

CAN JUST ANYONE BE SAVED?

The Calvinistic Doctrine of Unconditional Election
By Ted J. Clarke

Quite likely most of the “unchurched” people in the world who believe in some sense in God, Christ and the Bible would say that everyone and anyone could be saved, if they had a desire to do so. A great number of religious denominations also teach that salvation is available to anyone who desires to be saved. One of the best known passages in all Scripture seems to teach the possibility of salvation for anyone who would come to God through faith in Christ. John 3:16 says, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”*

However, there are a number of denominations of the Calvinistic persuasion that deny this teaching. Unconditional Election: Many Baptist, Presbyterian and Pentecostal faiths teach that not just anyone can be saved. In the Calvinistic flower of T-U-L-I-P the “U” stands for the doctrine of unconditional election. We will let the creed books followed by these groups define their own position. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined or foreordained to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice [The Westminster and Savoy Confessions read for this last clause: “and others foreordained to everlasting death.” - TJC] These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number so certain, and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. [“Of God’s Decrees,” Chapter Three, The Philadelphia Confession of Faith].

What these quotes teach is that God has chosen a certain number of specific people to be saved and a certain number of specific people to be lost and who those people are in those specific categories cannot be changed in any way. Thus, if you were one determined by God to be saved you will be saved whether you desire to be saved or not. If you were a person chosen by God to be lost, you will be lost and there is nothing you can do to change that determination by God. This also applies to infants. Some are elected by God to be saved; others to be lost.

A statement from the same creed book quoted above says, “Elect infants dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit...Others not elected ...cannot be saved” [Chapter 10, “Of Effectual Calling”, emphasis TJC]. Conditional Election The Scriptures assuredly speak of God’s election of some to be saved and others to be lost, but this election is not unconditional and arbitrary as

Calvinism teaches. God is no respecter of persons, whimsically choosing so many to be saved and all others to be lost without such having any personal choice in the matter! *“Then Peter opened his mouth and said: In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him”* (Acts 10:34-35).

People are saved or lost because of their personal choices regarding fearing God and obeying Him. Those whom God chose to be saved are those who believe in and put on Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the for the forgiveness of our sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).

Baptism (immersion in water in the name of Christ) is the means God has chosen to place us “in Christ”—and puts us in a state of being God’s elect, His chosen. Please notice the following two passages that state clearly that we are “baptized into Christ.” *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”* (Romans 6:3-4). *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”* (Galatians 3:26-27).

“In Christ” we are God’s elect and we are saved. There is no promise of salvation for those outside of Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). God has chosen whom He will save. Will you choose to be saved? Yes, anyone who follows God’s will can be saved.

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