

A Case Against Calvinism – Lesson 6

Tulip: Unconditional Election

Ephesians 2:8-9

Introduction: Does God give us the right to choose salvation or reject it? This is the question that the second point of Calvinism rails against. It has been said that the power of choice is love's essential ingredient. Unconditional Election is the misguided attempt of the Calvinist in which they hold to an unbiblical view of the Sovereignty of God. Its perversion of sovereignty demands that whether one goes to heaven or hell depends solely upon God's will and decree. A man's receiving or rejecting Christ is not by his free choice but is irresistibly imposed upon him by God.

Again, why wouldn't the God who is love exercise the absolute control Calvinism attributes to Him over every thought, word, and deed to eliminate sin, disease, suffering, and death and to bring all mankind into heaven? This contradiction of the basic standards that God has put in every human conscience raises an obvious question, and it is a question in response to which Calvinists themselves cannot agree upon an answer.

Some, like John Calvin, unashamedly say that God doesn't want everyone saved, indeed, that it is his "good pleasure" to damn so many. Others, realizing the conclusion that idea creates in anyone with a normal sense of mercy and kindness, call this "hyper-Calvinism" and attempt to find other explanations for God's alleged failure to irresistibly elect everyone. The necessity to overcome non-Calvinists' objections to God's apparent callousness in predestining multitudes to eternal torment before they were even born has led to a number of attempted rationalizations.

Some try to escape the moral disaster by simply saying that the answer is hidden in the secret of God's will, an obvious copout. Others, while admitting the monstrous contradiction, insist that what to us seems abhorrent is not so to God, that we cannot impose our standards upon Him.

I. The Calvinist definition of Unconditional Election.

- A. The Canons of Dort explained this tenet as "the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen, from the whole human race...a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ..."
- B. Unconditional Election is the outworking of Calvinism's extreme view of sovereignty, which allows man no freedom of choice or action even to sin. That being the case, if anyone is to be saved, God must choose for them. Out of Unconditional Election, then, comes predestination to salvation.
- C. The Westminster Confession of Faith states, "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His own glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death."

II. The importance of the doctrine to the Calvinist.

III. The Scripture and Unconditional Election.

A. The view concerning the gift of God. Ep. 2:8

B. The Sovereignty of God.

C. The views of predestination and Election.

D. The Calvinists efforts to redefine words.

IV. The questions that this doctrine raises.

A. Why so few were chosen by the God who “is love” (1 John 4:8).

B. Does God cause man to sin?

C. How can it be disobedience to do what God has willed?

D. Who are the elect?

E. Why did Calvin’s God choose to save so few when He could have saved all?