

Unconverted Elect

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I. Sovereign grace makes the doctrine of the unconverted elect necessary.

1. All men are born in state of spiritual death because of Adam's sin (**Rom 5:12; Eph 2:1**).
2. In this state, men cannot seek God, understand God, nor do good (**Rom 3:9-12**).
3. Therefore, if anyone will be saved, God has to do the saving all by Himself.
4. God first, before the foundation of the world, chose (elected) in Christ those whom He would save (**Eph 1:4**).
5. The elect are still unconverted at this point since they don't yet exist.
6. In time, Christ came and died for their sins on the cross (**2Co 5:18-19; 1Pe 2:24**).
7. The elect are still unconverted at this point since they haven't yet been born.
8. Having forgiven their sins on the cross, the Holy Spirit regenerates them at some point in their lives (**Col 2:13; Tit 3:5**).
 - A. Prior to moment of regeneration, the elect are still unconverted because they are spiritually dead and yet incapable of hearing and believing the gospel (**1Co 1:18**).
 - B. After the moment when the elect are regenerated, they then have the ability to hear and believe the gospel, but until they do, they are still unconverted.
 - C. They may hear the gospel soon after they are regenerated, or it may take a long time if, for instance, they live in a country where there are no Bibles, churches, preachers, or Christians.
9. In that conversion *always* comes after regeneration, all of the elect will be unconverted for some period of time between the time they are regenerated and the time they hear and believe the gospel.

II. Conversion vs. Regeneration

1. Conversion is a process in which the person is an active participant.
 - A. Conversion - II. Change in character, nature, form, or function. 8. a. The bringing of any one over to a specified religious faith, profession, or party, esp. to one regarded as true, from what is regarded as falsehood or error. (Without qualification, usually = conversion to Christianity.)
 - B. Converted *ppl.* - 1. Turned, turned back; 2. That has turned or been brought over to a religious faith or profession, whether from a different religion or from irreligious life.
 - C. The Bible defines conversion the same as the dictionary: a turning to God (**Act 15:3 c/w Act 15:19**).
 - D. A person is *active* in conversion, which includes believing, repenting, being baptized, and becoming a member of the church (**Act 14:1,21-23 c/w Act 15:3**).
2. Regeneration is an instantaneous act of God in which the person is passive.
 - A. Regeneration - 1. a. The action of regenerating; the process or fact of being regenerated; re-creation, re-formation, etc. 2. a. In religious use: The process or fact of being born again in a spiritual sense; the state resulting from this.
 - B. Quicken *v.* - 1. a. To give or restore life to; to make alive; to vivify or revive; to animate (as the soul the body). b. *fig.* in renderings of Biblical passages, or echoes of these, occas. with ref. to spiritual life.

- C. Regeneration (quicken) happens when a person is *dead* (**Eph 2:1**).
- D. Therefore, a person is entirely *passive* in regeneration.

III. Categories of the unconverted elect

1. Unconverted, unregenerate elect

- A. All of the elect prior to regeneration are unconverted.
- B. At one time we all walked in sin according to the course of this world when we were dead in sins before God quickened us (**Eph 2:1-5; Tit 3:3-5**).
- C. There is no way for us to distinguish an unregenerate elect person from a reprobate since they are both dead in sins.

2. Unconverted, regenerated elect who have not yet heard the gospel.

A. Cornelius

- i. Cornelius was a devout man who feared God and whose prayers God heard (**Act 10:1-4**).
 - a. The unregenerate do not fear God (**Rom 3:18**).
 - b. God doesn't hear the prayers of the unregenerate (**1Pe 3:12; Pro 15:29**).
 - c. These two facts (he feared God and God heard his prayers) prove that Cornelius was an elect, regenerate child of God.
- ii. God had already cleansed Cornelius *before* Peter ever preached the gospel to him (**Act 10:15 c/w Act 10:28 c/w Act 10:35**).
- iii. Cornelius just needed to hear the gospel which told him about the Lord Jesus Christ who saved him so that he could commit his life to Him.

B. Lydia

- i. Lydia, like Cornelius, was a regenerate child of God who worshipped God (**Act 16:14**).
- ii. But Lydia was not yet a believer in Christ until the Lord opened her heart so that she attended to the things Paul preached (the gospel) (**Act 16:14**).
- iii. Like Cornelius, once she heard the gospel, she was baptized (**Act 16:15**).

C. Gentiles which have not the law in Romans 2:14-15

- i. Paul describes Gentiles "which have not the law" (the scripture), but nevertheless "do *by nature* the things contained in the law" (**Rom 2:14**).
 - a. These Gentiles are clearly regenerate, children of God because unregenerate people who are dead in sins are "*by nature* the children of wrath" (**Eph 2:1,3**).
 - b. The carnal, unregenerate man is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (**Rom 8:7**).
- ii. These Gentiles have "the law written in their hearts" (**Rom 2:15**).

- a. These Gentiles were under the new covenant in which the law of God gets written in the elect's hearts when God forgives their sins and quickens them (**Heb 8:10-12 c/w Col 2:13**).
- b. These Gentiles were able to do by nature the things contained in the law because God had put His Spirit in them so that they could walk in His statutes and keep His judgments (**Eze 36:26-27**).
- iii. These Gentiles needed to hear the gospel which told them about the Lord Jesus Christ who saved them so that they could commit their lives to Him.

D. Unconverted Gentiles in Corinth

- i. God told Paul to stay and preach the gospel in Corinth because He had much people in that city (**Act 18:9-11**).
- ii. God's people were made His people through the new covenant in which Christ died for them and saved them from their sins (**Heb 8:10-12 c/w Mat 1:21 c/w Heb 13:20**).
- iii. These were God's people who had yet to hear the gospel.

E. Children of God caught up in Mystery Babylon

- i. God has some whom He calls "my people" in Mystery Babylon whom He tells to come out of her (**Rev 18:4**).
- ii. These are God's elect who are unconverted followers of a false religion.

F. Before the gospel had gone to the Gentiles, God had children outside of the nation of Israel which were scattered abroad for whom Christ died (Joh 11:50-52).

- i. Prior to the resurrection of Christ, the word of God was only given to the Jews (**Psa 147:19-20**).
- ii. Yet, God's elect are taken *out of every kindred, tribe, people, and nation* (**Rev 5:9**), including the nations and peoples that lived prior to the coming of Christ.
- iii. Therefore, God's elect among those Gentile nations who never heard the gospel during the OT times were unconverted, elect children of God.

G. Many *righteous* men in the past desired to see and hear what the disciples did concerning Jesus Christ and were not able (**Mat 13:17**). In other words, they were unconverted elect.

3. Unconverted, regenerated elect who believe the gospel, but still need to be converted.

A. Peter

- i. Peter was an elect, regenerate child of God, which was evidenced by his faith (**Mat 16:15-17 c/w 1Jo 5:1**).
- ii. Yet Peter clearly had areas in his life in which he needed converted (**Mat 16:21-23**).
- iii. Just prior to Jesus' death, Peter still needed to be converted (**Luk 22:31-32**).
- iv. Peter was an unconverted, elect, regenerate child of God.

B. Lot

- i. Lot was said to be a righteous and a just man (**2Pe 2:7-8**).
- ii. A survey of Lot's life will demonstrate that Lot was anything but a converted, obedient child of God, but yet he was righteous because of Christ's obedience (**Rom 5:19**).

C. The Galatians

- i. The Galatians were God's elect (**Gal 4:9**), born again children of God (**Gal 4:28-29**) who were redeemed by the blood of Christ (**Gal 3:13**).
- ii. Yet they believed "another gospel" (**Gal 1:6**), did not obey the truth (**Gal 3:1**), and thought that they were justified by the law (**Gal 5:4**).
- iii. They were elect, regenerate, children of God who were yet unconverted on serious points of doctrine.

4. Unconverted, regenerated elect who have heard the gospel, but have rejected it.

A. The apostle Paul prior to his conversion

- i. Paul was a child of God *before* his conversion.
 - a. Paul was elect before his conversion (**Act 22:14**).
 - b. Paul was regenerated (called by the grace of God) before his conversion (**Gal 1:15 c/w Rom 8:29-30**).
 - c. God called Paul by his grace to reveal Jesus Christ *in* him, not *to* him (**Gal 1:15-16**).
 - (i) Reveal v. - To disclose, make known (to one) in a supernatural manner.
 - (ii) Christ was in Paul (**Gal 1:16**), which means that Paul had the Spirit of God in him and was a born again man with new spiritual life (**Rom 8:9-10**).
 - (iii) It pleased God to *reveal* (*make known*) to Paul that Christ was in him on the road to Damascus.
- ii. This is why Paul could feel the pricks in his heart and was resisting them prior to meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus (**Act 9:5 c/w Act 2:37**).
- iii. Stony hearts don't feel pricks; but hearts of flesh do (**Eze 36:26-27**).
- iv. Therefore, Paul was a regenerate, elect child of God before he believed on Jesus.
- v. Paul had obviously heard the gospel of Jesus Christ prior to his conversion on the road to Damascus because he was in the process of persecuting Christians for believing it when Christ arrested him (**Act 9:1-4**).
- vi. Therefore, prior to Christ appearing to Paul, he was an unconverted, elect, regenerate child of God who had heard the gospel, but rejected it.

B. The rich young ruler

- i. During Jesus' ministry, a rich young ruler approached Him and asked Him what he had to do to inherit eternal life (**Mar 10:17**).
- ii. Jesus told him to keep the commandments, which he said that he done from his youth (**Mar 10:19-20**).

- iii. Jesus then told him to sell all that he had, give to the poor, and follow Him (**Mar 10:21**).
- iv. He walked away sad and grieved and didn't follow Jesus because the cost was too high (**Mat 10:22**).
- v. Nevertheless, this man was an elect child of God because Jesus loved him (**Mar 10:21**).
 - a. Jesus loves *His own* (**Joh 13:1**).
 - b. Nothing can separate one of God's children from His love (**Rom 8:35-39**).
- vi. The rich young ruler was an elect child of God who was loved by Jesus Christ, yet he rejected Jesus' requirements for his life and walked away from him.

C. The people who crucified Christ

- i. Jesus asked the Father to forgive those (or at least some of them) who crucified Him (**Luk 23:34**).
- ii. If a prayer is made according to God's will, He hears it and answers it (**1Jo 5:14-15**).
 - a. God always heard Jesus' prayers (**Joh 11:42**).
 - b. Therefore Jesus' prayer was answered and God forgave those for whom Christ prayed.
 - c. For them to have been forgiven, they would have had to have been God's elect who were under the blood of Christ (**Eph 1:4-7**).
 - d. They were some of Christ's enemies for whom He died (**Rom 5:10**).
- iii. Some of those who were responsible for Christ's crucifixion were later converted (**Act 2:36-38,41**), but we don't know that all of them were.
- iv. Regardless if they were later converted, at the time Christ prayed for them and they were forgiven, they were unconverted elect children of God who had rejected Jesus Christ.
- v. A beautiful type of Christ's forgiveness of His enemies who killed Him is the story of Joseph saving and forgiving his brothers who sold him into slavery (**Gen 45:5; Gen 50:20**).
- vi. A Gentile centurion, after he beheld Jesus die on the cross, said "Truly this was the Son of God" (**Mat 27:54**).
 - a. This man was clearly not a believer when he took part in the crucifixion of Christ, but his statement shows that he was one of the elect nonetheless.
 - b. He could only have known that by God revealing it to him (**Mat 16:16-17**).
 - c. Whoso believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God (**1Jo 5:1**).

D. Jews in Romans 11

- i. Within the nation of Israel (the seed of Abraham, the children of the flesh), there is an elect remnant (**Rom 9:27**) who are the children of God and the children of the promise (**Rom 9:6-8**).
 - a. This remnant is according to the election of grace (**Rom 11:5**).

- b. Among this remnant there are believers like Paul (**Rom 11:1-2**).
 - c. But there are also unbelievers who were broken out of the olive tree (the church) because of their unbelief (**Rom 11:20**).
 - d. Nevertheless, all of the elect remnant of Israel (believers and unbelievers) shall be saved (**Rom 9:27-29 c/w Rom 11:26-27**).
 - e. Some of the elect remnant of Israel are *enemies of the gospel*, but are nevertheless *beloved according to election* (**Rom 11:28**).
 - f. Even though they are enemies of the gospel, God will not repent of His gifts and calling of them (**Rom 11:29**).
 - g. This includes the gift of eternal life (**Rom 6:23**) and the effectual call from death unto life (**Rom 8:29-30**).
 - ii. Therefore, these Jews are unconverted, elect children of God who have rejected the gospel, and are even enemies of it.
 - iii. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." (**2Ti 2:13**)
5. De-converted elect - regenerated elect who were converted, but then backslid into sin.
- A. The righteous will perish by the sword and die without knowledge if they obey not God (**Job 36:7-12**).
 - i. Their disobedience notwithstanding, they are still righteous before God because of the obedience of Christ (**Rom 5:19**).
 - ii. Such are an example of de-converted elect.
 - B. There are branches in Christ which bear no fruit which are taken away (**Joh 15:2**).
 - i. Nevertheless they are still *in Christ* which means that they are elect and predestinated children of God (**Eph 1:4-5**).
 - ii. Such are unconverted, or de-converted, elect.
 - C. Solomon
 - i. Solomon was an elect child of God; God *chose* him to be His son (**1Ch 28:6**).
 - a. All of the elect will be glorified (**Rom 8:29-30**).
 - b. Therefore Solomon will be glorified.
 - ii. The Lord loved Solomon (**2Sa 12:24; Neh 13:26**).
 - a. Nothing can separate us from the love of God (**Rom 8:38-39**).
 - b. Therefore Solomon was never separated from the love of God.
 - iii. Solomon was a prophet who wrote three books of the OT: Proverbs (**Pro 1:1**), Ecclesiastes (**Ecc 1:1**), and The Song of Solomon (**Son 1:1**).
 - a. All the prophets will be in the kingdom of God (**Luk 13:28-29**).
 - b. Therefore Solomon will be in the kingdom of God.
 - iv. Even though Solomon was an elect, beloved, justified child of God, he backslid into sin and worshiped other gods at the end of his life (**1Ki 11:4-8**).
 - a. He was beloved of his God: nevertheless outlandish women caused him to sin (**Neh 13:26**).

- b. There is no indication in scripture that Solomon ever repented.
- c. The last recorded act of Solomon was of him trying to kill Jeroboam (**1K 11:40**).
- v. Solomon was an regenerate, elect, yet de-converted, child of God.
 - a. Though he didn't persevere in faith, God did.
 - b. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." (**2Ti 2:13**)

D. King Saul

- i. God "turned [King Saul] into another man" (**1Sa 10:6**) and "gave him another heart" (**1Sa 10:9**).
 - a. A new heart is given to a child of God in regeneration (**Eze 36:26-27; Tit 3:5**).
 - b. In regeneration a child of God is made into a "new man" (**Eph 4:24; 2Co 5:17**).
 - c. Therefore Saul was an elect, regenerate child of God.
- ii. The Spirit of God came upon Saul and he prophesied (**1Sa 10:10-11**).
 - a. All the prophets will be in the kingdom of God (**Luk 13:28-29**).
 - b. Therefore Saul will be in the kingdom of God.
- iii. The story of the rest of the life of Saul is one of sin and rebellion against God.
 - a. Saul ended his life in suicide (**1Sa 31:4**).
 - b. Yet Saul went to heaven to be where Samuel was (**1Sa 28:19**).
- iv. Saul was a regenerate, elect, yet de-converted, child of God.

E. Israel in the wilderness

- i. Israel, our spiritual fathers (**1Co 10:1**), came out of Egypt by faith (**Exo 14:31; Heb 11:29**).
- ii. They were spiritual partakers of Christ (**1Co 10:3-4**) who had eternal life (**Joh 6:53-58**).
- iii. Nevertheless, they were overthrown in the wilderness for their unbelief of the gospel (**1Co 10:5-10 c/w Heb 3:17-4:2**).
 - a. They were begotten by God (**Deu 32:18**) and were children of God (**Deu 32:19**), yet they were children without faith (**Deu 32:20**).
 - b. Although the Israelites which came out of Egypt were elect, regenerate children of God, they lost out on the temporal blessing of the land of Canaan because of their unbelief.
 - c. Though they lost temporal blessings, being God's elect, they did not lose their eternal life (**Joh 10:28-29**).
- iv. Paul used the history of Israel in the wilderness as a warning for NT Christians (**1Co 10:11-12**).
 - a. If those Israelites were reprobates, what would be the relevance to the born-again saints in Corinth?
 - b. If that were the case, Paul would have in effect been saying, "Listen up ye Gentile Corinthians, there were reprobate, hell-bound Jews who died in the wilderness for their unbelief."

- c. But on the other hand, if those Jews were elect children of God like the saints in Corinth were, then their history is very instructive because it shows that God's children can rebel and be temporally judged for it by God in this life.
- v. Israel in the wilderness were elect, regenerate, yet de-converted, children of God.

F. There were false teachers in Paul's day who had taught that the resurrection was past and had overthrown the faith of some (**2Ti 2:18**).

- i. Those that had their faith overthrown were believers who had fallen away from the faith.
 - a. According to Arminians, they would have lost their eternal life.
 - b. According to Calvinists, they were never elect in the first place.
 - c. According to the Bible, though they didn't know God because their faith was overthrown, *nevertheless* God knew them (**2Ti 2:19**).
- ii. They were elect, yet de-converted, children of God.

IV. The key to understanding the doctrine of the unconverted elect is to understand as Jonah did, that "Salvation is of the LORD." (**Jon 2:9**)