

Chosen by Father

September 8, 2019 ~ Five Points of Calvinism ~ Romans 9.10-24

Embracing Arminianism

- When planning sermon series I thought I'd focus very little on Arminianism
- But the "5 Points" were born out of controversy – It can't be avoided
- Instead of avoiding Arminianism I've decided to engage with it more fully
- **III: "Cage Stage"** – Arminians would get angry at me as I shared "Calvinist" texts
- "Why were Arminians angry with me?" – Not just my attitude / Didn't like texts
- **III: "Lane's Bible Study"** – Crossed arms/feet ~ Bible study – angry at texts

Election Defined – Conditional vs Unconditional (define terms)

- **Def: Election** ~ "The verb elect means 'to select, or choose out.' The biblical doctrine of election is that before Creation God selected out of the human race (foreseen as fallen) those whom he would redeem .. through Jesus Christ." (Concise Theology by JI Packer)
- We may be confused by "election" / Many -> One vs. One -> Many
- **Def: Unconditional Election** ~ "God elects people to salvation by His own sovereign choice and not because of some future action they will perform or condition they will meet. Those who come to Christ become His children by His will, not by theirs." (GotQuestions)
- **Def: Conditional Election** ~ "Conditional election is the belief that God elects people for salvation based on His foreknowledge of who will put their faith in Christ. .. It's based on the condition of man doing something of his own free will." (GotQuestions)
- These are competing definitions for biblical term election
- A synonym for elect (verb) is choose and elect (noun) would be chosen

Reprobation Defined

- Existence of an elect necessitates the existence of a non-elect
- Non-elect are referred to as reprobate – as they're in a reprobate state
- So simply put – "The elect are saved – the reprobate are lost"
- Calvinists and Arminians agree on these terms and truths
- They agree that the elect will go to heaven and the reprobate will go to hell
- They also agree God knew the destiny of every individual before time began
 - Evangelical Arminian scholars must embrace (**Eph 1.4** and **Rev 13.8**)
 - "Book of Life from the foundation of the world"
 - Arminian layman should too – To reject them is to reject biblical inerrancy
 - **C** say God chose this outcome / **A** say each man's free will chose this outcome
 - **Q:** "Why does God choose to not interfere in the destiny of the lost?"
 - **A:** "Because to do so would violate their free will."
- Let me repeat: **C & A** define the elect and reprobate the same

Xition: Let's read a few verses from both Calvinist and Arminian perspectives

Some Concepts Calvinists & Arminians Agree & Disagree On . . .

- **Read Eph 1.3-4** ~ “Blessed be the God .. before Him in love.”
 - **C & A** agree that God chose the elect before the foundation of the world
 - Disagree on who’s will prevailed – **C** say God’s / **A** say man’s
 - **A** would say that their will then aligns with God’s will (“wants all men saved”)
- **Phil 1.29** ~ “.. to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ .. to believe in Him.”
 - **C & A** agree that belief in Christ is a gift from God given only to the elect
 - **A** believe all men were offered gift – those that accepted it are made elect
 - **C** also believe all men were offered gift – but only the elect accepted it
- **C & A** agree elect and reprobate fixed before time / agree that faith is a gift
- These identify failures of “open theism” & works righteousness cults (LDS, JW)

Mini Training Course – “Read the Bible Like an Arminian”

- **John 6.37** ~ “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”
 - **A** agree Father gives all to Jesus who will come – self-selection of elect
- **John 6.44** ~ “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”
 - **A** agrees Father draws people to Christ – self-selection of elect
- **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.”
 - Traditionally a powerful verse in the Calvinist’s arsenal
 - Arminians would prefer: “as many as believed were appointed to eternal life”
 - But all they need say is, “those appointed were the self-selected elect”
- **Read Rom 8.28-30** ~ “And we know that all .. these He also glorified.”
 - John Piper cites this text as “Perhaps the most important text of all in relation to the teaching of unconditional election” in his book “Five Points”
 - But if I were a scholarly Arminian I wouldn’t fear this text – I’d embrace it
 - All is okay if man’s election is based on his free-will before time began
- I could go on, but I think you’re seeing the pattern I’m describing
- The process by which the elect are chosen is the key to everything
 - **C** say God chooses the elect without regard to human “will” or “work”
 - **A** say God chooses elect based on His knowledge of who accepts gospel call

Summarize Some Key Points

- **C & A** agree all earthly events are known by God & unchangeable
- **C & A** agree that human works, prayers, and efforts are all means in God’s plan
- **C & A** disagree on whose will is ultimate in salvation – God’s or man’s

Xition: Let’s now look at the heart of Arminianism . . .

“Is it God’s Will to Save Everyone?”

- If Yes, and all not saved then God failed to achieve His will for some reason
 - “This is the mainspring that drives all Arminian beliefs”
 - **A** say God’s will is to save everyone – yet admit that not all will be saved
 - The reason for this is not that God can’t but that God won’t
 - He won’t violate man’s free will to save them – they must choose freely
- I’ll read 4 verses they cite to support this view
 1. **1 Tim 2.3b-6a** ~ “God our Savior .. desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all..”
 - **1 Tim 2.1-2a** ~ “I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority”
 - Paul’s use of “all” refers to all types of men (*kings and leaders*)
 2. **2 Pet 3.9** ~ “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”
 - **2 Pet 3.1** ~ “Beloved, I now write you this second epistle” / to believers
 3. **Eze 18.23** ~ “Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?’, says the Lord God, ‘and not that he should turn from his ways and live?’”
 4. **Eze 33.11** ~ “Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’”
 - God is having Ezekiel warn Israelites of destruction should they not obey
 - Hardly all men – All other people of earth were assumed lost

“If it is God’s Will to Save Everyone He’s Done a Pretty Poor Job”

- If it is, why do so many texts speak of people being destined for hell?
 - **1 Thess 5.9** ~ “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ?”
 - **1 Pet 2.8b** ~ “They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they were also appointed.”
 - But I taught you to read Bible like an Arminian / “appoint” in **Acts 13.48**
 - God appointed them to destruction after their free will choice was foreseen
- Must admit - If it were God’s will to save “all” men He’s done a pretty poor job
 - Noah’s day – all killed but 8 on ark (“preacher of righteousness” **2 Pet 2.5**)
 - Noah may have been a fine boat builder – but a horrible preacher
 - Abraham alone chosen out of all men on earth
 - “How can Arminians cling to this weak reed?”

Xition: Before we look to Romans 9 I want to cover two more texts

God Does the Choosing and Calling

- **John 15.16** ~ “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” (after Judas was dismissed)
 - We read “I chose you and appointed you” like Arminian – been there, done that
 - But Jesus insists apostles didn’t choose Him / This undermines assumption
 - But let’s give the Arminians a “mulligan” here – Apostles are unique
- **1 Cor 1.26-29** ~ “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.”
 - Self-selection wouldn’t guarantee this grouping of believers
 - Additional details given c/God’s choice (can’t assume self-selection)
 - And we’re told the reason for God’s choice – “no flesh should glory”
 - I taught you to read Bible like an Arminian earlier – but this text stumps me

It All Comes Down to Choice – Whose Choice Prevails – God’s or Man’s

- **Read Rom 9.10-13** ~ “And not only this .. but Esau I have hated”
- Paul cites “the purpose of God” behind all of this
 - Arminians say God’s ultimate purpose is to honor theirs – not pursue His own
 - They turn this verse completely around
- But note well Paul’s next statement in **vss 14-16**
 - “What shall we say then? .. of God who shows mercy.”
 - Paul knows how people have responded to this in the past
 - He knows at least some will regard this as unfair
 - “It is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God”
 - Paul explicitly states man’s will and works have no bearing on God’s choice
- **v18** ~ “He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.”
 - Let’s pause here a minute and review our Arminian axioms
 - “God wants all men to be saved” – Yet He’s hardening hearts
 - “Men self-select their way into the elect” – Yet God bypassed Ishmael & Esau
 - God chose Isaac and Jacob instead
 - Were these choices based on “self-selection”? The text refutes that. . .

Xition: Let’s look at Paul’s lost opportunity to support conditional election

Two Competing Definitions of Elect

- Remember our 2 definitions are mutually exclusive
- At this point Paul could throw his support towards | away from one or other
- **Def: Unconditional Election** ~ “God elects people to salvation by His own sovereign choice and not because of some future action they will perform or condition they will meet. Those who come to Christ become His children by His will, not by theirs.” (GotQuestions)
- **Def: Conditional Election** ~ “Conditional election is the belief that God elects people for salvation based on His foreknowledge of who will put their faith in Christ. .. It’s based on the condition of man doing something of his own free will.” (GotQuestions)
- These are competing definitions for biblical term election

Let’s Resume at Verse 18

- Paul said “He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.”
- At this moment, if God was honoring man’s will in his “self-selection” into the elect, wouldn’t Paul simply state that . . . / “But does he?”
 - Does Paul here have in mind God defending / honoring the “free will” of man
 - “No” – as a matter of fact – Paul anticipates the opposite response
 - The Arminian response - that man would accuse God of violating man’s will
- **v19** – “You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”
 - “How does Paul answer this question he anticipates being asked?”
 - **Read vs 20-23** ~ “But indeed, O man .. beforehand for glory”
 - He doesn’t dignify the question with an answer
 - Instead, he rebukes the questioner for his audacity

I’ve not debated an Arminian on this issue in a long time . . . I don’t care to
They are missing out on something beautiful though – I wish I could convince them
But if God’s clear Word doesn’t convince them – I know I can’t
This message is not meant for Arminians – it’s meant for you Calvinists
I want you to know that God is sovereign in all things including man’s salvation

Let me close with this exclamation from Psalm 107

“Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”

Jude 24-25 ~ “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”

Chosen by Father - Handout

September 8, 2019 ~ Five Points of Calvinism ~ Romans 9.10-24

1. This word means to “select or choose out” _____.
2. What is the Arminian condition in conditional election? _____.
3. The two types of election are: _____ and _____.
4. _____ is the opposite of elect.
5. What heresy arises from disbelieving that the elect and reprobate were fixed before time began? _____.
6. What two cults include works righteousness? _____ and _____.
7. What is the key to reading the Bible like an Arminian? _____
_____.
8. What is the “mainspring” that drives all Arminian beliefs? _____
_____.
9. What 3 reasons were given as to why **1 Corinthians 1.26-29** resists being read in the Arminian way? 1) _____
2) _____,
3) _____.
10. What does the Calvinist / Arminian debate come down to? _____.
11. What did Paul miss a golden opportunity to do in **Romans 9** if conditional election was true? _____.
12. What does Paul’s proposed question in **verse 19** (“*Why does He still find fault?*”) presuppose? _____.

Election from “Concise Theology” by JI Packer (pg 149)

For [God] says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. Romans 9:15-16

The verb elect means “to select, or choose out.” The biblical doctrine of election is that before Creation God selected out of the human race (foreseen as fallen) those whom he would redeem, bring to faith, justify, and glorify in and through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28-39; Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:9-10). This divine choice is an expression of free and sovereign grace, for it is unconstrained and unconditional, not merited by anything in those who are its subjects. God owes sinners no mercy of any kind, only condemnation; so it is a wonder, and matter for endless praise, that he should choose to save any of us; and doubly so when his choice involved the giving of his own Son to suffer as sin-bearer for the elect (Rom. 8:32).

The doctrine of election, like every truth about God, involves mystery and sometimes stirs controversy. But in Scripture it is a pastoral doctrine, brought in to help Christians see how great is the grace that saves them, and to move them to humility, confidence, joy, praise, faithfulness, and holiness in response. It is the family secret of the children of God. We do not know who else he has chosen among those who do not yet believe, nor why it was his good pleasure to choose us in particular. What we do know is, first, that had we not been chosen for life we would not be believers now (for only the elect are brought to faith), and, second, that as elect believers we may rely on God to finish in us the good work that he started (1 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:18). Knowledge of one’s election thus brings comfort and joy.

Peter tells us we should be “eager to make [our] calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10)—that is, certain to us. Election is known by its fruits. Paul knew the election of the Thessalonians from their faith, hope, and love, the inward and outward transformation of their lives that the gospel had brought about (1 Thess. 1:3-6). The more that the qualities to which Peter has been exhorting his readers appear in our lives (goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love (2 Pet. 1:5-7), the surer of our own election we are entitled to be.

The elect are, from one standpoint, the Father’s gift to the Son (John 6:39; 10:29; 17:2, 24). Jesus testifies that he came into this world specifically to save them (John 6:37-40; 10:14-16, 26-29; 15:16; 17:6-26; Eph. 5:25-27), and any account of his mission must emphasize this.

Reprobation is the name given to God’s eternal decision regarding those sinners whom he has not chosen for life. His decision is in essence a decision not to change them, as the elect are destined to be changed, but to leave them to sin as in their hearts they already want to do, and finally to judge them as they deserve for what they have done. When in particular instances God gives them over to their sins (i.e., removes restraints on their doing the disobedient things they desire), this is itself the beginning of judgment. It is called “hardening” (Rom. 9:18; 11:25; cf. Ps. 81:12; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28), and it inevitably leads to greater guilt.

Reprobation is a biblical reality (Rom. 9:14-24; 1 Pet. 2:8), but not one that bears directly on Christian behavior. The reprobates are faceless so far as Christians are concerned, and it is not for us to try to identify them. Rather, we should live in light of the certainty that anyone may be saved if he or she will but repent and put faith in Christ.

We should view all persons that we meet as possibly being numbered among the elect.