

## A Polemic on Reform vs. Biblical Election

Dave Hunt's book, *What Love Is This* dismantles the biblical inaccuracies in the model of *election* presented by Reform theology. This model presents *as biblical* the theory of *double* predestination. But a full hearing of that complex doctrine uncovers a two-tiered salvation scheme that stands against the bible's clear teaching of "*whosoever will*" (Acts 2:21, 10:43, 13:26; Rom 9:33, 10:11, 10:13; 1 John 3:9, 4:15, 5:1, 5:8, Rev 22:17.)

An honest and forthright examination of applied Calvinist doctrine of *election* teaches there are souls who are *pre*-excluded from redemption for no other reason than because their created purpose is to serve as members of a control group assigned to hell. But this application of lapsarian decrees rests on a complicated system employing philosophical reasoning, Augustinianism, Calvin's Institutes, the Westminster and Heidelberg Confessions, Reform doctrine, the Canons of Dort, etc. —and prominently —on the acronym TULIP. We cannot ignore the witness of several prominent teachers who support the use of these extra-biblical elements to prove the system's thesis that *election* is not simply *to* heaven.

Popularly offered, the mysterious outworking of a holistic five point formula blends definitions of *depravity*, *unconditional* election, *limited* atonement (sometimes particular atonement), *irresistible* grace and perseverance *of the saints* in an attempt to prove *how one soul is in Christ* while *another is not*. At every turn this model has the devotee in *bondage* to devices that are contrary to Scripture. The theory cannot be established by a study of every entry and subsequent chains formed by the biblical words *elect*, *election*, *predestine*, and *predestinate*.

Paul declares *predestinate* means it is the *whole* of Christ's *body* that is elected —chosen —*granted* unconditional eternal life. This divine choice was made *from among* the options our sovereign God *could have made*, before the foundation of the world (Eph 1). Omnipotence and divine justice *could* have chosen to simply do away with rebellious creation, i.e., annihilation even *before* ensuing history. (This is despite theories that God *had* to save some. It is so odd to read this from those who pound away at His sovereign right to do only as He pleases!) But *our gracious God chose* from eternity past to decree the saving of souls based on His final atoning sacrifice that satisfies His demands for justice (Hebrews 10:18.)

Christ is the Head of His body. An application of Barthian<sup>1</sup> doctrine best describes *predestination of God's elect in that body*. Election is the "...choosing of the group, the church, in Christ, but *not* of individuals..." (Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 358). Recognizing there are three views of election, Sproul, et al aptly disprove the "foreknowledge is foresight" view. This author sees the evangelical version of Barthian doctrine as the *middle* view. But the *third* view—the polar extreme of *foreknowledge view*—double predestination—is disproved by virtue of its inconsistency with God's own revelation of His perfection and purity of purpose. Simply stated, God's perfect character disproves the tenants of double predestination. But we must digress.

Examining the *implications* of Augustinian election exposes what is wrong with the theory. Calvinists all agree that divine attributes of perfection, love, holiness, goodness, justice, mercy, righteousness, and truth give glory to God—and that all His decrees and actions must demonstrate "the good pleasure of His will." These souls somehow do not spiritually discern that *double predestination does not evidence this divine character*—and cannot be demonstrated *scripturally* as representative of the "good pleasure of His will."

I conclude, after five years studying Soteriology, that to embrace the *doctrine of election* presented by most Reform thinkers exposes that doctrine as more akin to what was offered by the Pharisees who attributed Christ's deeds to evil yet failed to acknowledge His goodness. Reform thinking on this doctrinal point does not align with biblical understanding of an entirely just, loving, and holy God. The Bible reveals *one must be born again into Christ to enjoy eternal life*. To that end Bible believers are called to scatter seed, presenting the *inclusive*<sup>2</sup> gospel of grace. Beyond that, we can say with certainty that no divine decree *causes* even one soul to be lost. "Whosoever will" is biblical; double predestination is not.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> While it is generally accepted that scholarship does not stoop to include Wikipedia, reading that entry on Barth, along with Ryrie's quote, is strong evidence that election has to do with Christ's *body* and not individuals. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl\\_Barth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Barth) and numerous other links regarding Barth's embrace of election.

<sup>2</sup> Use of this word has nothing to do with "Inclusivism"—a thoroughly false doctrine.

<sup>3</sup> The single most confusing argument for Calvinism's defense rests on the simplistic complaint, "But man *cannot* choose; he has *no* free will!" All the exploration of the arguments for and against compatibilism and incompatibilism fail to *scripturally* deal with the non-negotiable offer of salvation by the Bible's non-Calvinist God.