



The Five Points of Calvinism 3

Unconditional Election (Eph. 1:3-14)

God has chosen from eternity a fixed number of people to be saved, based solely on His own will.

1. Man deserves eternal damnation.

- God is the Creator. Man has been given dominion over all (Gen. 1:26-28; Rom. 8:20-21).
: God owes man nothing. Man owes God everything. Yet, man fails to obey God, from the Fall.
: Man deserves eternal damnation (Rom. 3:19, 23; 6:23). God is not obligated to save anyone.
- In his fallen state, man has no desire for fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8).
: With time, man departed farther and farther away from God's law.
: There was the flood (Gen. 7), Babel (Gen. 11), and idolatry (Gen. 31:34; Rom. 1:23).

2. Predestination is a teaching of the Bible.

- God chose, from before creation, a fixed number of people to be saved (Eph. 1:4-6).
: (i) Note that this is not a small number (Rev. 7:9).
: (ii) This is a fixed number, represented symbolically by the 144,000 (Rev. 7:4);
: (iii) Called "the elect, or chosen ones" (Matt. 24:24, 31; Rom. 8:33; 11:7; etc.);
: (iv) Who will never be lost (Rom. 8:38-39);
: (iv) Whose names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20) or the Book of Life (Rev. 13:8; 17:8).
- Predestination is not the same as fatalism, where an impersonal "fate" determines all events.
: Fatalism erases human responsibility. Avoid saying, "I am lucky...", "It is fated...", etc.

3. God chose according to His good pleasure and sovereign will (Eph. 1:5).

- Although omniscient, God's choice was not based on foreseen faith or good works of the elect (Rom. 9:11-13, 16; 2 Tim. 1:9), as claimed by the Arminians.
: We have seen that total depravity causes: (i) the sinner to turn away from God; (ii) his good works to be not good enough for salvation.
- Faith and good works are the results, not the cause, of God's choice (Eph. 2:10; John 15:16; James 2:5). Election shows forth God's mercy, to the praise of His glorious grace (Eph. 1:4-6).
: Be careful about passages like John 3:16 (similarly 1 Tim. 1:16; 2:4 cf 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:10) and Rom. 8:29, where "foreknew" means "loved beforehand" (cf. Gen 4:1; 2 Tim. 2:19). Furthermore, it is a reference to the persons, not their actions.

- God has the right to pass by others who are not saved (Rom. 9:14-16, 21-24). They will perish in the fires of eternal hell. This is known as “reprobation”.
- : Those lost deserve their punishment. Reprobation and election are the two sides of the same coin.

4. The “covenant of grace” is the only reason for, and the means of, salvation.

- Election is based on “the eternal covenant” (also known in theology as “the covenant of redemption” or “the covenant of peace”) made between members of the Godhead (2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2).
 - : The Father has chosen a fixed number of people for salvation and given them to the Son (John 6:39; 10:14-16; 17:24).
 - The eternal covenant operates in history as the covenant of grace, which was promised to Adam, Abraham, Moses and David (Eph. 2:12; Jer. 31:31 cf. Heb. 8:6-13). It was progressively revealed in the OT period and concluded in the new covenant (Gal. 4:21-31; Luke 22:20).
 - : There are not many administrations of the covenant of grace, as claimed by the paedobaptists.
 - We do not know who are elect until sinners repent and believe in Christ.
 - : Our duty is to preach to all alike (Rom. 10:17). Who hears, and when, is determined by God (Rom. 10:14-15; Acts 17:27, 30). Beware of Hyper-Calvinism!
 - : It is not for sinners to know whether they are elect or not. Their duty is to repent & believe.
- = The cry of the tax collector in Luke 18:13 takes on new significance, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” Those saved can only adore and praise God (Rom. 11:33-36).
- = This doctrine encourages us to preach because the Lord said “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me (John 10:27).”

Review Questions

1. Why does man deserve eternal damnation?
2. What happened to man in his fallen state, in relation to God and His law?
3. What is “predestination”?
4. In what ways is “predestination” different from “fatalism”?
5. What do Arminians wrongly teach about election?
6. What are faith and good works when seen in relation to election?
7. What does “foreknew” mean in passages like Rom. 8:29?
8. What is “the eternal covenant” also known as?
9. How was the covenant of grace revealed in history?
10. What is the duty of Christians, and of hearers, with regard to the gospel?

Assignment/Discussion

Believing in Unconditional Election has not hampered missions and the preaching of the gospel. Examples of great preachers and soul-winners are George Whitfield and C H Spurgeon. Examples of great missionaries are William Carey, Adoniram Judson, and David Brainerd. What could have motivated these men in their work?
