

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## Unconditional Election

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Because of Adam's transgression, his descendants enter the world as guilty, lost sinners. As fallen creatures, they have no desire to have fellowship with the Creator. He is holy, just, and good, whereas they are sinful, perverse, and corrupt. Left to their own choices, they inevitably follow the god of this world and do the will of their father, the devil. Consequently, men have cut themselves off from the Lord of heaven and have forfeited all rights to His love and favor. It would have been perfectly just for God to have left all men in their sin and misery and to have shown mercy

**Biblical Support for the "Five Points" of Calvinism<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The question of supreme importance is not how the system under consideration came to be formulated into five points, or why it was named Calvinism, but rather *is it supported by Scripture?* The final court of appeal for determining the validity of any theological system is the inspired, authoritative Word of God. If Calvinism can be verified by clear and explicit declarations of Scripture, then it must be received by Christians; if not, it must be rejected. For this reason, Biblical passages are given below in support of the five points.

After each point has been introduced, some of the more important verses in which it is taught are quoted. All quotations are from the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible. In each case, the italics within the verses are ours. Apart from the remarks contained in the headings under which the verses are given, there are no explanatory comments as to their meaning. This procedure was necessary because of the limited design of this introductory survey. To compensate for this, we have recommended a number of works in Part Three which deal with these as well as with many other passages of Scripture related to Calvinism.

Although the "five points" are dealt with below under separate headings, and texts are classified in support of each of them individually, they must not be evaluated on a purely individual basis. For these five doctrines are not presented in the Bible as separate and independent units of truth. On the contrary, in the Biblical message they are woven into one harmonious, interrelated system in which God's plan for recovering lost sinners is marvelously displayed. In fact, these doctrines are so inseparably connected that no one of them can be fully appreciated unless it is properly related to, and viewed in light of the other four; for *they mutually explain and support one another*. To judge these doctrines individually without relating each to the others would be like attempting to evaluate one of Rembrandt's paintings by looking at only one color at a time and never viewing the work as a whole. Do not, therefore, merely judge the Biblical evidence for each point separately, but rather consider carefully the collective value of the evidence when these five doctrines are viewed together as a system. When thus properly correlated, they form a fivefold cord of unbreakable strength. (Steele, D. N., Thomas, C. C., & Nicole, R. (1963). *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended and Documented* (p. 24). The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co.)

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to none. God was under no obligation whatsoever to provide salvation for anyone. It is in this context that the Bible sets forth the doctrine of election.

The doctrine of election declares that God, before the foundation of the world, chose certain individuals from among the fallen members of Adam's race to be the objects of His undeserved favor. These, and these only, He purposed to save. God could have chosen to save all men (for He had the power and authority to do so) or He could have chosen to save none (for He was under no obligation to show mercy to any)—but He did neither. Instead He chose to save some and to exclude others. His eternal choice of particular sinners unto salvation was not based upon any foreseen act or response on the part of those selected, but was based solely on His own good pleasure and sovereign will. Thus election was not determined by, or conditioned upon, anything that men would do, but resulted entirely from God's self-determined purpose.

Those who were not chosen to salvation were passed by and left to their own evil devices and choices. It is not within the creature's jurisdiction to call into question the justice of the Creator for not choosing every one to salvation. It is enough to know that the Judge of the earth has done right. It should, however, be kept in mind that if God had not graciously *chosen* a people for Himself and sovereignly determined to *provide* salvation for them and *apply* it to them, none would be saved. The fact that He did this for some, to the exclusion of others, is in no way unfair to the latter group, unless of course one maintains that God was under obligation to provide salvation for sinners—a position which the Bible utterly rejects.

The doctrine of election should be viewed not only against the backdrop of human depravity and guilt, but it should also be studied in connection with the *eternal covenant* or agreement made between the members of the Godhead. For it was in the execution of this covenant that the *Father* chose out of the world of lost sinners a definite number of individuals and gave them to the *Son* to be His people. The *Son*, under the terms of this compact, agreed to do all that was necessary to save those "chosen" and "given" to Him by the Father. The *Spirit's* part in the execution of this covenant was to apply to the elect the salvation secured for them by the *Son*.

Election, therefore, is but *one* aspect (though an important aspect) of the saving purpose of the Triune God, and thus must not be viewed *as* salvation. For the act of election *itself* saved no one; what it did was to mark out certain individuals for salvation. Consequently, the doctrine of election must not be divorced from the doctrines of human guilt, redemption, and regeneration or else it will be distorted and misrepresented. In other words, if it is to be kept in its proper Biblical balance and correctly understood, *the Father's act of election* must be related to the *redeeming work of the Son* who gave Himself to save the elect and to the *renewing work of the Spirit* who brings the elect to faith in Christ!

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A. General statements showing that God has an elect people, that He predestined them to salvation, and thus to eternal life.

- Deuteronomy 10:14, 15: Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; yet *the Lord set his heart in love* upon your fathers and *chose* their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day.
- Psalm 33:12: Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has *chosen* as his heritage!
- Psalm 65:4: Blessed is he whom thou dost *choose* and bring near, to dwell in thy courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, thy holy temple!
- Psalm 106:5: ... that I may see the prosperity of thy *chosen ones*, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thy heritage.
- Haggai 2:23: "On that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, says the Lord, and make you like a signet ring; for I have *chosen* you, says the Lord of hosts."
- Matthew 11:27: "... no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son *chooses* to reveal him."
- Matthew 22:14: "For many are called, but few are *chosen*."
- Matthew 24:22, 24, 31: And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the *elect* those days will be shortened.... For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even *the elect*.... and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather *his elect* from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
- Luke 18:7: And will not God vindicate *his elect*, who cry to him day and night?
- Romans 8:28–30: We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are *called according to his purpose*. 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 brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

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- Romans 8:33: Who shall bring any charge against *God's elect*?
- Romans 11:28: As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards *election* they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.
- Colossians 3:12: Put on then, as *God's chosen ones*, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, ...
- 1 Thessalonians 5:9: For God has not *destined* us for wrath, *but to obtain salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Titus 1:1: Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of *God's elect* and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness ...
- 1 Peter 1:1, 2: To the exiles of the dispersion ... *chosen* and *destined* by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood ...
- 1 Peter 2:8, 9: ... for they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were *destined* to do. But you are a *chosen* race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who *called* you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
- Revelation 17:14: "They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are *called* and *chosen* and faithful."

B. Before the foundation of the world, God chose particular individuals unto salvation. His selection was *not based upon any foreseen response or act* performed by those chosen. Faith and good works are the *result*, not the *cause* of God's choice.

1. God did the choosing.

- Mark 13:20: And if the Lord had not shortened the days, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of *the elect, whom he chose*, he shortened the days.
  - See also 1 Thessalonians 1:4 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13 quoted below.

2. God's choice was made before the foundation of the world.

- Ephesians 1:4: Even as he *chose* us in him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

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- See 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9; Revelation 13:8 and Revelation 17:8 quoted below.
3. God chose particular individuals unto salvation—their names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world.
- Revelation 13:8: And all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose *name* has not been *written before the foundation of the world* in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain.
  - Revelation 17:8: "... and the dwellers on earth whose *names* have not been *written* in the book of life *from the foundation of the world*, will marvel to behold the beast, because it was and is not and is to come."
4. God's choice was not based upon any forseen merit residing in those whom He chose, nor was it based on any foreseen good works performed by them.
- Romans 9:11–13: 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 his *call*, she was told, "The elder will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."
  - Romans 9:16: So it depends *not upon man's will or exertion*, but upon *God's mercy*.
  - Romans 10:20: "... I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."
  - 1 Corinthians 1:27–29: *God chose* what is *foolish* in the world to shame the wise, *God chose* what is *weak* in the world to shame the strong, *God chose* what is *low and despised* in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, *so that no human being might boast in the presence of God*.
  - 2 Timothy 1:9: ... who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of *our works* but in virtue of *his own purpose* and the *grace* which he gave us in Christ Jesus *ages ago*.
5. Good works are the result, not the ground, of predestination.
- Ephesians 1:12: We who first hoped in Christ have been *destined* and *appointed* to live for the praise of his glory.
  - Ephesians 2:10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*, which *God prepared beforehand*, that we should walk in them.

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- 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 abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.
6. God's choice was not based upon foreseen faith. Faith is the result and therefore the evidence of God's election, not the cause or ground of His choice.
- Acts 13:48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were *ordained* to eternal life *believed*.
  - Acts 18:27: ... he greatly helped those who *through grace had believed*.
  - Philippians 1:29: For it has been *granted* to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only *believe* in him but also suffer for his sake.
  - Philippians 2:12, 13: Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; *for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure*.
  - 1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5: For *we know*, brethren beloved by God, that *he has chosen you; for our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction*.
  - 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14: ... *God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth*. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - James 2:5: ... Has not *God chosen* those who are poor in the world *to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom* which he has promised to those who love him?
    - See the Appendix on The Meaning of "Foreknew" in Romans 8:29. See also those verses quoted below under Point IV on Efficacious Grace, which teach that faith and repentance are the gifts of God and are wrought in the soul by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.
7. It is by faith and good works that one confirms his calling and election.
- 2 Peter 1:5–11: For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if

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these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be the more zealous *to confirm your call and election*, for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

C. Election is not salvation but is *unto* salvation. Just as the president-elect does not become the president of the United States *until* he is inaugurated, those chosen unto salvation are not saved *until* they are regenerated by the Spirit and justified by faith in Christ.

- Romans 11:7: What then? Israel failed to obtain what it sought. *The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened.*
- 2 Timothy 2:10: Therefore I endure everything for the sake of *the elect*, that they also *may obtain the salvation* which in Christ Jesus goes with eternal glory.
  - See Acts 13:48; 1 Thessalonians 1:4 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14 quoted above. Compare Ephesians 1:4 with Romans 16:7. In Ephesians 1:4 Paul shows that men were *chosen* “in Christ” before the world began. From Romans 16:7 it is clear that men are not *actually* “in Christ” until their conversion.

D. Election was based on the sovereign, distinguishing mercy of Almighty God. It was not man’s will but God’s will that determined which sinners would be shown mercy and saved.

- Exodus 33:19: “... I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”
- 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 own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples.”
- Matthew 20:15: “ ‘Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?’ ...”
- Romans 9:10–24: And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done

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nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call, she was told, "the elder 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 it depends not upon man's will or exertion, *but upon God's mercy.* For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy *upon whomever he wills*, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills. You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But, who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me thus?" *Has the potter no right over the clay*, to make out of the same lump one *vessel for beauty* and another for menial use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for the *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?

- Romans 11:4–6: But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So too at the present time there is a remnant, *chosen by grace*. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. Compare 1 Kings 19:10, 18.
  - Romans 11:33–36: O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen.
  - Ephesians 1:5: He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.
- E. The doctrine of election is but a part of the much broader Biblical doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty. The Scriptures not only teach that God predestined certain individuals unto eternal life, but that all events, both small and great, come about as the result of God's eternal decree. The Lord God rules over heaven and earth with absolute control; nothing comes to pass apart from His eternal purpose.
- 1 Chronicles 29:10–12: Therefore David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of Israel our father,



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for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from thee, and thou rulest over all. In thy hand are power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great and to give strength to all."

- Job 42:1, 2: Then Job answered the Lord: "I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted."
- Psalm 115:3: Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases.
- Psalm 135:6: Whatever the Lord pleases he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.
- Isaiah 14:24, 27: The Lord of hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.... For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?"
- Isaiah 46:9–11: "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose, calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.' "
- Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the things for which I sent it."
- Jeremiah 32:17: "'Ah Lord God! It is thou who hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and by thy outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for thee.' "
- Daniel 4:35: All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing; and he does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What doest thou?"
- Matthew 19:26: "... with God all things are possible."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Steele, D. N., Thomas, C. C., & Nicole, R. (1963). *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended and Documented* (pp. 30–38). The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co.