

Our Doctrine (TULIP)

Part 2: Unconditional Election



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A Quote



If God enters into a covenant with unfallen man, man is so insignificant a creature that it must be an act of gracious condescension on the Lord's part; but if God enters into covenant with sinful man, he is then so offensive a creature that it must be, on God's part, an act of pure, free, rich, sovereign grace.

Charles H. Spurgeon

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Outline



- Overview of the Doctrine
- Defining Unconditional Election
- Scriptural Basis
- Some Objections
- Practical Implications

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Overview of the Doctrine



- Election must be viewed within the context of God's sovereignty
 - **Psalm 135:6** Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.
 - **Proverbs 16:4** The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil.
 - **Job 42:2** I know that You can do all things...no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.
- Election is but one aspect of God's eternal, decreed will (*WCF* Chap. 3)
- Election follows directly from total depravity (last week)
 - Nature of fallen (unregenerate) man is totally corrupted by sin
 - People are universally deserving of God's condemnation
 - People are unwilling and unable to come to God for salvation
- God, for His own good pleasure, has purposed to elect *some* unto salvation

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Overview of the Doctrine



Ephesians 1:3-6 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 to Himself 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 1:11-12 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, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

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Overview of the Doctrine



Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), Chapter 3, para. 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 free grace and love alone, 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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Defining Unconditional Election



- What is meant by *election*?
 - Election is God's foreordained choice of some for salvation
 - Election is *not* salvation (justification); it is *unto* salvation
 - Election, as a special case of predestination, deals with man's final destination
- What is meant by *unconditional*?
 - God's choice is not *conditioned* on anything within us (**Romans 9:11-16**)
 - No past, present or future acts or responses influence God's sovereign choice
- Objection! Isn't faith in Christ necessary to be saved?
 - Yes! Justification is conditioned on faith (**Romans 10:9, Hebrews 11:6**)
 - Anyone who believes in Christ will be saved (**John 3:16**)
 - God produces such faith in His elect (**John 6:44,63; Acts 13:48**)

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Defining Unconditional Election



John 6:44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

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Quick Review



- When did God elect some unto salvation?
 - **Ephesians 1:4** ...He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...
- On what basis did God elect some unto salvation?
 - According to His will and to the praise of His glorious grace (**Ephesians 1:11**)
- Why did God elect some unto salvation?
 - He could have elected all, or He could have elected none; He did neither
 - Sproul: “Some receive mercy, others receive justice; none receive injustice”
- So who are God’s elect?
 - We don’t know, but they are from every tribe, language, people and nation (**Revelation 5:9**)
 - **Mark 13:27** ...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

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Scriptural Basis (OT)



- **Genesis 12:1-2** Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.” (see also Isaac, Jacob, Joseph)
- **Deuteronomy 7:6-7** For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession...It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set His love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples...
- **Psalms 33:12** Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen as His heritage!
- **Psalms 65:4** Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!

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Scriptural Basis (NT)



- **Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—... For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- **2 Timothy 1:9** ...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,...
- **2 Timothy 2:10** Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect...
- **Revelation 13:8** ...everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

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Scriptural Basis (NT)



Romans 8:29-30 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.

Golden Chain of Salvation

Foreknew → Predestined → Called → Justified → Glorified

Non-Reformed (Prescient) View

God knows in advance who will believe, and He elects on that basis

Reformed View

Foreknew is *foreloved*; to set His love upon or have a special regard for

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What Does *Known by God* Mean?



- **Deuteronomy 7:7** It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set His love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples...
- **Amos 3:2** You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.
- **Jeremiah 1:5** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.
- **Matthew 7:22-23** On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'.
- **Romans 11:2** God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew...

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Scriptural Basis for the Doctrine



- **Romans 9:10-16** And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 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— she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” So then He has mercy on whomever He wills, and He hardens whomever He wills.

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Some Objections



- Sovereign election seems unfair or unjust
 - Our notion of fairness is warped (depravity and limited knowledge)
 - Everyone deserves God's condemnation (**Psalm 14:3, Romans 3:23**)
 - Paul anticipates and *demolishes* this objection (**Romans 9:14-15, 19-24**)

Romans 9:14-15 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 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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Some Objections



Romans 9:19-24 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who can resist His will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory— even us whom He has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

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Some Objections



- Election is inconsistent with man's "free will"
 - Adam and Eve truly had free will; all were corrupted after the fall (**Psalm 14:3**)
 - We make real, free choices; however, we choose according to our *nature*
 - Unregenerate man will not and cannot believe unto salvation (**John 6:44**)
- Election makes God the author of sin
 - God actively works faith in the elect; He does not actively cause non-elect to sin
 - **Acts 13:48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.
 - **James 1:13-15** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

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Some Objections



- Election discourages holy living
 - **John 14:15** If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.
 - **1 John 2:29** If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him.
 - **Rom. 6:1-2** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
- What's the point of evangelism?
 - It is commanded: **Matt. 28:19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...
 - The *means* are ordained: The elect are called by hearing the Word
 - **Romans 10:14** How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
- What about **John 3:16** and similar "universal" verses?
 - Unrelated to sovereign election; it asserts all who believe will be saved
 - We reject the notion that all people are saved (*universalism*)

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Practical Implications



- Election gives us *real* security
 - We know our eternal home, despite earthly circumstances
 - **John 10:29** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.
 - No need to be anxious (**Phil. 4:6** ...do not be anxious about anything...)
- Election leads to humility
 - We played no part in our election and calling (**Ephesians 2:8-9**)
 - Therefore, we can have no sense of superiority to others
- Election leads to greater praise and adoration of God
 - It magnifies and emphasizes the glory of God's grace
 - He deserves our praise and adoration for His grace and mercy (**Psalm 111**)
 - **Romans 5:8** ...but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

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Practical Implications



- Election leads to obedience motivated by love
 - If we love Him, we will keep His commands
 - We love because He first loved us (**1 John 4:9**)
- Election encourages genuine evangelism
 - We take the Great Commission seriously – God's elect are everywhere
 - God ordains the means by which His elect are to be called (by the Word)
 - We do not need to depend on eloquent speech or "trickery"
 - Gives us patience with others; the results do not depend on us

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Helpful References



- *Holy Bible* (ESV)
- *Westminster Confession of Faith*
- *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (L. Boettner)
- *Chosen by God* (R.C. Sproul)
- *The Five Points of Calvinism* (D.N. Steele, C.C. Thomas and S.L. Quinn)
- *The Sovereignty of God* (A.W. Pink)