

# **Belgic Confession 16—I Chose You From My Love, not your Beauty**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Did you choose to believe in Jesus Christ? If you are a Christian, you chose to believe in Jesus Christ. Did God choose you? If you are a Christian, God chose you. Well, which one is it? Did you choose Christ, or did Christ choose you? Answer: Both are correct.

Well, you may say, which one happened first? Did I choose first or did God choose me first? And why did God choose me and why didn't God choose other people who are nicer than I? Why didn't God choose all people? These are some of the questions for which you will get answers today.

Our headings are:

**God's Electing Love** (拣选大爱)

**God's Reprobating Judgment** (弃绝之审判)

Our goals are: That you **learn to love and hold on to the doctrine of election** (拣选), and that you **praise God all the more for your election in Jesus Christ.**

We believe that, all the posterity of Adam being thus fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest Himself such as He is; that is to say, merciful and just: merciful, since He delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom He in His eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness has elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works; just, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves.

我们相信亚当所有的后裔，既如此由于我们始祖的犯罪，堕落在败坏与灭亡中，神就彰显他的恩慈与公义 1，因他本是如此。在恩慈方面说，他拯救并保守他们，是按着不变旨意，并不在乎他们的行为 2，在主耶稣基督里所拣选的人脱离死亡；在公义方面说，把别的人留在自取的堕落与灭亡中 3。 (Translated by Rev. Charles Chao D.D.)

## **God's Electing Love**

**1. Election is God's sovereign** (主权) **choosing of those he wished to save through the death of his Son.**

**2. Election was necessary because man could not choose to be saved.** Adam was perfect and fully morally capable of obeying his laws and was in no way deficient, but he sinned grievously. His sin caused him to lose the ability to reach out to God for help. This plight (困境) came upon all of Adams' natural children because he was the natural and federal head of all mankind. Sin separated man from God. This separation is called spiritual death (灵性死亡). Acts 13:48b - And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

**3. Election is therefore evidence of God's mercy (God did for Adam what he could not do for himself).** Election begins the unalterable process of salvation; once begun, it cannot stop.

Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him (Jesus Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, **according to the good pleasure of His will.** (4 就如神从创立世界以前，在基督里拣选了我们，使我们在祂面前成为圣洁，无有瑕疵；5 又因爱我们，就按着自己意旨所喜悦的，预定我们藉着耶稣基督得儿子的名分，)

Romans 9: 15 For He says to Moses, "**I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy,** and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."

**4. While Adam's act of apostasy** (背叛, 变节) **had grave consequences for all men, his rebellion did not catch God by surprise, nor did it ruin God's plan for human history.** As soon as Adam broke God's law, God came to them with the Gospel (福音). God had already decided to present this plan of salvation for the elect long before Adam sinned! **God works out election by the preaching of the gospel. So the elect** (选民) **aren't zapped** 被删除 **with salvation. So don't make the excuse: If they are elected they will be saved. Preach the Gospel! Preach it to all.**

**5. God did not elect you because you were good.** God didn't choose some people because he liked the color of their skin. In history, at times, most Christians were people of color and in North Africa and the Middle East, while some whites were even cannibals (食人者). Now many whites are Christians. God shows no preference to skin color.

**6. If God does not elect you based on your good works** (好行为), **why then did God choose to show you mercy and elect you?**

**a. God chose you for his glory and honor.**

1 Samuel 12:22 "For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because **it has pleased the LORD to make you His people.**

You bring glory and honor to God when you worship him and when you work for him.

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.

**b. God chose you because he is good and loving.**

Romans 8:28 And we know that **all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called (his children) according to His purpose.** <sup>29</sup> 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. (28 我们晓得万事都互相效力, 叫爱神的人得益处, 就是按他旨意被召的人。29 因为他预先所知道的人, 就预先定下效法他儿子的模样, 使他儿子在许多弟兄中作长子; )

God had no need of you, but because he is good, he showed you his mercy by choosing you. The word "foreknew" is a word that means "fore-loved." This was a common way of speaking: "Adam knew his wife and she conceived."

**Some people try to argue that this word means "to know beforehand."** They believe that God knew who would believe and then elected them. But no one could believe unless God helps him. So God knew whom he would help.

Deuteronomy 7: 6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; **the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples** on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup> **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; <sup>8</sup> "but **because the LORD loves you...**

**This knowledge of God's election must make you realize how precious you and your children are.**

**This knowledge must humble you** (使你谦卑下来) as God did not choose you because of anything good in you!

**This knowledge must remove fear from your hearts...** for your future is secure. **This process is unalterable!**

**7. Because God loves you his elect people, he preserves (保守) you and does not destroy you!**

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.** (预先所定下的人又召他们来; 所召来的人, 又称他们为义; 所称为义的人, 又叫他们得荣耀。)

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.**

In the new Adam, the one who is elected, grows in grace and in Christ's knowledge and is saved for eternity 永恒.

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant (约) and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments (诫命); <sup>10</sup> **and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them.** He will not be slack (延迟) with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.

**8. God's election of his people is from his eternal and unchangeable counsel.** God knows who will believe, not because he looked forward to see who would believe, but because he has already chosen those who will believe!

## **God's Reprobating Judgment**

**1. Reprobation (弃绝) is God passing-by some people who are on the Devil's side.** God simple refuses to draw them to himself through his Son. This is a passive act of God.

John 6: 65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me **unless it has been granted to him by My Father.**" (耶稣又说: "所以我对你们说过, 若不是蒙我父的恩赐, 没有人能到我这里来。)

God leaves those who have plunged into sin and perdition (沉沦) by their own actions and the actions of their fathers. They are not saved because they continue in their sins, they love their sins, and they do not have the slightest desire to leave their sins behind.

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,** <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." <sup>13</sup> As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, **but Esau I have hated.**"

**2. Reprobation is a matter of divine justice (公义).** Love it! Don't ever argue that God is unfair. God never sins.

1 Peter 2:8 - and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, **to which they also were appointed.** (又说: "作了绊脚的石头, 跌人的

磐石。”他们既不顺从，就在道理上绊跌，他们这样绊跌也是预定的。)

Trouble makers were appointed to be troublemakers, but are condemned **because it was their choice to be troublemakers.** The wicked are condemned, not for their reprobation (被上帝弃绝), but because of their sins – sins they inherited from their parents and their actual sins.

**You must not therefore accuse God of sin** and you must not excuse other people's sin by saying: "They are sinning because they are not elected." The truth is, the wicked are sinning because they are sinners, and as such, will be justly condemned.

### **3. Reprobation, like election, is for God's glory.** God's justice must always be praised.

Romans 9:22-24 What if God, **wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known,** endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles (外邦人)?

**So if you don't sing the imprecatory Psalms, you are robbing God of praise for his justice.**

### **4. What about phrases like "God hardened Pharaoh's heart?"** Sometimes God uses the phrase

"hardens (使刚硬)," but that simply means that God left some to their own devices. Man, left to his own devices, becomes hardened against God. God did not go into their hearts and harden them. In fact, the Bible said on multiple occasions that Pharaoh hardened his heart. (Exodus 8:15, 8:32, 9:34; 1 Samuel 6:6) Look at a warning!

Romans 9:19-22 - 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, **O man, who are you to reply against God?** Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 19 这样，你必对我说：“他为什么还指责人呢？有谁抗拒他的旨意呢？” 20 你这个人哪！你是谁，竟敢向神强嘴呢？受造之物岂能对造他的说：“你为什么这样造我呢？” 21 窑匠难道没有权柄，从一团泥里拿一块作成贵重的器皿，又拿一块作成卑贱的器皿吗？

While this may offend you, the truth is, you are all sinners in Adam (guilty for his sins as well as your own). **You should be thankful to God for his grace.** This doctrine of Reprobation **should also humble you** because you are no better than the reprobate, only loved.

### **Conclusion:**

God chose some to eternal life out of the grace that flowed from his heart. God judged some for their wickedness.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. You are regenerated (被更新，重生得救)** and have the hope for heaven **because God chose you in Jesus Christ, from love, before the world began,** he **presented the Gospel** to you that you might believe, and **he worked in you by his Holy Spirit** so that you might believe. Now you **trust in him.**

**2. There was nothing good in you – your name or your nature...there was nothing good in your future which caused God to elect you. How humbling!** Knowing this completely eliminates "foreknowledge" as the basis for election but rather confirms that "foreloving" was the basis of your election. If God had not chosen you, you would never have chosen him. Spurgeon 司布真: **"I am sure God chose me before I was born, or else he never would have chosen me afterward!"**

**3. If someone asks you: How do you know if you are one of the elect?** Say: I am one of the elect because I trust in Jesus Christ.

**4. If you don't accept election, you won't work for and worship your heavenly Father like you should.** Your salvation would seem less valuable.

Finally, if you are moved to trust in Christ today, you are the elect, the chosen of God. Do not fight against it. Ask God to accept Christ's suffering as yours. Enjoy God's love...his electing love.