

The Root of Opposition to Election

The fact that God chooses people to salvation is clearly taught in Scripture (Ephesians 1:4-6, Romans 8:30...). The initial reaction to this (including mine) is almost always, "that's not fair". We, especially in this American culture, feel that for people to be treated differently is unjust, especially by Almighty God. The result is often to begin impressing this presupposition onto Scripture to alleviate and even distort this clear biblical truth.

I believe the root of this opposition to God's elective right is usually, if not always, a lack of understanding of biblical grace. Biblical grace is always **undeserved**. That is to say, anytime somebody is forgiven for the sake of Christ's finished work, it is always a totally merciful act by God. That person receives something *they did not earn* and *did not deserve* to receive. None of us deserve God's grace, but instead, we all deserve God's wrath. If God were to condemn every single person who has ever lived for their personal and willful rebellion against Him, He would be perfectly **just** in doing that. Nobody would be treated unfairly or unjustly. If God didn't send His Eternal Son, the Lord Jesus, into the world to secure salvation for anyone, this would not compromise God's holy character: He was not **required** to do that. Just sending Christ to redeem anyone was a gracious act.

If God decided by the pleasure of His perfect will to save only one person in the history of the world, this would make God **merciful**. You have to understand that. If grace is **pure** mercy and never deserved, then salvation for just one person would have put God's mercy on display. Of course, God has graciously saved many more than one (who knows how many millions or billions He has saved); but the point is, each time God saves, He is not required to do that. Grace cannot be demanded nor even the offer of grace. If grace, or even the offer of grace can be demanded, **IT IS NO LONGER GRACE** (mercy cannot be demanded). As I noted, even sending His Son into the world was a merciful act and could not have been demanded by sinful human beings in complete rebellion against Him.

We have the ability to love people in different ways. If you have a spouse, or children, or friends; you have a love for them that is different than a love you have for a total stranger. Why we would think God doesn't have the ability or right to love differently as well, is prideful. If He sovereignly chooses to have loving mercy on some and others display His holy justice, He has that right.

So if you understand that salvation is truly, from beginning to end, a gracious work by a loving and holy God, you can begin to see the goodness in God being able to choose who and how He distributes His grace. But mercifully, His broad gospel call goes to all people (Acts 17:30) and is a legitimate offer. But in their (and our at one time) rebellion, nobody has or will ever respond in repentance and faith because of our love for sin (John 3:19). Every last person can and should respond by humbling themselves and trusting in Christ, but left at just the external call to salvation, nobody WILL. God, in an **additional act of mercy**, chooses to overcome the unwillingness to come to Christ by effectively changing the desire of the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. This internal or effective call is done for His elect people and is always undeserved, yet always results in salvation. If you are truly born again, you can only thank God for that: and you should.

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