

## Canons of Dort–3&4Head: Article 4-9–How Then Shall You Be Called?

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: We have covered Unconditional Election无条件拣选, Definite (Limited) Atonement, Total Inability (Depravity), and now we are starting to look at Effectual (Irresistible) Call. Today you will hear that only God can call man out of sin and misery, and when God calls man from that cesspool, man will respond and will be established on the Rock.

Our headings are: Light of Nature and Law Cannot Call. Only The Holy Spirit Can Call. Reason some do not hear the Holy Spirit's Call.

Our goals are: You will learn to love your Covenant Keeper, hold on to him by faith, and serve in his kingdom, knowing that you are only called to him as he works in you by his Holy Spirit.

### Light of Nature and Law Cannot Call

**Article 4: The Inadequacy of the Light of Nature:** There is, to be sure, a certain light of nature remaining in people after the fall, by virtue of which they retain some notions about God, natural things, and the difference between what is decent and indecent, and demonstrate a certain eagerness for virtue and for good outward behavior. But this light of nature is far from enabling them to come to a saving knowledge of God and conversion to God—so far, in fact, that they do not use it rightly even in matters of nature and society. Instead, in various ways they completely distort this light, whatever its precise character, and suppress it in unrighteousness. In doing so they render themselves without excuse before God.

然而，人堕落之后，在他里面还保留自然之光的余辉，借此他对神，对自然之物，和善恶之分还拥有些知识；对德行、社会的治安，仍能维持外部的善良行为。但这自然之光不足以领人对神有得救上的知识（不能认识神），不能领人得到真正的改变，而且在自然和民事上他们也不能正确使用这知识。尤有甚者，人在各方面把这光完全弄暗了，在不义中把它给压住了；如此他在神面前情不可原，无法推诿。

**1. Arminians argue that the “light of nature” (common grace) is sufficient to enable a sinner to know Christ and to come to a full conversion.** This is false. God created man good with the ability to keep his law and image God, but when man sinned he was adversely affected不利影响. He was unable to fulfill the mandate使命 of imaging God. He was no longer positively inclined to good. He could do no good work, not one. None seeks after God by himself.

Man did not become an animal, but he was so negatively affected after the fall, that though he might know and see good in his tarnished玷污 image, he is unable to do any truly good thing. If you look at a car in a junk yard, you know it is car...but without an engine, it can't go anywhere. It will slowly rust away! So man has a tarnished image of God and can't come to God without total renewal of his soul. Man can know God exists when he looks at creation (and for this God will hold him responsible), but the method of salvation and the need of salvation cannot be deciphered解密 without God's help.

**Romans 1:20** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they

**became fools,**

**A person with a futile徒劳 mind can't chose to live contrary to his nature!** So unlike what the Arminians teach, you cannot be saved by your own remaining abilities. Spiritual things - like how to be saved – are foolishness to the non-believer.

1Corinthians 2:14 **But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God,** for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

**Article 5: The Inadequacy of the Law:** In this respect, what is true of the light of nature is true also of the Ten Commandments given by God through Moses specifically to the Jews. For humanity cannot obtain saving grace through the Decalogue, because, although it does **expose the magnitude of human sin** and increasingly convict people of their guilt, yet it does not offer a remedy or enable people to escape from human misery, and, indeed, weakened as it is by the flesh, leaves the offender under the curse.

我们要同样去看神借摩西之手交给他的选民犹太人十条诫命的律法。虽然借着律法显明罪恶之重大，并使人更加向道罪，但是它不能指出救法，也不能赋予力量，解救他脱离悲苦，并且既因肉体上的软弱，而把那些罪者置于咒诅之下。人不能靠此律法而得救恩。

**2. Arminians believe that man could ultimately move back to God by keeping his law (another common grace).** They believe that man is able to do this because they don't believe man's will became "evil" at the only but it was only hampered妨碍. They believe that God would not have given man his law without giving man the ability to keep them. (Of course the law was there before the fall!) This causes Arminians to insist on training and imitation. Arminians are often legalistic instead of Christ centered. They might say: You must dress this way, you must act this way... ) But was that how the Apostle Paul saw the law? No!

**Romans 7:5** For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 6 **But now we have been delivered from the law,** having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and **not in the oldness of the letter.**

**The law did not encourage man to go to God and obey him.** The law encouraged – aroused - man to pursue his own sinful desires which led to death. How does the law arouse man to do contrary to what it says? Man is diametrically直接 opposed to keeping the law. So when God says, "You shall not steal," the sinner says "Surely I want to steal."

**Romans 7:7** ...Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness贪心 unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." 8 **But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire.** For apart from the law sin was dead. 10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.

The law in Eden was sufficient足够 to bring man the rewards of God, but because of sin, the law lost its effectiveness.

Man was not able to keep God's laws anymore according to God's standard. Man could not rise out of his pathetic可怜 condition and find his way back to God by obeying the law. God's laws are a package and must be perfectly obeyed!

## **Only The Holy Spirit Can Call**

**Article 6: The Saving Power of the Gospel** - What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law can do, God accomplishes by the **power of the Holy Spirit**, through the **Word or the ministry of reconciliation**. This is the gospel about the Messiah, through which it has pleased God to save believers, in both the Old and the New Testaments. 因此，为那自然之光和律法所不能行的事，神更借着圣灵的工作，借着圣道，或使人和他的罪孽完成了；  
这道就是有关弥赛亚的佳音，借此神乐意拯救在旧约之下相信的人。

1. **The only way you can be saved is when the Holy Spirit calls you and pulls you to receive Christ's work as your own.**

**John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..."**

**John 3: 5 "...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**

This Gospel message comes through a preacher. When the hearer hears the Gospel message, **God works in him by his Holy Spirit** to produce faith. With faith, man then receives salvation.

**Romans 1: 16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.  
**17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

**Galatians 2: 16** "...that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

2. **This means the noblest man, or the most charitable woman, or the most helpful boy to his parents, or the girl who speaks the truth to her friends, or that nice father-in-law who remembers your birthday, cannot enter heaven on account of those good actions.** Do you realize that all, every single one of your non-Christian friends and acquaintances, even those born in a Christian home, will go to hell unless they have faith in Jesus Christ? That nice old lady in the next cubicle at work, that neighbor who seems kind and friendly and picks up your garbage can when the garbage men throw it on the road, will go to hell and stay in the eternal fires of hell. There are no shortcuts没有捷径. There is no other way to please the true God but by faith in Jesus Christ. **Brothers and sisters, this must humble you, for you don't deserve salvation, you don't deserve God's Work, and you don't deserve faith.** But you have them! This must also give you the desire to tell others of this salvation. **This Gospel is what the Holy Spirit will use to pull others to the Savior.**

3. **Faith has always been the mean by which man is saved...in the Old and New Testaments – in all dispensations.** Abraham was saved by faith. (John 8)...and a cloud of witnesses of faith are listed in Hebrews 11-12. **They all had faith in Christ.**

**Hebrews 11:24** **By faith Moses**, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches** than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

## **Reasons some do not hear the Call**

**Article 7: God's Freedom in Revealing the Gospel** - In the Old Testament, God revealed this secret of the divine will to a small number; in the New Testament (now

without any distinction between peoples) God discloses it to a large number. The reason for this difference **must not be ascribed to the greater worth of one nation over another**, or to a better use of the light of nature, but to the **free good pleasure and undeserved love of God**. Therefore, those who receive so much grace, beyond and in spite of all they deserve, ought to **acknowledge it with humble and thankful hearts**. On the other hand, with the Apostle they ought to adore (but certainly not inquisitively to search into) the severity and justice of God's judgments on the others, who do not receive this grace.

神旨意的奥秘只归约之下蒙福的人显明，在约中（不论人与人之间的区分）却将他自己启示给许多人。这种安排的原因，不在于一个民族比另外一个民族更优越，也不在于他们更善于利用自然之光，乃完全由于神出于主权的美意和白白赐予的爱。因此那些虽然不配，反有缺欠，却领受了如此伟大、如此恩慈的福音的人，应当用谦虚与感恩的心承认这福分，要可耻地去赞美，不要存着好奇心去窥察神在别人审判的严厉和公义，说神未有施恩给他们。

**1. Some people are not called by God – this is why they are not saved.** God may even prevent the Gospel from going to some. After all, election is not a right! Hell is God's justice. God has no obligation to pull any unbeliever to himself.

**Acts 16:6 ... they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.**

To dance around these verses, Arminians argue that **God calls those who are more worthy than others**. They think that those who do not get the Gospel are the worst people. **But Israel did not receive salvation privileges because they were better**. They were only chosen because God loved them.

**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;**

**So you were not less deprived than others.** This is why you ought to love God with a deep passion...and show it by your zealous service.

**Article 9: Human Responsibility for Rejecting the Gospel** - The fact that many who are called through the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not brought to conversion must not be blamed on the gospel, nor on Christ, who is offered through the gospel, nor on God, who calls them through the gospel and even bestows various gifts on them, **but on the people themselves who are called**. Some in **self-assurance** do not even entertain the Word of life; others do entertain it but **do not take it to heart**, and for that reason, after the fleeting joy of a temporary faith, they relapse; **others choke the seed of the Word** with the thorns of life's cares and with the pleasures of the world and bring forth no fruits. This our Savior teaches in the parable of the

sower. 那些只蒙福音所召的人，若拒绝前来，悔改归主，错处不在福音，也不在于福音中所提的基督，也不在于那用福音召人并赐各种恩给他们的神。错处乃在于他们自己，其中有些人蒙召时，不顾自己的危险，拒绝生命之道。其他的人，虽然接受，却不容这道在他们的心中留下永久的印象，因此他们的喜乐既从暂时的信心而生，不久即消失，他们更跌倒了；还有些人因忧虑和今世的快乐把这道的种子给挤住了，不能结实——我们的救主在撒种的比喻中已经教导了（太十三章）。

**2. People are condemned because they (or their fore parents) reject the Gospel call in the hardness of their hearts.** They don't care about God's glory...but for their own pleasures. (Of course you must still take the Gospel to all.)

**Article 8: The Serious Call of the Gospel** - Nevertheless, all who are called through the gospel are called seriously. For seriously and most genuinely God makes known in the Word what is pleasing to God: that those who are called should come to God. Seriously God also promises rest for their souls and eternal life to all

who come and believe. 凡蒙福音所召的人，都是真实被召的，因为神在他的话语中，  
极诚恳地真实宣布了什么是他所接纳的，即一切蒙召者，都接受邀请。此外，他诚恳地立约，将永生和安息赐给凡到他面前而相信的人。

**3. If God does not want some to be saved and he did not elect them, can the call of the Gospel be really serious?** Yes. Arminians accuse Reformed Christians of making God out to be dishonest for **teaching election** and a **serious call**. They think that a “serious call” must discount the possibility of election. But God elects and his Gospel call is serious. The fact that God does not choose some does not mean that the call is not serious. Look at the Scriptural proofs:

**Ezekiel 33:11** "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, '**I have no pleasure in the death** of the wicked, but **that the wicked turn from his way and live**. Turn, turn from your evil ways!

Does this look like an insincere call? If God calls you to repentance, it is a real call.

**Isaiah 55:1** "Ho! **Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters**; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you...

Look at some New Testament examples:

**2Corinthians 5:20** Now then, we are ambassadors 使者 for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, **be reconciled to God**.

**Luke 13:34** "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often **I wanted to gather your children together**, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings 好像母鸡聚集小鸡到翅膀底下, but you were not willing!

Just as election is true, so the call is serious. God desires the salvation of all, and yet, he is under no obligation to save any. (You might desire to help the orphans in Africa, but do you have an obligation to do so...and do you often do so?) This must make you grateful even more for your salvation.

### **Conclusion:**

Neither nature nor the law can call you to Christ. Both leave you guilty, but none can call you to the Savior and tell you how to be saved. Only the Holy Spirit can call you to the Savior. Those who don't hear the call have only their themselves and their parents to blame.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **Seeing the futility 徒劳 of man to come to God, and seeing man's lacking desire to come to God by himself, do you love him more that he has called you to himself? And seeing the gracious gift of faith from God** to hold on to the promises of Jesus Christ, **do you love God more?** Good doctrines will always lead to generous obedience! Will you promise then to serve him better and stronger...and with more zeal?

And if you are not a Christian, hear God's call. Read his Word. Ask him for his Holy Spirit to work in you and pull you to him.