

## **Canons 1<sup>st</sup> HofD, Art. 1-3 – Election: The Basis and the Means**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Most people, when they hear of canons, they think of big guns – c-a-n-n-o-n-s. But these are very different. “C-a-n-o-n-s” does not mean big guns.

“Canons” means standards or rules. The Canons of Dort are the standards God established in his Word.

Now the Canons of Dort (1618-1619) is not equal to the Bible, but it is a **summary of 5 major doctrines about salvation in the Bible – 5 doctrines that were being attacked by false teachers of that time.**

These 5 major errors were promoted by one notable teacher, Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), a minister from The Netherlands. Arminius borrowed some ideas from Pelagius, a heretic, of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, **who did not believe in original sin, or predestination, or man’s total estrangement from God.** While Arminius was not as extreme as Pelagius, he minimized the greatness of God’s salvation.

And sadly, when men cannot see the full greatness of God and his work, he cannot worship as he should.

So you see the problem. Our greatest work is to worship God properly! Arminianism is a thief of God’s worship.

Since **Arminianism** (the system established by Arminius) **has been revived and has been spreading in the last 200** years. It is the most dominant view in evangelical circles today. So it is most appropriate to **keep exposing their errors** by revealing the truth of God’s Word.

**In doing so, you can cause men to worship God in a better way.** (It is not to show you are better!)

**The first doctrine in the Canons of Dort is the doctrine of the Unconditional Election of man.**

Our headings are:

**Your Election is based on God’s Love**

**Your Election is Worked through God’s Word**

Our goals are: **That you will love the fact you were loved by Christ, a love you heard of through God’s Word, and in turn, that you will worship him better.**

## Your Election is based on God's Love

**Article 1: God's Right to Condemn All People:** Since all people have sinned in Adam and have come under the sentence of the curse and eternal death, **God would have done no one an injustice** if it had been the divine will to **leave the entire human race in sin and under the curse**, and to condemn them on account of their sin. As the Apostle says: "The whole world may be held accountable to God," "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and "The wages of sin is death."

**Article 2: The Manifestation of God's Love:** But this is how God showed love: "God gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

### **1. Adam and his descendants sinned and were justly condemned by a holy God.**

**God would have been totally just to leave every single man in sin with no hope of ever enjoying salvation.**

**In other words, you don't deserve to be elected.** You and your ancestors were sinful from birth and lawfully condemned. God was justified in hating you, your grandmother, your cousin, your best friend, your baby, the poorest girl in Africa, and every handicapped child.

Romans 3: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Not some...not most...but all deserved to be sent to hell. In fact, God hated sinners...all sinners **and was righteous to do so!**

Psalm 5: 5 The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; **You hate all workers of iniquity.**

Psalm 11: 5 The LORD tests the righteous, **But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.**

Romans 9: 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, **but Esau I have hated.**" 14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

### **2. But God, acting from love, chose (or elected) to save some, not all.**

**It was a particular love!** God **did not choose because of the color of a man's skin, his ethnicity, or his gender.**

One religious counsel said their god taught them women were useless. But the one true God does not say so. He loves all kinds of people.

Hitler thought the handicapped and Jews were useless.

There was a time when the **color of one's skin** made him subject to slavery.

There was a time when **nationality** cause people to be treated as slaves, as the Irish were.

God loves all kinds of people.

**Deuteronomy 7:7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 "but because the LORD loves you.**

So when you hear "For God so loved the world," know that it meant God loves all kinds of people.

### **3. Some Arminians (followers of Arminius) believe God did not elect any to salvation but salvation is purely a human choice.**

They imply man could do good things and make the right choice to trust in Christ.

This contradicts the Bible, as man can only choose to do evil. Man's will to do good was corrupted by the fall into sin.

### **4. Arminians say God did elect, but he did so based on the foreseen faith of the individual.**

**They argue that because God knew the ones who would be "good enough" to choose Christ, he chose them.** In doing this, Arminians **emphasize man's superior choice over God's election.**

**But note the teaching of the Bible in the Covenant of Redemption** – the agreement made before the world began that the Father would give the Son a definite number whom he would redeem.

**John 17:6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.**

Surely this does not emphasize human ability and choice first. **Man cannot and man will not choose God in his unregenerate state because he is wholly unable and unwilling to choose God.**

**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.**

Does this make man the 1<sup>st</sup> chooser or the 2<sup>nd</sup> chooser? Man chooses God *because* God chose him first.

**Arminians are robbers of God's glory.** How do you think God views robbers of him?

**Arminians interpret "foreknew" (Romans 8:29) in the Word of God as "foreknowledge."** But "foreknew" means to fore-loved. There are different words for "love" in the Greek. "Gynoskoh" means "to know in an experiential way" and is often used in the place of "love."

For example, Adam "knew" his wife and she conceived. This meant he knew his wife intimately – or, he loved her. Genesis 4:1. See also Numbers 31:18, Psalm 1:6, Amos 3:3, Matthew 7:23, Timothy 2:19, and 1Cor 8:3. "Gynoskoh" is different from knowing something as a fact.

**5. Some Arminians teach God elected, not for salvation, but he elected to give faith, and man could do whatever he wanted with it.**

But if God only elected you to have faith, you could then refuse to use that faith and therefore never be saved. **This means you could toss God's gift aside.** This is false.

**No one can believe unless God regenerates his heart. Faith is never apart from regeneration.** They are like 2 sides of a coin. Further, once regeneration starts, glorification is certain.

God always goes all they way through. It is a Golden unbreakable Chain!

**Romans 8:30** Moreover **whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

In acting like God's election is conditional, Arminians **rob God of the full glory of his work in Jesus.**

## **Your Election is worked through God's Word**

**Article 3: The Preaching of the Gospel:** In order that people may be brought to faith, God mercifully sends messengers of this very joyful news to those whom God desires and where God desires it. By this ministry people are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. For “how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?”

### **1. God works out his electing love through the preaching of his Word.**

God was not anxiously waiting to see who would believe. Rather, God, out of pure love, chose and saved a people for himself, and he actively revealed that love to them through his Word.

You would never be saved without the Gospel!

Since salvation is for the glory of God it is never at the mercy of his creation – even his best creation. God took the initiative in election.

And by receiving the Word of God, faith comes. When faith comes, the sinner responds to his election. Look again:

Romans 8: 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Even the one who is already a Christian, when he reads and believes God's Word, his faith is strengthened. This is why you must read the Word of God in your home.

If you are careless about this, your family will suffer. This is a guarantee I can give you.

### **2. Arminians don't agree it is purely by faith (coming through the Word) you get the benefits of election.**

So they try to mix faith and obedience to be saved. How? They argue this was how people were saved in the Old Testament– living good lives and repenting. So the cry of the Arminians is, “Repent, repent, repent!”

So they take partial credit from God.

2Timothy 1:9 **who has saved us** and called us with a holy calling, **not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace** which was given to us in Christ Jesus **before time began**,

Everything you need to be saved was given to you and was put in place before you were born!

Ephesians 2:3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.** 4 But God, who is **rich in mercy**, because of **His great love with** which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and **raised us up** together, and made us **sit together in the heavenly places** in Christ Jesus, **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God...

Do you see why the Word of God must be preached so faith can come and the elect believe?

**3. Because the Arminians argue you must participate in your salvation, they are, in effect, removing grace as the grounds for your salvation. (It is all of grace or nothing!)**

Romans 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But **if it is of works, it is no longer grace;** otherwise work is no longer work.

Would God be pleased if you rob him? If you are Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, or some Baptist, this is what your church teaches.

You need to find a better church. Don't stay in one that robs God.

### **Conclusion:**

All men are sinners and deserve to be condemned to hell forever! But God does not send some deserving sinners to hell. Rather, he puts their punishment on his own Son. **Election is amazing love.** You learned about this love through God's love letter – the Bible. You received this message and you were saved for eternity.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: How must you respond to your election?

**1. Be humble**, knowing your salvation did not depend upon you. It was all the work of a gracious God.

**2. Praise God** for what God has done for you. Praise him in the morning, noon time, and evening!

**3. Be diligent** in your service to the Lord. Be diligent in how you live and how you love others.

**4. Proclaim the Gospel so the elect might be saved.** Proclaim it yourself and support others who do.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, don't wonder if God chose you. Repent, believe, and receive! God will turn none away but will save all who come. He assures you he will work in your heart and give you the assurance he has saved you. His love is great. If you reject him, know his judgment is fierce. But the elect will come!