

Canons of Dort – 1st Head of Doctrine, Art:12-14 – Results of Your Election

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: So far you have seen why you needed to be elected – you would never choose God on your own. Then you saw how you were elected – you were chosen in Christ and given faith to receive what he did into your soul. Today you will see the results of your election.

Our headings are: God gives you Assurance of Election, What do you do with the Assurance of your Election, and How can you teach Election properly so others can get this Assurance.

Our goals are: That being assured of your election in Jesus Christ, that you will bear fruits of that election for the glory of Christ and the good of your neighbor.

God Gives you Assurance of Election

Article 12: The Assurance of Election: Assurance of their eternal and unchangeable election to salvation is given to the chosen in due time, though by various stages and in differing measure. Such assurance comes not by inquisitive searching into the hidden and deep things of God, but by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God's Word—fruits such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on.

1. God gives you an objective assurance that you are the elect of God. Arminians don't believe that you can have assurance, that you are elect. But ignoring this doctrine puts them at a difficult uncertain position. They have to wonder and worry. Every time they sin, they have to think: Am I elect or not? But the Bible teaches that God gives assurance in your heart that you are elect. (What good would election do for your if you didn't know you had it?)

John 6: 37 "All that the **Father gives Me will come to Me**, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

Do you see any uncertainty in this passage? There is no doubt that the people who were given to Christ by his Father in the Covenant of Redemption would come to him. "By no means," is an expression of double certainty. It means "never, never." God will not and cannot cast out any of the ones he has given to his Son. They can never be lost.

Look at how the Apostles Paul and John express this objective assurance.

2Timothy 1:12 ...for **I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep** what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Further, you objectively know if you are elect if you love the Lord. (Love is actions.)

2Corinthians 13:5 **Examine yourselves as to whether** you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified.

John 14:21 "He who has **My commandments and keeps them**, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Others can see this as well, though not perfectly.

2. God gives you a subjective assurance that you are elect. God causes you to see fruits of assurance in your heart. You can know in your heart that you are elected as the Holy Spirit works with your spirit to convince you. You don't need a dream or a direct sign from God. You don't need a fortune teller.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 **The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.**

God gives you true faith in Christ. The more you hear God's Word preached, the stronger will be your faith.

God gives you a childlike fear of God.

God gives you a godly sorrow for sins.

God gives you desire for righteousness. Calvin: "It must be held to be a universally acknowledged point, that no man is a Christian who does not feel some special love for righteousness."

Matthew 12:35 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

3. Your assurance comes by various stages and in various measures. One gains great assurance by 25, others at 75.

Isaiah 50:10 "Who among you fears the LORD? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness And has no light? **Let him trust in the name of the LORD** And rely upon his God.

No one perfectly fears God or obeys the Lord. Some trees bear less fruits than others, but if they are good trees they will

bear some fruits. So if you find yourself sinning, repent, but don't worry about your election. God willing, you will become more obedient and trusting as you grow as a Christian. The relatively new Christian might not be as sure of his election, but he gets more and more assured over time.

What do you do with the Assurance of your Election

Article 13: The Fruit of This Assurance: In their awareness and assurance of this election, God's children daily find greater cause to **humble themselves** before God, to **adore the fathomless** depth of divine mercies, to **cleanse themselves**, and to give fervent love in return to the One who first so greatly loved them. This is far from saying that this teaching concerning election, and reflection upon it, make God's children lax in observing his commandments or carnally self-assured. By God's just judgment this does usually happen to those who casually take for granted the grace of election or engage in idle and brazen talk about it but are unwilling to walk in the ways of the chosen.

1. Having the objective and subjective assurance of your salvation, what do you do with them?

a. You will humble yourself more before God. God not only elected you, but he assured you that you are elected. He did for you what you could not do for yourself! How can you not be humbled in his sight? How can you be arrogant when you were helpless?

1John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.

b. The humble man will then worship God in the most adoring way. Who does not rejoice in being chosen for that which is good? Who does not sing the praises of a famous person who recognizes him in a crowd? How much more when the God of the universe picked you out from all of fallen mankind...and then made you his child? What goodness! But more, you will reflect on the awesome majesty of God as your Creator and praise him day and night.

c. You will cleanse yourself of your sins... You will daily repent of your sins that hurt you loving Savior.

1John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

d. You will truly love God in return for his loving you. That true love is seen in obedience. True love kills the desire to sin. For instance

1John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

e. You will fight to convince yourself of your salvation.

2Peter 1:5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 Therefore, brethren, be **even more diligent to make your call and election sure**, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

f. You will want to tell others about Jesus. You will not become lazy. You will not think preaching is unnecessary and say: If he is elect, why does he need preaching? Who doesn't want to tell the world when they love someone and someone loves them back? Who doesn't want to tell the world that there is one who loves all nations?

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Are these 6 things evident in your life?

2. What about those who argue that the teaching of election makes one lax so that he doesn't worship God properly or becomes careless about serving him?

They believe that one who knows he is elect will live however he wants. That argument is like this: "About 500 people in North America are killed by hammers each year, so hammers must be bad." It is foolish to argue that way. The fact people misuse a doctrine does not make the doctrine null and void.

If the doctrine is clearly taught in the Scriptures, you have to accept. You may not change it because it is misused. God's Word is not up for negotiations. You may not even say: "Well, this doctrine might be good for me, I will accept it." Or, "This doctrine will not promote my faithfulness, so I will drop it." You are to labor to obey God's Word at all times.

The truth is, as you have seen, a Christian will show that he is elect by his godly actions.

Election is not a license to be sloppy. A Christian will live a life of faithfulness and prove that he is elect. The Christian will not "continue in sin that grace may abound." He will consciously labor to prove his election. As 2Peter 1:10 says, you must be diligent to make your calling and election sure. This means you will be humble. You will worship God and learn from his Word. You will

repent when you sin. You will fight to obey God's law. You will tell others about Jesus. The elect will never – and can never be stagnant. The elect cannot be indifferent.

3. Those that treat election with laxity can be certain of God's just judgment. Either they are weak Christians who need to change, or they are not believers at all.

How can you Teach Election Properly so others can get this Assurance

Article 14: Teaching Election Properly: By God's wise plan, this teaching concerning divine election has been proclaimed through the prophets. It was proclaimed also through Christ and the Apostles. Subsequently the proclamation was **committed to writing in the Holy Scriptures**. So also today in God's church, for which it was specifically intended, this teaching must be set forth with **a spirit of discretion**, in a godly and holy manner, at the appropriate time and place, without inquisitive searching into the ways of the Most High. This must be done for the glory of God's most holy name, and for the lively comfort of God's people.

1. Historically, the prophets taught election. Later, Christ and his disciples taught election. If it is in the Bible, you can expect that God wants you to teach election as well. So those who avoid this doctrine and put it at the bottom of the "to-do" list, are defying God. Yes, some things are beyond our knowledge (Is 55:9, and Deut. 29:29) but what God has revealed, you must proclaim.

2. But you must teach it wisely. Don't use election to scare of non-believers. Don't start evangelizing a non-believer by telling him: "You may be the non-elect." Election is a fact, but it is not the starting point of the Gospel. Furthermore, you must not teach election callously. Election is an expression of God's love, not a sledgehammer. It must be taught in light of the work of Jesus Christ. Even for young Christians who might doubt their election, you must teach it carefully lest they be overwhelmed when they think of their sins.

3. But don't be afraid to preach it with conviction. Election is part of the Gospel.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

1Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

3. Ultimately, You must teach election for the glory of God. You must not teach election to show that you know more doctrines than others or teach it to make them feel bad about their doctrines. Winning the argument and losing the soul is not glorifying to God.

Conclusion:

God wonderfully assures you by objective and subjective assurances that he has elected you. But that assurance is not only for your personal benefit. That assurance then must bear fruit in your life. You must show the fruits of humility, which leads to more sincere and faithful worship and service of God. You must daily search out your heart for sin and confess them. You must love God and learn how to keep his commands. You must battle in your soul to make sure that you are convinced that you are the elect of God. You must tell others about Jesus.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: 1John 3: 1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! How well are you responding to God's love for you? Are the fruits of election evidenced in your life? If they aren't, ask God to restore the knowing of your election...to remind you of his love in Jesus Christ. When you are assured of his love, you will live like you are loved.

Finally: God sincerely extends his love to anyone who will hear and receive it. If you are not a Christian, will you accept God's offer of love today? He sent his Son to live and die as a substitute for sinners.