

# THE GOOD NEWS

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Romans 3:19-26 (p. 1750)

July 7, 2019

*But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved in the Lord,  
because from the beginning God chose you to be saved  
through the sanctifying work of the Spirit  
and through belief in the truth.*

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 (p. 1843)

## In defense of the gospel

*. . . so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God . . . .*

*But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known,  
to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God  
comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*

*There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,  
and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that that came by Christ Jesus.*

Romans 3:19-24

1) The Canons are a response to CONFLICT

2) The Canons OUGHT make me uncomfortable

## Pictures of God at work

1) We are SLAVES redeemed

*The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous . . . .*

*But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers  
that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you . . . .*

Deuteronomy 7:7

2) We are orphans ADOPTED by the Father

*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

*In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ . . . .*

Ephesians 1:4-5

3) We are lost sheep SOUGHT AND FOUND by the Good Shepherd

*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me.*

*I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.*

John 10:27

4) We are SPIRITUALLY DEAD made ALIVE

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins . . . .*

*Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.*

Ephesians 2:1-5

## **The heart of election**

*This is how God showed his love among us:*

*He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.*

1 John 4:9

1) Election reflects the SEEKING heart of God

2) Election is intensely PERSONAL

2) Election is powerfully PRACTICAL:

Assurance, Article 12

Assurance of this their eternal and unchangeable election

to salvation is given to the chosen in due time, though by various stages and in differing measure. Such assurance comes not by inquisitive searching into the hidden and deep things of God, but by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God's word – such as true faith in Christ, as childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for sins, a hunger and thirst after righteousness . . . .

The Response of Unbelievers, Article 16

Those who do not yet actively experience within themselves a living faith in Christ or an assured confidence of heart . . . . ought not be alarmed at the mention of reprobation . . . .

The Salvation of Infants of Believers, Article 17

. . . not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, godly parent ought not doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy.

## Resources for studying the Canons of Dordt

The Canons of Dordt at <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs>

Tim Keller's "No One Seeks God" sermon on Romans 3 at <https://www.monergism.com/no-one-seeks-god-%E2%80%93-romans-39-20>. He also has a nice answer to objections at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/3-objections-to-the-doctrine-of-election/>

Michael Horton's "Romans at 30,000 Feet" at [http://www.reformationtheology.com/2011/04/romans\\_from\\_30000\\_feet\\_by\\_mich.php](http://www.reformationtheology.com/2011/04/romans_from_30000_feet_by_mich.php)

Community Christian Reformed Church of Kitchener, Ontario, has developed a wonderful teaching resource for the Canons at <https://www.crc.on.ca/dive-into-doctrine>

John Piper's "What We Believe" introduction to the 5-Points at <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-we-believe-about-the-five-points-of-calvinism>

Justin Taylor's "Tweaking the TULIP" at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/tweaking-the-tulip/>

Commentators that I have found help

J.I. Packer has an introduction to Arminianism that is sometimes too harsh at <http://whitefield.freeservers.com/packer.html>. His opening pages of *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (InterVarsity Press, 1961) is much fairer.

Reformation Theology's "J.I. Packer on 'Calvinism'" at [http://www.reformationtheology.com/2006/10/j\\_i\\_packer\\_on\\_calvinism.php](http://www.reformationtheology.com/2006/10/j_i_packer_on_calvinism.php)

Westminster Seminary has a good introduction at <https://www.wscal.edu/about-wsc/doctrinal-standards/canons-of-dort>

Jim Osterhouse has a very helpful "fresh look" at the Five Points in "FAITH Unfolded" (Faith Alive, 1997).

Spurgeon on "Election" from 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 at <https://www.monergism.com/election-0>

## Spurgeon's "Election" from 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

First, I think election, to a saint, is one of the most stripping doctrines in all the world--to take away all trust in the flesh, or all reliance on anything except Jesus Christ. How often do we wrap ourselves up in our own righteousness, and dress ourselves with the false pearls and gems of our own works and doings. We begin to say, "Now I am saved, because I did this or that." Instead of that, it is faith and faith alone that saves; that faith and that alone unites to the Lamb, irrespective of works, although saving faith will produce works after salvation. How often do we lean on some work, other than that of our own beloved, and trust in some power, other than what comes from on high. Now if we would have this power taken from us, then we must consider election. Stop, my soul, and consider this. God loved you before you had a being. He loved you when you were dead in disobedience and sin, and sent His Son to die for you. He purchased you with His precious blood, before you could even pronounce His name. Can you then be proud?

I know nothing, nothing again, that is more humbling for us than this doctrine of election. I have sometimes fallen prostrate before it, when endeavoring to understand it. I have stretched my wings, and, eagle-like, I have soared toward the sun. Steady has been my eye, and true my wing, for a while; but when I came near it, only one thought possessed me--"From the beginning God chose you to be saved"--I was lost in its luster, I was staggered with the mighty thought; and from the dizzy elevation down came my soul, prostrate and broken, saying, "Lord, I am nothing, I am less than nothing. Why me? Why me?"

Friends, if you want to be humbled, study election, for it will make you humble under the influence of God's Spirit. He who is proud of his election is not elect; and he who is humbled under a sense of it may believe that he is. He has every reason to believe that he is, for it is one of the most blessed effects of election, that it helps us to humble ourselves before God.