned up, married a King and given a royal name! Pray like you access to heaven! You do!**

**3. Tell others God loves the world.** Be a part of working out someone's election. God is pleased to use human agents to work his plan! Remember, every bride is expected to have children, or at least try to have them.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, know you will be condemned if you refuse to accept salvation in Jesus. I plead with you to ask the Lord to give you eternal life. He says: Whoever calls on the Lord will be saved.