

The Bible vs. Calvin: Unconditional Election

Opening Remarks

- I. Introduction (1:15) (6:15)
 - a. Description of Herod's Temple
 - i. Divided into six areas
 - ii. Each one was higher than the previous
 1. The court of the Gentiles
 2. The Sacred Enclosure (3 ft higher)
 3. The court of the women (3 ft higher)
 4. The court of Israel (ten feet higher)
 5. The court of the priests (3 ft higher)
 6. The house of God (8 ft higher)
 - a. Holy Place
 - b. Holy of Holies
 - iii. The design of the temple depicted the separation between Holy God and sinful man.
 - iv. The wall of separation – divided the court of the Gentiles from the sacred enclosure.
 1. 4.5 ft tall
 2. Inscriptions on the wall at intervals warned that no Gentile should enter on pain of death
 - a. “No outsider shall enter the protective enclosure around the sanctuary. And whoever is caught will have only himself to blame for his ensuing death”
 - b. Two of these inscriptions are still in existence today
 3. Emphasized the Jews as God's chosen people
 4. Also emphasized the exclusion of all other tribes and nations.
 - b. Preview
 - i. Compare and contrast the concept of the Jews as the chosen people of God with the Calvinist doctrine of Unconditional Election
 - ii. Make the case that the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ is for all is inconsistent with the Calvinist view of unconditional election
 - iii. Explain the proper understanding of the predestination mentioned in the New Testament, namely, that the eternal purpose of God was that salvation would be available to all through the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - iv. Illustrate the glory of God and His truth
- II. Unconditional Election (7:31) (10:40)
 - i. The doctrine
 1. “Predestination, according to Calvin, is the eternal and unchangeable decree of God by which he foreordained, for his own glory and the display of his attributes of mercy and justice, a part of the human race, without any merit of their own, to eternal

salvation, and another part, in just punishment of their sin, to eternal damnation.” - Creeds of Christendom, by Philip Schaff, Vol. 1, Section 59.

ii. Discussion

1. Necessary conclusion of the Calvinist doctrine of Total Inherited Depravity (Original Sin)
2. A misdirected attempt to give God glory by making Him responsible for every aspect of our redemption
3. Scriptural basis:
 - a. Rom. 8:29-30
 - b. Eph. 1:5, 11
 - c. 1 Pet. 1:2, 1 Th 1:4

iii. Initial Objections

1. Lead the “elect” to take no concern for spiritual things, since their destiny is secure
2. Unfair - Leave the “unelect” without hope or any reason to attempt to be godly.

iv. Calvin's defense

1. With regard to the elect sinning - God forbid – Rom 6:1-2
2. God is always righteous, even when from man's perspective he is acting unfairly
 - a. There is no injustice with God – Rom 9:14
 - b. We as the creatures, have no right to question the deeds and decrees of God – Rom 9:18-21
3. These arguments are unanswerable. Whatever God does is right and just.
4. But this defense is only amount to saying: “If my understanding of God's deeds are correct (unconditional election), then unconditional election is right and just”
5. It leaves unanswered the question as to whether, in fact, God practices unconditional election with respect to the salvation of men's souls.

v. Other views of predestination

1. Predestine – to determine beforehand, to write down or mark out in advance (Acts 4:27-28)

III. The Jews as God's chosen people (18:12) (6:26)

- a. Promises to Abraham
- b. They were predestined to inherit the land of Canaan – the boundaries of their inheritance were decreed beforehand, and marked out in advance
- c. The Jews thought that they were God's chosen people simply because they were descended from Abraham, without any regard for their love of God or obedience to His will
- d. The Jews were wrong:
 - i. Luke 3:7-8
 - ii. OPTIONAL - Romans 9 – They are not all Israel who are of Israel

1. Isaac, but not Ishmael
 2. Jacob, but not Esau – The promise regarded their offspring, not the individuals themselves
 3. Not even all of Jacob's descendants would be saved, and not all Gentiles would be lost.
- e. Calvin thought that God chooses individual people to be saved without any regard to their personal attitude toward Him or obedience to His will.
- f. He was also wrong
- IV. The Gospel is for All (24:38) (10:20)
- a. One of the most wonderful features of the Gospel
 - i. In Jesus teaching:
 1. Parable of the day laborers (Matt. 20:1-16) **So the last will be first, and the first last.**
 2. Parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:2-14)
 3. Luke 13:23-30 – esp 28-30
 4. John 10:16
 - ii. The renewed hope of Ephesians 2:11-19
 - iii. The mystery of Eph. 3:1-6
 - iv. The eternal purpose of God – Eph 3:8-11
 - v. The continual theme of heavenly praise – Rev 5:8-10; 7:9-10; 15:3-4;
 - b. Indicated the superiority of the gospel to the Old Law
 - i. No boundaries on who can be saved
 - ii. The middle wall of separation is removed
 - iii. Ended enmity between people because all are equal before God
 - iv. All can be citizens of the kingdom
 - v. All can be members of the household of God.
 - vi. Demonstrates the wisdom of God
 - vii. Demonstrates the praiseworthiness of God
- V. The Inconsistency of Unconditional Election with the Gospel for All Nations (35:00) (6:10)
- a. Replaces the middle wall of separation with an insurmountable wall that reaches all the way to heaven.
 - b. It makes the gospel inferior to the Mosaic Law with respect to providing access to God:
 - i. A Gentile could have access to God, even under the Old Covenant
 1. Ex. 12:48-49
 2. OPTIONAL - Proselytes to Judaism “submitted to be circumcised, obliged themselves to observe all the rites and ceremonies of the law, and were in nothing different from the Jews but merely in their having once been heathens. The former, or proselytes of the gate, might not eat the passover or partake of any of the sacred festivals; but the latter, the proselytes of the covenant, had the same rights, spiritual and secular, as the Jews themselves.” Clarke's Commentary
 3. Isa 56:6-7 – The foreign convert to Judaism was welcome in the Jewish assembly

- ii. What recourse do those who have not been unconditionally elected have if they wish to have access to God? Eph. 2:12 with no vs 13!
- c. Clearly the Calvinist view of Predestination is not consistent with Scriptures
 - i. What are the alternatives?
 - 1. Two common views:
 - a. God's foreknowledge allows Him to know in advance who will be saved and who will not, if He wishes
 - b. With respect to salvation, God has chosen a kind of people, and terms for them to become his people, as well as their eternal destiny
 - 2. Both of these statements are true, and are at least as consistent with the passages as the Calvinistic view, BUT
 - a. We will see that there is much more being said here than that God used his knowledge of all history to "read the last chapter" and find out who is saved and lost.
 - b. It is more significant than just that God chose a certain set of conditions for salvation
 - c. It is that God wants ALL MEN TO BE SAVED. The GOSPEL IS FOR ALL.

VI. Conclusion

- a. Whosoever wills may come
- b. Joh 1:29; Joh 3:16; 1Jo 2:2; 1Jo 4:14; 1Ti 2:4; 2Pe 3:9

UNDERSTANDING PREDESTINATION

- VII. The Proper Understanding of Predestination (41:10) (5:32)
 - a. The predestination of Eph. 1:5 is the eternal purpose of God to save both Jews and Gentiles through the gospel of Christ.
 - i. Eph. 3:8-11 – from the beginning of the ages; eternal purpose = JEWS AND GENTILES, that is, ALL MEN to be called
 - ii. Eph. 1:3-6 – before the foundation of the world; predestined = SOME MEN TO BE CALLED? Or ALL MEN TO BE CALLED?
 - b. The predestination of Eph. 1:11 is the eternal purpose of God to save both Jews and Gentiles through the gospel of Christ.
 - i. Eph. 1:11-13 – predestined, purpose, counsel of His will
 - 1. We who first trusted = JEWS
 - 2. You also trusted = GENTILES
 - c. The predestination of Romans 8:28-30 is the same.
 - i. Those who are called according to His purpose are those who love God. NOT those who without respect to their own attitude toward God or willingness to follow Him have been marked by God for salvation

- ii. Those who love God are the called, predestined and foreknown, of God. They have been justified, and glorified in being saved from their sins, and receiving the adoption of sonship and promise of inheritance that is the glory of all who obey the gospel of Christ in faith.
 - iii. This blessing is available to Jews and Gentiles alike,
 - d. Foretold in the OT (Isa. 9:2; 42:1; 49:6; 55:5; Jer. 3:17; Dan. 7:14; Mal. 1:11)
 - e. The theme of the book of Romans as well as the book of Ephesians.
 - 1. Romans 1:16-17
 - 2. Ephesians 2:11-13
- VIII. Conclusion (46:42) (4:00)
 - a. Whosoever wills may come
 - b. Joh 1:29; Joh 3:16; 1Jo 2:2; 1Jo 4:14; 1Ti 2:4; 2Pe 3:9