



# A grace worth saving: God's election

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The Historic Faith  
Lecture 2

# Election: conditional or unconditional?

The word election simply means “choice.”

A very important debate concerns God’s choices—are they unconditional or are they conditional?

When God chooses, what is He looking for? Height? Size? Morality? Faith? Works? Or is it according to His pleasure for unknowable reasons to us?

“For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.” (Deut 14:2)

The nickname you often hear for Israel is...

# More examples

Moreover He rejected the tent of Joseph,  
And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim,  
But chose the tribe of Judah. (Psalm 78:67-68)

What about Jonah? Why did God choose him?

Calvin surveys verses like these in pp. 926-930 (McNeill ed.) and concludes that predestination is unconditional.

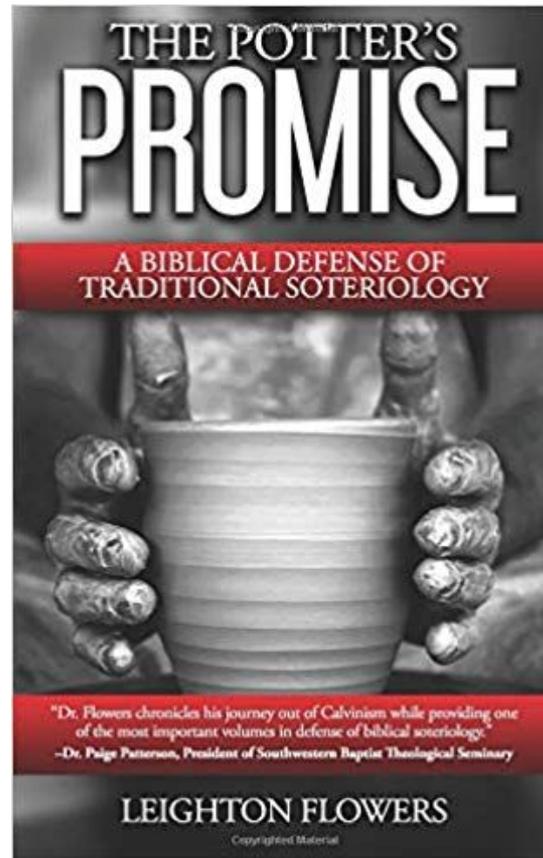
# Matthew 22:1-14 (NKJV)

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.” ’ 5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ 10 So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

14 “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

# Book recommendation



# This parable is mostly straightforward

- The king represents...
- God
- The wedding feast represents...
- eternal life
- The first nation represents...
- Israel
- The servants represents...
- prophets
- The clothes represent...
- righteousness / putting on Christ

# There are three choices in this passage!

1. Choosing messengers to send out invitations
2. Choosing to send messengers to his own country first, then others.
3. Choosing to allow only properly clothed guests into the wedding feast

The first two choices look “unconditional” as far as we can tell.

Do we then assume that God’s choices about salvation are unconditional?  
This was Calvin’s unwarranted leap.

The final choice (#3) is conditional!

We cannot assume that if some of God’s choices are unconditional (as far as we can tell), that all of them are.

# Not all of God's choices are to save or damn forever

1. Choosing messengers to send out invitations
2. Choosing to send messengers to his own country first, then others.
3. Choosing to allow only properly clothed guests into the wedding feast

Which is the above choices are to save or damn forever?

The first choice is "election to service"!

# Take-homes from Lecture 2

1. Some of God's choices are unconditional and some are conditional. Only the context and Scripture can tell us which.
2. Matthew 22:1-14 is a beautiful parable that highlights the riches of God's choices.
3. Not all of God's choices (elections) are to save or damn eternally. God can choose people to carry out a ministry or a purpose.

# What do you call those who aren't Calvinists?

Arminian?

There are several proposals:

- Traditionalists
- Provisionists: God is glorified in his love and provision for all
- Extensivists (as opposed to exclusivists): “Extensivism men cannot be saved because they will not believe, whereas, in Calvinism, men will not be saved because they cannot will to believe, as decided by God.” (R. Rogers)

# Homework for tomorrow

Read Genesis 12:1-3 and consider the purpose of God's election (choice) of Abraham as relates to eternal salvation.

Read Exodus 7-11 and look for any patterns that you can about Pharaoh's heart being hardened.

Read Romans 9-11. What do you understand this passage to mean about salvation?