



## **Reformed Theology**

### **Unconditional Election**

#### **Definition**

This is sometimes called "sovereign election".

Unconditional Election is needed because of Total Depravity.

Because man is totally depraved, it leaves man hopeless of finding God and God has to choose / elect some. (Simple Theology)

God elected or chose some to be saved. (Simple Theology)

U: Unconditional Election: This shows that God the Father planned to save certain humans. (Orrick)

The letter U stands for unconditional election. If man is as depraved as the Bible says he is, then his divine election to salvation would have to be as unconditional as the Bible says it is (cf. Rom. 9:15).” (Packer et al. 50)

“God has chosen unconditionally who he will bring to faith and salvation.” (John Piper)

Unconditional

“We were elected / brought into salvation not because of anything that we have done or would do but only because of God’s free choice, grace, and mercy extended to us.” (Simple Theology)

Q: On what basis does God elect to save certain people?

A: God’s sovereign election.

## Arminianism

Conditional election is usually based on God's foreknowledge of human actions and responses. This is often called the *prescient view* of election or predestination. The term *prescience* or *pre-science* simple refers to foreknowledge. (Sproul)

## Reformed Theology

Reformed theology understands the golden chain to mean that God predestines some people to receive a divine call that others do not receive. Only the predestined, or the elect, receive this call, and only those who receive this call are justified. (Sproul)

“Election refers to God’s choosing whom to save. It is unconditional in that there is no condition man must meet before God chooses to save him. Man is dead in trespasses and sins. So there is no condition he can meet before God chooses to save him from his deadness.” (Piper)

## Some Points

### Predestination

Acts 4:28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Romans 8:29–30 [29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

When we add the prefix *pre* to *destination*, we speak of something that takes place prior to or before the destination. The *pre* of *predestination* relates to the question of time. In biblical categories predestination clearly takes place, not only before we believe in Christ, and not only before we were even born, but from all eternity, before the universe was ever created.

The agent of predestination is God. In his sovereignty he predestinates. Human beings are the object of his predestination. In short, predestination refers to God's sovereign plan for human beings, decreed by him in eternity.

(Sproul)

Ephesians 1:3–1 [3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he **predestined** us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. [11] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined** according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

Revelation 13:8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

In summary we may define *predestination* broadly as follows: From all eternity God decided to save some members of the human race and to let the rest of the human race perish. God made a choice – he chose some individuals to be saved unto everlasting blessedness in heaven, and he chose others to pass over, allowing them to suffer the consequences of their sins, eternal punishment in hell. (Sproul)

Where is faith in the chain?

Reformed theology sees faith as the result of election. (Sproul)

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

John 10:26 but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.

Ephesians 2:4–9 [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Unconditional Election is prior to faith.

What are the grounds for election?

Ephesians 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

The grounds of our election are not something foreseen by God in us but rather the good pleasure of his sovereign will. The ground on which God chooses the objects of his mercy is solely the good pleasure of his will. (Sproul)

Unconditional Election is with purpose.

## An overall statement

Reformed theologians understand the golden chain as follows: From all eternity God foreknew his elect. He had an idea of their identity in his mind before he created them. He foreknew them not only in the sense of having a prior idea of their personal identities, but also in the sense of foreloving them. When the Bible speaks of “knowing”, it often distinguishes between a simple mental awareness of a person and a deep intimate love of a person. The Reformed view teaches that all whom God has foreknown, he has also predestined to be inwardly called, justified, and glorified. God sovereignly brings to pass the salvation of his elect and only of his elect. (Sproul)

## Romans 9:10-18

Romans 9:10–13 [10] And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, [11] though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—[12] she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” [13] As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

Here is Paul's illustration of his teaching about election that he has taught in Romans 8.

Paul is reminding us of what God had said to Moses centuries before. It is God's divine right to execute mercy / compassion wherever He desires.

One group receives justice, which they deserve.

One group receives mercy, which they don't deserve.

There is no injustice in this.

The focus here is on grace.

There is no accent on my merit.

The focus is totally on the mercy and grace of God.

God (Simple Theology)

God has the right.

God is not being unjust.

God is making known His glory.

## Take-Aways

God does the saving work...not us.

It is God's sovereign will to bring people to salvation, not because they deserve it, but because He is kind and merciful and gracious. God is the one who is fully just in electing anybody because nobody deserves it.

This doctrine of election should motivate us in our evangelism.

Romans 10:14-15 [14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

## Summary Statements

God's election is an unconditional act of free grace that was given through his Son Jesus before the world began. By this act, God chose, before the foundation of the world, those who would be delivered from bondage to sin and brought to repentance and saving faith in Jesus. (John Piper)

Reformed theology does not teach that God brings the elect "kicking and screaming, against their wills," into his kingdom. It teaches that God so works in the hearts of the elect as to make them willing and pleased to come to Christ. They come to Christ because they want to. They want to because God has created in their hearts a desire for Christ. Likewise the reprobate do not want to embrace Christ earnestly. They have no desire for Christ whatever and are fleeing from him. (Sproul)

We conclude that the election of which the Bible speaks is unconditional. No foreseen actions of the elect cause them to be elect or provide the grounds of their election. The conditions for salvation or justification are indeed met by the believer, but they are met because God provides these conditions for them by his sovereign grace. (Sproul)

The Bible teaches that before God had created anyone or anything, he decided that he would choose, or *elect*, some humans to be his adopted children. No one deserved this honor; God did not foresee any *condition* in them that prompted him to choose them, so we say that God chose them *unconditionally*. God chose or elected them because he wanted to; or, to put it another way, it was his will to elect them.

Since his chosen people, along with the rest of mankind, would fall into sin, God planned to save them from their sin, and he also planned or *predestined* all the means to bring about their salvation. He planned that Christ would redeem his chosen ones; he planned that the Holy Spirit would enlighten and enliven his chosen ones and call them to Christ; and he planned all the providential arrangements to make sure that each of his chosen ones would hear the gospel and receive Christ as Lord. God the Father gave this group of chosen ones, the *elect*, as a gift to Christ to be his people, his sheep, and his bride. All of God's elect will be saved, and they are the only humans who will be saved. (Orrick)

“We are not saying the final salvation is unconditional. It is not. We must meet the condition of faith, for example, in Christ in order to inherit eternal life. But faith is not a condition for election. Just the reverse. Election is condition for faith. It is because God chose us before the foundation of the world that he purchases our redemption at the cross, and then gives us spiritual life through irresistible grace, and brings us to faith.”  
(Piper)