
The Glory of the Grace of God in Salvation

A Study of the Attributes and Applications of the Doctrines of Grace in the Life of the Believer

The Extent of God's Love: Unconditional Election

Romans 9:1-29

One of the most basic of human desires is to be loved, and, if all possible, to be loved unconditionally - to have someone who will love us in spite of our idiosyncrasies, in light of craziness and even with our vices. We find comfort when there is someone who takes an interest in us, who will initiate a relationship with us, and, even when they know the worst things about us, they still make a commitment to love us with a bond of affection so strong that it will not be withdrawn even in the face of our failures. Such a love brings belonging and security.

To be sure, such relationships are not easily forged here on earth; but let me tell you something remarkable; such a love as I have just described is at the very heart of the biblical doctrine of unconditional election. At its heart, this doctrine of election is nothing short of a divine love that in spite of what you and I have done or will ever do, has sought out sinners like you and me for salvation. Let me summarize the essence of the Bible's teaching concerning God's love and election:

- God took the initiative to love us (Romans 5:8)¹ – not the other way around;
- God loved us long before we loved Him (Ephesians 1:4-5);²
- God loved us and determined, according to His own purposes and will that He would save us, or establish a restored relationship with us forever when His justice could rightly have seen our eternal damnation in Hell (Ephesians 2:3-5);³
- We love God only because He first loved us.⁴

John Piper defines unconditional election this way; *“Unconditional election is God's free choice before creation, not based on foreseen faith, to which traitors he will grant faith and repentance, pardoning them, and adopting them into his everlasting family of joy.”* This is the doctrine of loving, unconditional election, and yet it is often dismissed by many, even by those who call themselves Christian, because it is supposedly harsh, seemingly unloving, allegedly unfair, and appears, they say, to make God a monstrous tyrant who practices some type of favoritism and turns God into a respecter of persons. Start talking about unconditional election and soon there is bound to be emotional arguments and divisions. Why is this? Why is it that simply stating what is clearly taught in Scripture becomes the source of so much angst and contention? Not to oversimplify it, but generally speaking, those who oppose the doctrine of unconditional election do so out of a misunderstanding of Scripture or because they get stuck on certain prejudices or perceived problems, allowing these to color their view of the whole. But for those of us who have a passion for this truth, we too are often at fault in such arguments, misunderstanding the very practical nature of this doctrine and then presenting such truths in some arrogant or condescending fashion.

Beloved, I exhort you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to listen carefully to the Word of God and, where necessary, consider or reconsider a teaching which dramatically illustrates the great love of God in the most amazing of ways. As the Scottish engineer and inventor, William Symington once noted, *“Our object should not be to have scripture on our side but to be on the side of scripture; and however dear any sentiment may have become by being long entertained, so soon as it is seen to be contrary to the Bible, we must be prepared to abandon it without hesitation.”* When we consider any

¹ **Romans 5:8** – *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*

² **Ephesians 1:4-5** – *“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will...”*

³ **Ephesians 2:3-5** – *“3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...”*

⁴ **1 John 4:19** – *“We love, because He first loved us.”*

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“teaching” of the Bible, we must seek to ensure it is on the side of Scripture. To that end, there is a clear Biblical logic to this doctrine of election; entirely grounded in the grace and mercy of God; which, by design, links it to last week’s message concerning total depravity (the truth that sin has affected and rendered every faculty of a person’s heart, will, mind and emotion as dead to God); and to its companion truth of total inability (that because of total depravity, a person is unable to do anything to make himself acceptable to God).

Put another way, the Bible teaches that people are spiritually dead in terms of relationship to God and as such, are unable and unwilling to recognize their state or do anything about it. Additionally, such persons are deservedly under God’s wrath and condemnation. This is what we considered in Ephesians 2 last week. That’s the bad news. The good news is that God determined to achieve His own purpose and glory in the world by undoing the devastating effect of sin and of building a great community of people, called the Church, who, because of the work of His Son, Jesus Christ on the cross, are now in a good and right relationship with God, having trusted and believed that Christ died in their place. These redeemed and restored people gladly live under God’s rule and give God all the glory and honor due Him. These are those who recognize that humanity’s only hope is for God to act to make all this happen.

In Ephesians 2:4 we saw that God did act and God, not man, makes persons “alive” and restores them to a right relationship with Him. What was it that motivated this action on God’s part? It was His great love, His great grace, and His great mercy. For in our salvation, God acts totally contrary to what every sinful person deserves. And all this brings us to the truth of God’s unconditional election; of His predestinating those whom He chose to salvation. This is the second in the series of the Doctrines of Grace and the ‘U’ in the acronym TULIP. Let me remind you that TULIP stands for:

- T — Total depravity
- U — Unconditional Election
- L — Limited atonement
- I — Irresistible grace
- P — Perseverance of the Saints

Our text is found in Romans 9, so please turn there. But before we look at Romans 9 to get an overview of this teaching regarding unconditional election, let me point out a few facts:

- **Fact:** *Election is not something squeezed from one or two obscure verses. Both the Old and New Testaments detail God’s plan of salvation being worked out in history, and God’s action in choosing who will be saved is an integral of this plan. We have not right to simply dismiss or ignore it. It is a very theme of Scripture, from beginning to end. We never ought to be ashamed that the Scriptures declare, from beginning to end, God sovereignly choosing things and people. God elected to create the world and all things in it. God elected that man would be the pinnacle of His creatures. God elected Abraham from the Ur of the Chaldees. God elected Israel out of all the nations of the earth. And God elected out of all who deserved die, so whom He would bless with salvation. There is to be no embarrassment, no confusion, and no shame attached to such a clear theme of Scripture.*
- **Fact:** *unconditional election is a sovereign act of God, the immediate purpose of which is to save undeserving sinners and, in this age, to place them within a great community of loyal, obedient servants called the church, whose ultimate purpose is to reflect and point others to the glory and honor of God. Beloved, this does not mean we understand everything we might wish to understand about God’s ways and plan, but it does mean that God has graciously told us everything we need to know.*
- **Fact:** *unconditional election is the free and unconditioned act of God’s grace and mercy. This means it was not based on anything found in the person chosen. It was not God looking into the future, seeing those who would believe and thus choosing them. It was not that there are some people who are less*

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dead or more appealing to God than others – such a line of thinking is totally foreign to the Scripture. Rather, the doctrine of election is that it falls entirely on God's gracious, sovereign, everlasting love as He determined to save into His family forever some from among those who deserve only His condemnation and wrath.

- **Fact:** (Stay with me – this is for every one!) *Understanding God's electing love is not just some abstract theoretical consideration for theologians and seminaries, but rather is a praise inspiring, practical truth that is to be pondered by each and every one of God's people.* Let me show you this Biblically. Turn to 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15; there we read...

13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

Because God has chosen you; because God has called you; all in order that your life may possess and reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; for this reason, your life is to be characterized (here is the practical application of election) by standing firm and holding to the practices taught by the apostles. Beloved, understanding that we are loved with an everlasting love, without condition, and that we are eternally secure in as part of our God's family should prompt in us passionate worship of God. In Ephesians 1:3, as Paul launches into the magna carta of redemptive truth, He begins with these words, ***“3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*** And what is the prime example given by Paul as to why our God is “blessed”? We find the answer in verse 4; the unconditional election of God, reading, ***4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him...”***

That God has foreknown, predestined and called us to Himself as we considered a few weeks ago from Romans 8:28-30 is a truth that brings us assurance and real comfort in all circumstances of life. Such a truth calls us to thankful, obedient living, as we read in Colossians 3:12-14,

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Now, I know that I am quite adept at long introductions, leading some of you to wonder not only if, but how I intend to work through a passage like Romans 9:1-29 in the time left. Let me remind you that what we are doing is simply an overview of the “Doctrines of Grace” – giving you in seed form, the reasons why we believe what we believe. My prayer and desire is that by giving these overviews, you will be inspired to dig deeper. To that end, let us turn our attention to Romans 9 where all that I have been saying is revealed.

If we are to understand Romans 9, we must remember that the all-encompassing theme of Paul's letter is to explain the power of God for salvation as found in the gospel. Romans 1:16 tells us, ***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”*** Then, beginning in verse 1:18 and running all the way through to 3:20, Paul lays makes the case that every person, Jew and Gentile alike, is under God's wrath and judgment because there is no one who lives in light of what they already know about God. And worse than that, each person apart from Christ, actually suppresses the truth about God they do know.

Beginning in Romans 3:21, Paul next defines several key aspects of the gospel, telling his readers what the gospel is; what are the results of the gospel, and what are the effect of the gospel in the life of the

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believer all of which culminates in the grand declaration of Romans 8:28-39. Romans chapters 1-8 reveal to us the Gospel according to God. They are a summary of the whole process of salvation and from beginning to end, revealing to any who will read and understand that salvation is God's initiative to save His sinful people; or to put it in the words of Ephesians 2 and what we studied last week, salvation is the process of what God does to make His people alive.

All of this led Paul to consider potential objections to what has been said. And so, in anticipation of such questions, Paul, in chapters 9-11, tackles them. And the chief question being addressed would be this, *"If this gospel you speak of is true, Paul, then why is it that the Jews have not believed it?"* At issue is God's reputation and credibility. For if salvation really is about what God alone does in a person's life, beginning with election then calling, then saving, and then keeping; why is it that it appears as though God has not made it work in lives of the vast majority of Jews; those whom God Himself declared to be His special people? Let us now walk through Romans 9 to examine Paul's response to such questions.

I. The Question Anticipated (Romans 9:1-5)

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

In verses 1-3 Paul expresses deep, heart-felt anguish over the mass rejection of the gospel by his fellow Jews. Paul's wishes, longs or the opportunity to help them, even if their salvation came at the price of his own damnation. This reminds me of the statement, *"Preaching the gospel without a heart for the lost is not preaching the gospel."* Then, in verses 4-5, Paul states how the Jews' rejection of Christ is all the more staggering since they had enjoyed a special status, God's chosen people and nation, though whom God had granted special purposes and privileges they had enjoyed from the time of Abraham up to the time of Christ. The issue is this; being the recipients of all these privileges and promises of salvation, surely, if what Paul has said is true, then the Jews should have been the first to acknowledge it and believe, right? The unbelief of the Jews seemingly calls into question everything Paul has said about the gospel, God and what He has done in Jesus. This leads to the next point...

II. The Question Answered (Romans 9:6-13)

6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. 9 For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." 10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." 13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

Here we see Paul answering the anticipated question. Here Paul clearly states that God has done exactly what He had promised to do in the very manner He promised to do it. The key statement is found in verse 6 revealing the absolute reliability of God's word. Paul assures his readers that God completely delivers on everything He promises to the people of Israel. But this does not yet answer the question; how can God be true and His promises intact given the fact that only a small handful of Jews have believed the gospel and have been saved? As Romans 9-11 reveal, while God is not finished with Israel, and that, in the words of Romans 11:25, *"all Israel will be saved..."* as one looks at the issue, God never promised to save each and every individual Jew without exception. The truth is that Israel's present circumstance of mass unbelief is not because God's salvation plan had failed, but is rather a reflection of God's pattern in salvation throughout the whole of human history.

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As we read in verses 6-8, we notice the promise of salvation is not made to those who are simply physical descendants of Abraham, not to the **“children of the flesh”** but rather those who are **“children of God; children of promise.”** And just who are the children of promise? As Paul begins to reveal, the children of promise are those God has unconditionally chosen to receive the promise. So, while it is true that God chose the nation of Israel from among all the other nations, He chose the nation to be the special means through which to achieve His purposes in the salvation of humanity; not just to the Jews. The promise of individual salvation, as clearly seen by Paul’s words here, was never made to every one of Abraham’s natural, biological descendants; **“children of the flesh;”** rather it was made to those who are the **“children of promise”** – or as we will see, the children of His own divine choosing, which would include Jews and Gentiles, making all who believe spiritual descendants of Abraham. In other words, in verse 8, we find God having chosen some individual Jews from within the nation of Israel and saved them. Only these chosen by God experience God’s saving mercy and they are the true seed or spiritual descendants of Abraham.

This truth of God’s unconditional choosing or election is readily seen in the history of God’s dealings with humanity. God, on His own, with input from anyone, chose to make Adam and Eve as the pinnacle of His creation. God chose of His own accord and for His own purpose, Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees. Here in our text we see that God chose Isaac to be His true spiritual descendent rather than Ishmael. In verses 10-13 this choosing of God, quite apart from anything ever done is made clear as God chose Jacob rather than his twin brother Esau. Note verse 11 carefully as this choice had nothing to do with human merit; this choice was determined before they were born, before either one “had done anything good or bad...” Why? Hear the word of the Lord from verse 11, **so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls.** Here is unconditioned election as God alone determined, in the case of Jacob and Esau, and determines, as we will see, in every case who receives His mercy.

But in case this is not enough, drop down to verses 24-29 where we see Paul appealing to the prophets to confirm God’s electing purpose. Here Paul cites evidence from both Hosea and Isaiah to show that God’s purpose in salvation always reflected free and unconditional choice on God’s part; without regard to one’s race or conduct. We read,

24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. 25 As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" 26 "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD." 27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; 28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOth HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

Verse 24 is clear, God not only choose from among the Jews, but also from among the Gentiles. And so, without panic or embarrassment, Paul gives the reason as to why only some Jews have responded to God’s offer of salvation in Jesus. What is the answer? Because, God, for His own purposes and glory, chose some and left others to themselves. Moving along in the text, Paul anticipates and addresses two objections to this teaching and they concern themselves with the issue of “fairness.”

III. **Objection #1 - This makes God unjust or unfair in choosing one and not another for salvation (Romans 9:14-18)**

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! 15 For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." 16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND

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THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

To the objection that God is unfair if He chooses one for salvation and passes over another, Paul responds with a resounding NO – ***“may it never be!”*** – literally, *“no, no, may it never be!”* (v. 14). In verses 15-16 we find it is in the very nature of God to be free to show mercy as He pleases without any reference to people or anything they have or have not done. God’s mercy, His not giving the punishment a person deserves, reveals His compassionate character and ultimately His glory.

We need to remember something key here; namely that God’s justice and God’s judgment reveal God’s power, holiness and glory as equally as God’s grace, mercy, and salvation. To demonstrate this, Paul looks to Pharaoh as an example in verses 17-18. Prior to God’s direct dealings with Pharaoh, he was already hostile to God, and when he decided to pursue his own plans against the Lord’s will, he suffered due punishment, which only showed God’s power and control as well as God’s freedom to do what He purposed. Beloved, many Christians have sought to oppose the doctrine of unconditional election from this very verse, believing it necessary to protect God against the accusation that appears to arise from it. For when we read that God “hardened” Pharaoh’s heart, it seems as though God is then responsible for Pharaoh’s sin because, the logic goes, that God intervened directly in Pharaoh’s heart and caused him, against his “will” to engage in a deeper, more hostile expression of sin and evil.

Yes such thinking would be contrary to all that we read and know of God from the Scriptures. What does it mean that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart? Let me remind you that in the Exodus text we read of Pharaoh’s hardened heart fourteen times. Of those fourteen times, five were simply statements of fact, that Pharaoh’s heart was hardened; three stated Pharaoh had hardened his own heart; and six stated that the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart; but only after Pharaoh had already hardened his own. In light of this, it is best to understand the LORD’s hardening of Pharaoh’s heart as God simply removing the restraints of common grace and giving Pharaoh greater freedom to express his own natural hostility toward God. Beloved, this is what we find throughout Scripture. Even when Israel refused to listen to God’s word through the prophets, God often punished them by giving them what they, in their own sinful nature, wanted and removed the influence and protection of His word; something that resulting in Israel’s demise.

We see the very same thing in Romans 1 where God’s judgment for people rejecting Him and choosing to live a lie is simply allowing sinful people to have their desired way and to follow their sinful desires into ever greater sinfulness. Only after stating how people suppress the truth of God within them, choosing, because of their sinful nature, to exchange the truth of God for a lie and to worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator do we then read in verses 24, 26, and 28 that God “gave them over” to their desires which they used to engage in deeper sin. In other words, God does not make Pharaoh or anyone engage in any sin they do not already desire. The Scriptures declare that no one deserves any grace or mercy but by their own doing deserve God’s wrath. So that God would chose anyone is rather amazing. But this leads to the next objection...

IV. Objection #2 - How can God punish those to whom He has not shown mercy to? (Romans 9:19-29)

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. 25 As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" 26 "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE

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CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD." 27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; 28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

In verses 20-21, Paul emphasizes a truth that needs to be remembered; **God is God and we are not**. Since God is the Creator and God is good, God always does what is right and everything He does is according to His own purpose. Too often Paul's point with the clay and the potter illustration is missed. Let's remember a couple of things;

- 1) The clay God is working with is actually comprised of guilty, death deserving criminals;
- 2) The fact that God chooses to pardon some while leaving others to face the punishment they rightly deserve then is not about fairness. If we were speaking about fairness, then God would rightly condemn everyone – that is the only biblically "fair" response to man's sin.
- 3) So then, the fact that God pardons and saves some is not a revealing of what is fair; rather it is a revealing of His love, His mercy, His grace, and His purpose. As we are fond of saying, the amazing thing unconditional election is not that God has chosen to save some, but rather is that there are any that are saved at all because all deserve Hell.

And so, in verses 22-29 we see that rather than accuse God of being unfair or worse yet, sadistically cruel, we should be immediately humbled and impelled to praise Him – for without this *unconditional election, this expression of His grace and mercy, no one would be saved and it reminds us that there will not be one person in in hell who does not deserve to be there AND there will not be one person in heaven who does deserve to be there.*

In verses 22-23 we find an answer to the charge that the doctrine of election makes God's choosing is arbitrary or whimsical. Rather, when God chooses to punish a guilty sinner for rebellion, God receives the glory as it reveals His justice and hatred of sin. And, conversely, when God chooses to save a person by His grace alone, He alone receives all the glory. Beloved, God does not and cannot share His glory. In the context of the coming salvation for Israel, the LORD, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, declared in Isaiah 48:11 – ***"For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another."*** Beloved, there is no unfairness or injustice done to one guilty sinner when another is pardoned.

Now, I know that I have not address every objection that has been raised against unconditional election, but I have sought to show you that it is what the Bible teaches. Behind most objections to election is some perceived offense to human work or pride; but then, that is just the point, is it not; that salvation, from start to finish is the work of God. I would ask you to consider these truths with humility making every effort to know what God has said in His Word on this matter rather than giving credence to what others have said about it. The Bible teaches unconditional election. And even if it were only taught in Romans 9 (which it is not), we would be compelled to believe it. So read Romans 9 and other passages I have pointed you to again. Do not reject this doctrine of election because it seems contradictory, impossible, or too hard to reconcile with what you believe God to be like. I would ask you to consider it prayerfully and search the Scriptures to see if these things are so.

In wrapping up, let me take you to my opening thought, that this doctrine of unconditional election is nothing short of the divine language of love, grace, mercy, compassion, and everlasting commitment from the Lord to us His sinful people. How shall we respond? How else can we respond but in gratitude? For the doctrine of unconditional election reveals to us that our God and His grace is so much greater than all our sin. Through election then, God reveals to the world His character and His glory. For if we had been left to ourselves, we would never have chosen God's salvation in Christ. And for that alone we ought

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to be eternally and demonstrably thankful. Let us see unconditional election as one of the most amazing action taken on our behalf, done for the most unlikely and most undeserving of people. It is this electing love of God that is our guarantee and our security, promising to bring us into God's presence. And just in case you think I am making more of this doctrine than necessary; and just in case you think that somehow this doctrine of election produces just a tiny, stuck up group of redeemed, listen to the words of Revelation 7:9-10 were we read...

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

This is the doctrine of unconditional election properly considered and thus properly celebrated. Let us celebrate it together daily!

Soli Deo Gloria

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