

## Canons of Dort – 1<sup>st</sup> Head of Doctrine, Art:1-5

### Principles of Your Election: God's Love, Word, and Purity

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Canons of Dort (1618-1619) were written to correct the errors of Arminian阿敏念派 doctrines of salvation. Arminian doctrines were developed by Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), a minister from Amsterdam. He borrowed some ideas from Pelagius, a heretic异教徒, of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, who did not believe in original sin, predestination, or man's total estrangement隔阂 from God. Arminianism notably minimizes the greatness of God's salvation and thus, the incentive to properly and passionately worship God. Arminianism is sometimes called semi-pelagianism. Since Arminianism has revived and is in fact spreading in the last 200 years, it is most appropriate to expose the errors by revealing the truth of God's Word. Arminian doctrines are taught in all Pentecostal churches, Roman Catholic churches, and most Baptist type churches.

While you are familiar with the acronym缩写 TULIP to describe the main doctrines of grace, the Canons of Dort uses a slightly different acronym, though the main points are the same. The Canons use the acronym ULTIP. The Canons deals with the doctrine of Unconditional election first instead of total depravity.

As you can conclude by now, "Canons" does not mean big booming guns. Rather, "Canons" is a body of rules, principles, or standards. We call the Bible the "Canon" of God." Using the "Canons of Dort" we will teach the truth of Scriptures and so reject the errors of Arminian teaching.

Our headings are: **Election is based on God's Love**, **Election is Worked through God's Word**, and **Election is Consistent with God's purity**.

Our goals are: **That you will love the fact that you were elected in Jesus Christ and that you will love him back in return.**

### **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 were wicked and justly condemned by God. God would have been well within his rights and just to leave man in sin with no hope of ever enjoying salvation.** What a striking way of starting to teach about election: **You don't deserve to be elected.** You and your ancestry were sinful and lawfully condemned. Your descendants will be sinful and lawfully condemned. God was just to hate you, your grandmother, your cousin, your best friend, and your baby. **But God acted from love and chose to save some, not all.** It was a particular love!

**Malachi 1: 2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; 3 But Esau I have hated..."**

God did not choose because of the color of one's skin, ethnicity, or gender. Last week a famous Islamic council in Pakistan determined that women were useless and Allah did not want them, but that is not your God.

**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, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage..."**

**2. Error 1: Most Arminians believe that God did not elect any to salvation and that salvation is purely a human choice.**  
So a man, without assistance from God, could do good things and make right choices.

**3. Error 2: Other Arminians believe that God elected – but he did so based on the foreseen faith of the individual.**

**IOW**, they argue that **because God knew you would be "good enough" to chose Christ, that was why he chose you.** 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 chose God in his unregenerate顽固不化 state because he is wholly unable and unwilling to choose God.**

Consider this other verse that makes this even clearer.

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? This passage teaches that man is the 2<sup>nd</sup> chooser. He chooses God **because** God chose him. To ignore the clear passages and try to reinterpret unclear passages to develop doctrines is serious sin. **Arminians are robbers of God's glory.** How do you think God views robbers of him?

**Why do Arminians get into so much trouble with this doctrine?** Arminians interpret "foreknew" in the Word of God as "foreknowledge" so they argue that God elected his people based on foreknowledge of what the people would do. But the "foreknew" simply means to fore-love. There are different words for "love" in the Greek. "Ginoskoh" means "to know" in an experiential way and is often used in the place of "love." For example the Bible says that Adam "knew" his wife and she conceived. This meant that he knew his wife intimately – or, he loved her. Genesis 4:1. You also see this type of usage in Numbers 31:18, Psalm 1:6, Amos 3:3, Matthew 7:23, Timothy 2:19, and 1Cor 8:3. This word is different from knowing something as a fact. **See why you need to know God's Word well? See why you need to compare passages with other passages? Not doing this is what gets Christians into trouble.**

**4. Error 3: Some Arminians teach that God elected, not for salvation, but to give faith.** But if God only elected you to have faith, you could then refuse to use that faith and therefore never be saved. Or could you use that faith and toss it aside. But **God doesn't have a big eraser wondering** what you will do today or tomorrow. Now this passage refutes 驳斥 all three of these errors. And God's loving choice is the foundation for these words.

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.**

**When this course of events begins, they go all the way through.** There can be no interruption of God's plan. In acting like God's election is conditional, Arminians rob God of the full glory of his work in Jesus Christ. The Lord's coming to die and save the predestined was part of the unchangeable counsel of God. Absolutely nothing is outside of the control of God. He "controlled" the coming of Christ to redeem sinful man.

## **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?"

**Article 4: A Twofold Response to the Gospel:** God's wrath remains on those who do not believe this gospel. But **those who do accept it and embrace Jesus the Savior with a true and living faith are delivered through him from God's wrath and from destruction**, and receive the gift of eternal life.

**1. God's love in electing some was manifested to his people in his Word.** This election was a positive act. It was not that God was anxiously waiting to see who would believe. Rather, God, out of pure love, chose and saved a people for himself. And he **revealed that love to them through his Word.** You see, 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. Even the one who is a Christian, when he reads God's Word and believes it, he is strengthened in his faith.** The Bible is a book of reassuring love. **What a shame that some don't even read the Word of God in their home!** Brothers, if you are careless about this, your family will suffer. This is a guarantee I can give you.

**2. Arminians don't agree that it is purely by faith (which comes through the Word) that you reap the benefits of election. So they try to mix faith and obedience to be saved.** They think this was how people were saved in the Old Testament times – living good lives and repenting. (See how this can affect evangelism? So they constantly yell "repent," forgetting that repentance must be accompanied by faith. **They do not believe that it is only by receiving Christ's death as their own that they are saved.** In doing this, Arminians take partial credit and steal God's credit. And of course, they charge the Apostle Paul with lying.

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,**

Apostle Paul reiterated here that everything you need to be saved was given to you and was put in place before you were even 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** 愤怒, **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, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.  
Romans 9:11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, **not of works but of Him who calls**),  
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.

## **Election is Consistent with God's Purity**

**Article 5: The Sources of Unbelief and of Faith:** The cause or blame for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is not at all in God, but in humanity. Faith in Jesus Christ, however, and salvation through him is a free gift of God. As Scripture says, "For by grace have you been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." Likewise: "For God has graciously granted you the privilege . . . of believing in Christ . . ."

**1. No man can and should blame God because some are elected and some are not elected. Election is a gift of God; it is not a requirement.** Election is from love. God was bound to save none. The blame for man's condemnation lies only in man.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...**

Others argue that God is too nice and sweet to reject someone and send him to hell. This is why you might hear someone say when a wicked person dies: "He is with God now." They assume God has chosen and loves every single person and eventually everyone will end up in heaven. Some, like Roman Catholics, believe in purgatory, where the wicked will wait, be purged清洗, and moved to heaven. The sense of the eternal fires of hell is missing from their beliefs. But God is just and cannot allow those who don't have Christ as their Covenant keeper to be saved.

**2. On the other hand, Arminians** try to make God unfair. But they have to argue with the Scriptures.

Remember how God challenged Job who was trying to find fault with God? Look also at:

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.

God did not only choose us, but he chose us for the purpose of bearing fruits for him – and these fruits will last forever. Your work will not go unrewarded. Why? Because you are elected forever.

## **Conclusion:**

What a thing to behold: God does not send some deserving sinners to hell but he puts their punishment on his own Son. Election is amazing love. You learn about this love through his love letter – the Word of God. God did have to do this, but he did anyway.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: How must your respond to your election? Be humble, knowing that your salvation did not depend upon you. Praise God for what God has done for you. Be diligent in your service to the Lord. And even in your service, know that the God who elected you will work in you to accomplish his purpose.

Finally: If you are not a Christian it is not for you to wonder whether you are elected or not. Instead, come to God for your spiritual needs. He promised that he will turn none away but will save all who come. He assures you that he will work in your heart and give you the assurance that he has saved you. But he also gives a warning to those who will not come. His love is great. His judgment is fierce.