

# CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE BASICS

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | AUGUST 11, 2019

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## Class 14: Introduction to Salvation – Election

**PURPOSE:** To refine the categorical (topical) way we understand the Scriptures helping us conform to Christ.

### I. Underlying Doctrines to the Doctrine of Election

- A. The Sovereignty of God. Looking at it from a democratic standpoint, we have no problem with “sovereignty” so long as it stays within its prescribed boundaries. But the *sovereignty of God* knows no such limits.
1. God Cannot Cease to be Himself
    - a. He cannot be neutral, even for a second.
    - b. He cannot be uninvolved, even for a second (Job 38-41 and 42:1-6).
  2. His Ways are Above Our Ways
    - a. We are like him but he is not like us (Isaiah 55:8-9; Acts 17:27-28).
    - b. God operates in linear time while not bound by time (2 Peter 3:8; Rev. 22:13).
    - c. God can appear to have two wills while not having two wills (1 Timothy 2:4; Romans 9:17-18).
- B. Total Depravity of Man. Comes down to a simple “heart” issue.
1. As Seen from Man
    - a. Magnetism to sin from early childhood.
    - b. Carnality and savagery shared by all nations, just in different ways.
    - c. Breakdown of the family & institutions.
  2. As Seen from God
    - a. God looks at the heart (Jeremiah 17:9-10).
    - b. God looks at the nations (Psalm 2).

## II. The Doctrine of Election in the Old Testament

- A. Election Keeping Israel Humble. The concept of “free will” isn’t strange to Israel’s history. In a sense the Mosaic Law was a kind of bilateral covenant between two equally bound parties: Yahweh and the Nation of Israel. The Lord God was to faithfully lead and Israel was to faithfully follow. Both parties formally had an opportunity to “keep their fair share of the bargain,” so to speak (see Deut. 30:11-14 on the practicality of the Law). But Israel failed so miserably their resulting punishment would have otherwise resulted in their extinction (see Romans 9:27-28 alluding to Isa.1:9 and 10:22-23). Thankfully God in his mercy made it so that a few faithful remnant believers would preserve the line. Surely this was of God’s intervention and not man’s (see Romans 11:4 quoting 1 Kings 19:18); God remains the hero of Israel’s salvation. On God’s effective voice to make dead Israel “live”, see Ezekiel 37 with 16:6-7 and 36:26. See also Romans 9:6-18.

It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples,<sup>8</sup> but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that **the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand** and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

–Deuteronomy 7:7-8

- B. Election Keeping Israel Hopeful. Since Israel could not be reassured by their own faithfulness (or lack thereof), they had to rely on the fact that God chose them and would thus surely keep them.

The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah:<sup>24</sup> “Have you not observed that these people are saying, ‘The LORD has rejected the two clans that he chose’? Thus they have despised my people so that they are no longer a nation in their sight.<sup>25</sup> Thus says the LORD: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth,<sup>26</sup> then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.**”

–Jeremiah 33:23-26

### III. The Doctrine of Election in the New Testament

- A. Election Keeping the Church Humble. By the time the Church comes on the scene in the New Testament, the failure of not just Israel but the world to keep God's law has become glaringly obvious. In fact, the Apostle Paul now regards any going back to the Mosaic Law, as if it could save, as a damning exercise. The Law has now marked us out for judgment. But God in his mercy made his Son to absorb all the Law's wrath so that anyone trusting him would have life in his name.

..even as he chose us in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will...

—Ephesians 1:4-5

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive** together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

—Ephesians 2:4-5

- B. Election Keeping the Church Hopeful. If it was literally true that our salvation was accessed solely by our own choice then continuing as a Christian must be solely by our own actions. God has to stay on his side since "we got this." But the Bible speaks to the contrary. "Jesus" (not self) is the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2). The Bible doesn't allow much room for autonomy for the believer who is truly persevering. After all, to have faith is to have dependence on Someone greater than we ourselves. One does not come out of a *crisis of faith* by looking back at their own decision to believe. Rather they come full circle by recalling to their minds the One who activated their faith and master-planned it from before the beginning of time (see also the sealing argument of 2 Timothy 2:13).

And I am sure of this, that **he who began a good work** in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

—Philippians 1:6

## IV. Where Do We Go From Here?

### A. Make Election Part of Evangelism

1. When you're tempted to write someone off because (s)he shows no signs of change to the hearing of the gospel, remember: *if they are "set apart" in the eternal mind of God they will at some point repent and believe.*
2. Which do people respond to more? Something massive, bold and majestic? Or something small and weak? The strong, sustaining undercurrent to the giving of the gospel is that God has set his own course in the actual saving of souls.

### B. Make Election Part of Discipleship

1. Because our salvation is so great, spanning for literally all times, our spiritual growth follows the same momentum (Eph. 2:10 in relation to 2:8).
2. Election reinforces our union with Christ.

### Christian Doctrine Basics Course Outline:

- Sin – Opposite Holiness
- Sin – “Original Sin”
- Sin – the Effects (Two Deaths)
- Salvation – Election
- Salvation – “Repent and Believe!”
- Salvation - Justification

(...More to come...)