

unconditional election either. God chose a people, but He chose a place, not individuals. The chosen are the obedient (Galatians 3:26-27).

Romans 8:28-30. This passage is used to teach that men were saved without their choice. Gene Taylor[8] gave two proofs:

- Those who love God OBEY Him (John 14:15).
- The called are the ones who heard the Gospel; they were called by the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

Romans 9:11-16, 19-23. This passage is a “sugar-stick” for Calvinism. This passage is used to illustrate or “prove” their doctrine; however, this passage is not about salvation, but about a continuance of God’s plan. God chose Jacob to carry on the seed promise. He did not choose Jacob to be saved and Esau to be lost.

John 15:16. Context is important to remember with this passage. Note that Jesus is talking to the apostles and their work, not about individual salvation. Bob Winton says that they could not have done the thing that Christ commissioned them to do without being chosen.[9]

Although this doctrine is “defended,” it is disproven by Scripture.

The Doctrine Defeated

The following points help prove conditional election and NOT unconditional election.

The Bible teaches that God loves all men and wants everyone to be saved (Ezekiel 18:23; John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

The Bible teaches that God gives man a choice (Genesis 2:16-17; Joshua 24:15).

The Bible teaches that man MUST obey God (Matthew 7:21-27; Acts 2:40; Philippians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 5:8-9; 2 Peter 1:10).

The Bible teaches that God is NOT a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11; 10:12).

The Bible teaches that the elect are in Christ (Romans 16:13; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 1:4).

The Bible teaches that evangelism aids in salvation (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 10:13-14). John McCarthur said about evangelism, “There are so many things that are incomprehensible to me, but I believe them because they’re revealed in scripture. And I don’t

even mind some tension here. I don’t even mind the fact that the Bible also says, ‘Whosoever will,’ the Bible also says that, ‘Jesus wept over Jerusalem and said you will not come to me that you might have life.’ You say, ‘Well what is all that?’ That’s simply saying that anybody will come can come and anybody who does come will be received. You say, ‘How does that work together with election?’ I don’t know.” Evangelism is pointless if Calvinism is true.

Calvinism and its tenants cannot be true. Unconditional Election is a false doctrine that must be defeated with Scripture. Man must CHOOSE to come to God. God does call men, but it is through the Gospel and being part of the elect is based upon their obedience to Him.

Endnotes

- [1]Duane Edward Spencer, TULIP, p. 44.
- [2]Laurence M. Vance, The Other Side of Calvinism, p. 241.
- [3]<https://www.gotquestions.org/unconditional-election.html>
- [4]<https://www.lawofliberty.com/study%20aids/miscellaneous%20studies/Resources/03-unconditionalelection.pdf>
- [5]<https://www.padfield.com/acrobat/taylor/calvinism.pdf>
- [6]Wayne Jackson, The Acts of the Apostles from Jerusalem to Rome, p. 162.
- [7]Laurence M. Vance, The Other Side of Calvinism, p. 347-348.
- [8]<https://www.padfield.com/acrobat/taylor/calvinism.pdf>
- [9]gbntv.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Textual/18-Winton-John.pdf

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TULIP: An Ugly Flower

A Study on Calvinism (Part 2)

Noah Olson



Unconditional Election

Noah Olson

The next letter in this ugly flower called TULIP is U and it stands for the Calvinistic doctrine, Unconditional Election. This doctrine, leans upon Total Depravity (the “T” in TULIP) because if man cannot save himself, he needs someone else to help him. One poem reads as follows

Tis not that I did choose Thee.
For, Lord that could not be:
This heart would still refuse Thee,
Hadst Thou not chosen me!^[1]

Laurence M. Vance quotes Boettner who said, “If the doctrine of Total Inability or Original Sin be admitted, the doctrine of Unconditional Election follows by the most inescapable logic. If, as the Scriptures and experience tell us, all men are by nature in a state of guilt and depravity from which they are wholly unable deliver themselves and have no claim whatever on God for deliverance, it follows that if any are saved god must choose out those who shall be the objects of His grace.”^[2] Some call this doctrine sovereign election or sovereign grace. The student is encouraged to open their Bibles and see what it says concerning Calvinism (in this case Unconditional Election).

The Doctrine Defined

Defining the words Unconditional and Election is important. Unconditional shows that man has no responsibility, simply, conditions are not required. Election means to choose. God chose some to be saved and be a part of His “elect.” John Calvin called this doctrine predestination. While predestination is a Biblical word (Romans 8:29), it is much different than the way Calvinists use it. Calvinists believe that God predetermined before the foundation of the world the spiritual state of all individual people. They say that it was not that God used his foreknowledge to see who had faith and obedience, but that He created His “saved and lost” list WITHOUT man’s choice. Note the

following quotes from advocates of this teaching

- Synod of Dort: “Election is the unchangeable purpose of God...This election was not founded upon foreseen faith, and the obedience of faith.”
- Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689: “Those of mankind who 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 to everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto.”
- Johnathan Edwards: “the conversion of a sinner being not owing to a man's self determination, but to God's determination, and eternal election, which is absolute, and depending on the sovereign Will of God, and not on the free will of man; as is evident from what has been said : and it being very evident from the Scriptures, that the eternal election of saints to the faith and holiness, is also an election of them to eternal salvation; hence their appointment to salvation must also be absolute, and not depending on their contingent, self-determining Will.”
- Westminster Confession of Faith: “God has predestined and foreordained some men and angels out of his free grace and love without any foresight of faith in either of them, and others are foreordained to everlasting death and the number of either is so certain and definite that it cannot be increased or diminished.”

In summary, God’s sovereign will predestined that some would be saved and others to be lost. To get around the fact that God is unjust, they claim that this doing is His “mysterious will.”^[3] Calvinists will teach that since no man deserves grace, God can give it to whomsoever He wills. He gives grace to the elect and justice to the non-elect. Of course, man is free from obligation because it is God who CHOOSES them. Unfortunately, this doctrine is one of the foundational truths of Calvinism, but it is of interest to point out that all Calvinists believe that they themselves are part of the elect.

The Doctrine “Defended.”

Advocates of this teaching wrongfully use the Scriptures to “prove” their teaching. One said regarding John Calvin that, “One of the many mistakes Calvin made was taking passages he did not understand and propounding false doctrines upon them.”^[4] What are some of the “proof” texts Calvinists use?

Acts 13:48. From this verse, it is taught that men were ordained to be saved apart from their own will. Ordained is automatically attributed as unconditional election according to Calvinists. Three proofs destroy this thought:

- Gene Taylor noted that reversing the verse will help: “Those who believed became part of those who had been appointed to eternal life.”^[5]
- Wayne Jackson noted: “The term ‘ordained’ means to arrange or, to set in order, to determine. Here the word may be either a passive form, ‘were ordained,’ or a middle form, ‘determined themselves,’ (Lenski, 1934, 552). The context indicates that the latter is the case, because these Gentiles are set in contrast to the Jews who trust from themselves the message of salvation. Knowling says, ‘There is no countenance here for the absolutum decretum of the Calvinists, since verse 46 had already shown that the Jews had acted through their own choice’ (300). Hence, the sense of the passage is this: Those who believed were those who had determined for themselves that they had been offered, and would accept, God’s gift of eternal life.”^[6]
- Note what it did NOT say: “It doesn’t say one has to be ordained to believe. It doesn’t say there are ‘reprobates’ who can’t be saved. It doesn’t say that anyone was ordained unconditionally. It doesn’t say that anyone was ordained before the foundation of the world. It doesn’t say that anyone was ordained by a sovereign decree. It doesn’t say that those who are ordained will believe. It doesn’t say that everyone who was ever saved was ordained to believe. And the final thing this verse doesn’t say is that every Calvinist has to use it as a proof text for Unconditional Election.”^[7]

This verse does not teach unconditional election.

Ephesians 1:4. This verse does not teach

