

# The Doctrine of Election 5. Its Justice

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## Transcript

### The Doctrine of Election

#### 5. Its Justice

Somewhat against our inclinations we have decided to depart again from the logical method of exposition, and instead of now proceeding with an orderly unfolding of this doctrine, we pause to deal with the principal objection which is made against the same. No sooner is the truth set forth of God's singling out certain of His creatures to be subjects of His special favors, than a general cry of protest is heard. No matter how much Scripture is quoted to the point nor how many plain passages be adduced in illustration and demonstration of it, the majority of those who profess to be Christians loudly object, alleging that such teaching slanders the divine character, making God guilty of gross injustice. It seems, then, that this difficulty should be met, that reply should be made to such a criticism of the doctrine, ere we proceed any further with our attempt to give a systematic setting forth of it. In such an age as ours, when the principles of democracy, socialism and communism are so widely and warmly espoused, in a day when human authority and dominion are being more and more despised, when it is the common custom to "speak evil of dignities" (Jude 8), it is scarcely surprising that so many who make no pretension of bowing to the authority of Holy Writ should rebel against the concept of God's being partial. But it is unspeakably dreadful to find the great majority of those who profess to receive the Scriptures as divinely inspired, gnashing their teeth against its author when informed that He has sovereignly elected a people to be His peculiar treasure, and to hear them charging Him with being a hateful tyrant, a monster of cruelty. Yet such blasphemies only go to show that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." It is not because we have any hope of converting such rebels from the error of their ways that we feel constrained to take up the present aspect of our subject—though it may please God in His infinite grace to use these feeble lines to the enlightening and convicting of a few of them. No, rather is it that some of God's dear people are disturbed by these ravings of His enemies, and know not how to answer in their own minds this objection, that if God makes a sovereign selection from among His creatures and predestinates them to blessings which He withholds from countless millions of their fellows, then such partiality makes Him guilty of treating the latter unjustly. And yet the fact stares them in the face on every hand, both in creation and providence, that God distributes His mercies most unevenly. There is no equality in His bestowments either in physical health and strength, mental capacities, social status, or the comforts of this life. Why, then, should we be staggered when we learn that His spiritual blessings are distributed unevenly? Before proceeding further it should be pointed out that the design of every false scheme and system of religion is to depict the character of God in such a way that it is agreeable to the tastes of the carnal heart,

acceptable to depraved human nature. And that can only be done by a species of misrepresentation: the ignoring of those of His prerogatives and perfections which are objectionable, and the disproportionate emphasizing of those of His attributes which appeal to their selfishness—such as His love, mercy, and long-sufferance. But let the character of God be faithfully presented as it is actually portrayed in the Scriptures—in the Old Testament as well as the New—and nine out of every ten of church-goers will frankly state that they find it impossible to love Him." The plain fact is, dear reader, that to the present generation the Most High of Holy Writ is "the unknown God." It is just because people today are so ignorant of the divine character and so lacking in godly fear, that they are quite in the dark as to the nature and glory of divine justice, presuming to arraign it. This is an age of blatant irreverence, wherein lumps of animate clay dare to prescribe what the Almighty ought and ought not to do. Our forefathers sowed the wind, and today their children are reaping the whirlwind. The "divine rights of kings" was scoffed at and tabooed by the sires, and now their offspring repudiate the "divine rights of the King of kings." Unless the supposed "rights" of the creature are "respected," then our modems have no respect for the Creator, and if His high sovereignty and absolute dominion over all be insisted upon, they hesitate not to vomit forth their condemnation of Him. And, "evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33)! God's own people are in danger of being infected by the poisonous gas which now fills the air of the religious world. Not only is the miasmatic atmosphere obtaining in most of the "churches" a serious menace to the Christian, but there is in each of us a serious tendency to humanize God: viewing His perfections through our own intellectual lenses instead of through the glass of Scripture, interpreting His attributes by human qualities. It was of this very thing that God complained of old when He said, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Ps. 50:21), which is a solemn warning for us to take to heart. What we mean is this: when we read of God's mercy or righteousness we are very apt to think of them according to the qualities of man's mercy and justice. But this is a serious mistake. The Almighty is not to be measured by any human standard: He is so infinitely above us that any comparison is utterly impossible, and therefore it is the height of madness for any finite creature to sit in judgment upon the ways of Jehovah. Again; we need to be much on our guard against the folly of making invidious distinctions between the divine perfections. For example, it is quite wrong for us to suppose that God is more glorious in His grace and mercy than He is in His power and majesty. But this mistake is often made. How many are more thankful unto God for blessing them with health than they are for His bestowing the gospel upon them: but does it therefore follow that God's goodness in giving material things is greater than His goodness in bestowing spiritual blessings? Certainly not. Scripture often speaks of God's wisdom and power being manifested in creation, but where are we told of His grace and mercy in making the world? Inasmuch as men commonly fail to glorify God for His wisdom and power, does it thence follow that He is not to be so much adored for them? Beware of extolling one of the divine perfections above another. What is justice? It is treating each person equitably and fairly, giving to him his due. Divine justice is simply doing that which is right. But this raises the question, What is due unto the creature? what is it that God ought to bestow upon him? Ah, my friend, every sober-minded person will at once object to the introduction of the word "ought" in such a connection. And rightly so. The Creator is under no obligation whatever unto the works of His own hands. He alone has the right to decide whether such and such a creature should exist at all. He alone has the prerogative to determine the nature, status, and destiny of that creature; whether it shall be an animal, a man, or an angel; whether it shall be endowed with a soul and subsist forever, or be without a soul and endure only for a brief time; whether it shall be a vessel unto honor and taken into communion with Himself, or a vessel unto dishonor which is rejected by Him. As the great Creator possessed perfect freedom to create or not create, to bring into existence whatever creatures He pleased (and a visit to the zoo will show He has created some which strike the beholder as exceedingly queer ones); and therefore

He has the unquestionable right to decree concerning them as He pleases. The justice of God in election and preterition, then, is grounded upon His high sovereignty. The dependence of all creatures upon Him is entire. His proprietorship of all creatures is indisputable. His dominion over all creatures is absolute. Let these facts be established from Scripture—and their complete demonstration therefrom is a very simple matter—and where is the creature who can with the slightest propriety say unto the Lord most high "What doest Thou?" Instead of the Creator being under any obligation to His creature, it is the creature who is under binding obligations to the One who gave it existence and now sustains its very life. God has the absolute right to do as He pleases with the creatures of His own hand: "Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" (Rom. 9:2 1) is His own assertion. Therefore He may give to one and withhold from another, bestow five talents on one and only a single talent on another, without any imputation of injustice. If He may give grace and glory to whom He will without such a charge, then He may also decree to do so without any such charge. Are men chargeable with injustice when they choose their own favorites, friends, companions, and confidants? Then obviously there is no injustice in God's choosing whom He will to bestow His special favors upon, to indulge with communion with Himself now and to dwell with Him for all eternity. Is a man free to make selection of the woman which he desires for his wife? and does he in anywise wrong the other women whom he passes by? Then is the great God less free to make selection of those who constitute the spouse of His Son? Shame, shame, upon those who would ascribe less freedom to the Creator than to the creature. Upon a little reflection it should be evident to all right-minded people that there is no parity between human and divine justice: human justice requires that we should give each of our fellows his due, whereas no creature is due anything from God, not even what He is pleased to sovereignly give him. In his most reverent discussion of the nature of God's attributes W. Twisse (moderator of the Westminster Assembly) pointed out that if human justice be of the same nature with divine justice then it necessarily follows: first, that which is just in man is just with God. Second, that it must be after the same manner just: as human justice consists in subjection and obedience to God's law, so God Himself must be under obligation to His own Law. Third, as a man is under obligation to be just, so God is under obligation to be just, and therefore as Saul sinned and acted unjustly in slaying the priests, so had God been unjust in doing the like. Unless the perversity of their hearts blinded their judgment men would readily perceive that divine justice must necessarily be of quite another order and character than human, yea, as different from and superior to it as divine love is from human. All are agreed that a man acts unjustly, that he sins, if he suffers his brother to transgress when it lies in his power to keep him from so doing. Then if divine justice were the same in kind, though superior in degree, it would necessarily follow that God sins every time He allows one of His creatures to transgress, for most certainly He has the power to prevent it; yea, and can exercise that power without destroying the liberty of the creature: "I also withheld thee from sinning against Me; therefore suffered I thee not to touch her" (Gen. 20:6). Cease, then, ye rebels from arraigning the Most High, and attempting to measure His justice by your petty tape-lines—as well seek to fathom His wisdom or define His power, as comprehend His inscrutable justice. "Clouds and darkness are round about him," and this be it noted, is expressly said in connection with: "righteousness [justice] and judgment are the habitation of His throne" (Ps. 97:2). Lest some of our readers demur at our quoting from such a high Calvinist as Mr. Twisse, we append the following from the milder James Ussher. "What is the divine justice? It is an essential property of God, whereby He is infinitely just in himself, of himself, for, from, and by Himself, and none other: 'For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness' (Ps. 11:7). What is the rule of His justice? Answer: His own free will, and nothing else: for whatsoever He willeth is just, and because He willeth it therefore it is just; not because it is just, therefore He willeth it (Eph. 1:11; Ps. 115:3)." Such men as these were conscious of their ignorance, and therefore they cried unto Heaven for instruction, and God

was pleased to grant them clear vision. But the pride-inflated pharisees of our day think they can already see, and therefore feel no need of Divine illumination: consequently they remain blind (John 9:40, 41). So again that justly renowned teacher W. Perkins: "We must not think that God doeth a thing because it is good and right, but rather is the thing good and right because God willeth and worketh it. Examples hereof we have in the Word. God commanded Abimelech to deliver Sarah to Abraham, or else He would destroy him and all his household (Gen. 20:7). To man's reason that might seem unjust, for why should Abimelech's servants be punished for their master's fault? So again Achan sinned, and all the house of Israel were penalized for it (Josh. 7). David numbered the people, and the whole nation was smitten by a plague (2 Sam. 24). All these to man's reason may seem unequal; yet being the works of God we must with all reverence judge them most just and holy." Alas, how little of this humility and reverence is manifested in the churches today! How ready is the present generation to criticize and condemn whatever of God's ways and works suit them not! So far from the truth are most of those who are now looked up to as "the champions of orthodoxy," that even they are often guilty of turning things upside down, or putting the cart in front of the horse. It is commonly assumed by them that God Himself is under law, that He is under a moral constraint to do what he does, so that He cannot do otherwise. Others wrap this up in more sophisticated terms, insisting that it is His own nature which regulates all His actions. But this is merely an artful subterfuge. Is it by a necessity of His nature or by the free exercise of His sovereignty that He bestows favor upon His creatures? Let Scripture answer: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. 9:18). Why, my reader, if God's nature obliged Him to show saving mercy to any, then by parity of reason it would oblige Him to show mercy to all, and thus bring every fallen creature to repentance, faith, and obedience. But enough of this nonsense. Let us now approach this aspect of our subject from an entirely different angle. How could there possibly be any injustice in God's electing those whom He did, when had He not done so all had inevitably perished, angels and men alike? This is neither an invention nor an inference of ours, for Scripture itself expressly declares "Except the Lord of Sabbaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom" (Rom. 9:29). Not one of God's rational creatures, either celestial or earthly, had ever been eternally and effectually saved apart from the grave of divine election. Though both angels and men were created in a state of perfect holiness, yet they were mutable creatures, liable to change and fall. Yea, inasmuch as their continuance in holiness was dependent upon the exercise of their own wills, unless God was pleased to supernaturally preserve them, their fall was certain. "Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly" (Job 4:18). The angels were perfectly holy, yet if God gave them no other assistance than that with which He had capacitated them at their creation, then no "trust" or reliance was to be placed in them, or their standing. If they were holy today, they were liable to sin tomorrow. If God but sent them on an errand to this world, they might fall before they returned to Heaven. The "folly" which God imputes to them in the above passage is their creature mutability: for them to maintain their holiness unchangeably to eternity, without the danger of losing the same, was utterly beyond their creature endowment. Therefore, for them to be immutably preserved is a grace which issues from another and higher spring than the covenant of works or creation endowment, namely, that of election grace, super-creation grace. It was meet that God should, from the beginning, make manifest the infinite gulf which divides the creature from the Creator. God alone is immutable, without variableness or shadow of turning. Fitting was it, then, that God should withdraw His preserving hand from those whom He had created upright, so that it might appear that the highest creature of all (Satan, "the anointed cherub" Ezek. 28:14) was mutable, and would inevitably fall into sin when left to the exercise of his own free will. Of God alone can it be predicated that He "cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13). The creature, though holy, may be tempted to sin, fall, and be irretrievably lost. The fall of Satan, then, made way for evidencing the more plainly the absolute necessity

of electing grace—the imparting to the creature the image of God’s own immutable holiness. Because of the mutability of the creature-state God foresaw that if all His creatures were left to the conduct of their own wills, they were in a continual hazard of falling. He, therefore, made an election of grace to remove all hazard from the case of His chosen ones. This we know from what is revealed of their history. Jude tells us of "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation" (v. 6), and the remainder of them would, sooner or later, have done so too, if left to the mutability of their own wills. So also it proved with Adam and Eve: both of them evidenced the mutability of their wills by apostatizing. Accordingly, God foreseeing all of this from the beginning, made a "reserve" (Rom. 11:4—explained in v. 5 as "election), determining to have a remnant who should be blessed of Him and who would everlastingly bless Him in return. Election and preserving grace are never to be severed. We have thus far pointed out, first that divine justice is of an entirely different order and character than human justice; second that divine justice is grounded upon God’s sovereign dominion over all the works of His hands, being the exercise of His own imperial will. Third, that nothing whatever is due the creature from the Creator, not even what He is pleased to give, and that so far from God’s being under any obligation to it, it is under lasting obligations to Him. Fourth, that whatever God wills and works is right and must be reverently submitted to, yea, adored by us. Fifth, that it is impossible to charge God with injustice in His electing certain ones to be the objects of His amazing grace, since that apart from it, all had eternally perished. Let us now descend to a lower and simpler level, and contemplate God’s election in connection with the human race fallen in Adam. If there was no injustice in God’s making a choice of some unto special favor and eternal blessing as He viewed His creatures in the glass of His purpose to create, then certainly there could be no injustice in His determining to show them mercy as He foreviewed them among the mass of Adam’s ruined race; for if a sinless creature has no claim whatever upon its maker, being entirely dependent upon His charity, then most assuredly a fallen creature is entitled to nothing good at the hands of its offended judge. And this is the angle from which we must now view our subject. Fallen man is a criminal, an outlaw and if bare justice is to be meted out to him, then he must be left to receive the due reward of his iniquities, and that can mean nothing less than eternal punishment, for his transgressions have incurred infinite guilt. Before enlarging upon what has just been said, it also needs to be pointed out that if the only hope for a holy creature lies in God’s electing grace, then doubly is this the case with one that is unholy, totally depraved. If an holy angel was in constant danger, incapable of maintaining his purity, because of the mutability of his nature and the fickleness of his will, what shall be said of an unholy creature? Why, nothing less than this: fallen man has a nature that is confirmed in evil, and therefore his will no longer has any power to turn unto that which is spiritual, yea, it is inveterately steeled against God; hence, his case is utterly and eternally hopeless, unless God, in His sovereign grace, is pleased to save him from himself. Preachers may prate all they please about man’s inherent powers, the freedom of his will, and his capacity for good, yet it is useless and madness to ignore the solemn fact of the fall. The difference and disadvantage between our case and that of unfallen Adam’s can scarcely be conceived. Instead of a perfect holiness possessing and inclining our minds and wills, as it did his, there is no such vital principle left in our hearts. Instead, there is a thorough disability unto what is spiritual and holy, yea, contrary enmity and opposition thereto. "Men err, not knowing the power of original sin, nor the depth of corruption that is in their own hearts. The will of man now is the prime and proper seat of sin: the throne thereof is seated therein" (Thos. Goodwin). Outward helps and aids are of no account, for nothing short of a new creation is of any avail. No matter what instruction fallen men receive, what inducements be offered them, the Ethiopian cannot change his skin. Neither light, conviction, nor the general operations of the Holy Spirit, are of any avail, unless God over and above them impart a new principle of holiness to the heart. This has been clearly and fully demonstrated under both Law and Gospel. Read Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 and see the

wondrous and awe-inspiring manifestation of Himself which God granted unto Israel at Sinai: did that change their hearts and incline their wills to obey Him? Then read through the four Gospels and behold the incarnate Son of God dwelling in the midst of men, not as a judge, but as a benefactor—going about doing good, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, proclaiming the gospel: did that melt their hearts and win them to God? No, they hated and crucified Him. Behold, then, the case of fallen mankind: alienated from the life of God, dead in trespasses and sins, with no heart, no will for spiritual things. In themselves their case is desperate, irretrievable, hopeless. Apart from divine election none would, none could, ever be saved. Election means that God was pleased to reserve a remnant, so that the entire race of Adam should not eternally perish. And what thanks does He receive for this? None at all, save from those who have their sin-blinded eyes opened to perceive the inexpressible blessedness of such a fact. Thanks, no; instead, the vast majority even of those in professing Christendom when they hear of this truth, ignorant of their own interests and of the ways of God, quarrel at His election, revile Him for the same, charge Him with gross injustice, and accuse Him of being a merciless tyrant. Now the great God stands in no need of any defense from us: in due time He will effectually close the mouth of every rebel. But we must address a few more remarks to those believers who are disturbed by such as insist so loudly that God is guilty of injustice when He sovereignly elects some. First, then, we ask these slanderers of Jehovah to make good their charge. The burden of proof falls upon them to do so. They affirm that an electing God is unjust, then let them demonstrate how such be the case. They cannot. In order to do so they must show that lawbreakers merit something good at the hands of the lawgiver. They must show that the King of kings is morally obliged to smile upon those who have blasphemed His name, desecrated His sabbaths, slighted His Word, reviled His servants, and above all, despised and rejected His Son. "Is there one man in the whole world who would have the impertinence to say that he merits anything of his Maker? If so, be it known unto you that he shall have all he merits; and his reward will be the flames of hell forever, for that is the utmost that any man ever merited of God. God is in no debt to man, and at the last great day every man shall have as much love, as much pity, and as much goodness, as he deserves. Even the lost in hell shall have all they deserve; ay, and woe worth the day for them when they shall have the wrath of God, which will be the summit of their deservings. If God gives to every man as much as he merits, is He therefore to be accused of injustice because He gives to some infinitely more than they merit?" (C. H. Spurgeon). How many who now speak of him eulogistically, and refer to him as "beloved Spurgeon," would gnash their teeth and execrate him were they to hear his faithful and plain-spoken preaching. Second, we would inform these detractors of God that His salvation is not a matter of justice, but of pure grace, and grace is something that can be claimed by none. Where is the injustice if any one does as he wills with his own? If I am free to disburse my charity as I see fit, shall God be conceded less freedom to bestow His gifts upon whom He pleases! God is indebted to none, and therefore if He grants His favors in a sovereign way who can complain. If God passes thee by, He has not injured thee; but if He enriches thee, then art thou a debtor to His grace, and then wilt thou cease prating about His justice and injustice, and wilt gladly join with those who astonishingly exclaim, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10). Salvation is God's free gift, and therefore He bestows it on whom He pleases. Third, we would ask these haughty creatures, to whom has God ever refused His mercy when it was sincerely and penitently sought? Does He not freely proclaim the gospel to every creature? Does not His Word bid all men to throw down the weapons of their warfare against Him and come to Christ for pardon? Does He not promise to blot out your iniquities if you will turn unto Him in the way of His appointing? If you refuse to do so, if you are so thoroughly in love with sin, so wedded to your lusts that you are determined to destroy your own soul, then who is to blame? Most certainly God is not. His gospel promises are reliable, and anyone is at liberty to prove them for himself. If he does so, if he

renounces sin and puts his trust in Christ, then he will discover for himself that he is one of God's chosen ones. On the other hand, if he deliberately spurns the gospel and rejects the Saviour then his blood is on his own head. This leads us to ask, fourth, You say it is unjust that some should be lost while others are saved: but who makes them to be lost that are lost? Whom has God ever caused to sin?—rather doth He warn and exhort against it. Whom has the Holy Spirit ever prompted to a wrong action?—rather doth He uniformly incline against evil. Where do the Scriptures bolster up any in his wickedness?—rather do they constantly condemn it in all its forms. Then is God unjust if He condemns those who wilfully disobey Him? Is He unrighteous if He punishes those who defiantly disregard His danger-signals and expostulations? Assuredly not. To each such one God will yet say, "Thou hast destroyed thyself" (Hos. 13:9). It is the creature who commits moral suicide. It is the creature who breaks through every restraint and hurls himself into the precipice of eternal woe. In the last great day it will appear that God is justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges (Ps. 51:4). Election is the taking of one and leaving of another, and implies freedom on the part of the elector to choose or refuse. Hence the choosing of one does no injury to the other which is not chosen. If I select one out of a hundred men to a position of honor and profit, I do no injury to the ninety and nine not elected. If I take two from a score of ragged and hungry children, and adopt them as my son and daughter, feed and clothe, house and educate them, I do them an immense benefit; but while disbursing my bounty as I choose and making two happy, I do no injury to the eighteen who are left. True, they remain ragged, ill-fed, and uneducated, yet they are in no worse condition for my having shown favor to their late companions—they only continue precisely in the situation in which they were. Again; if among ten convicts justly sentenced to death, the king of England was pleased to choose five to be the recipients of his sovereign mercy, pardoned and released them, they would owe their very lives to his royal favor; nevertheless, by extending kindness to them, no injury is done to the other five: they are left to suffer the righteous penalty of the law, due to them for their transgressions. They only suffer what they would have suffered if the king's mercy had not been extended toward their fellows. Who, then, can fail to see that it would be a misuse of terms, a grievous slander of the king, to charge him with injustice, because he was pleased to exercise his royal prerogative and evidence his favor in this discriminating manner. Our Saviour definitely expressed this idea of election when He said, "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Matt. 24:40). If both had been "left," then both had perished: hence the "taking" of the one did no injury to his fellow. "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Matt. 24:41). The taking of the one was a great favor to her, but the leaving of her companion did her no wrong. Divine election, then, is a choice to favor from among those who have no claims upon God. It therefore does no injustice to them that are passed by, for they only continue as and where they were, and as and where they would have been if none had been taken from among them. In the exercise of His electing grace God has mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and in the bestowment of His favor He does what He wills with His own. It is not difficult to perceive the ground upon which the false reasoning of God's detractors rests: behind all the murmurings of objectors against the Divine justice lies the concept that God is under obligation to provide salvation for all His fallen creatures. But such reasoning (?) fails to see that if such a contention were valid, then no thanks could be returned to God. How could we praise Him for redeeming those whom He was bound to redeem? If salvation be a debt which God owes man for allowing him to fall, then salvation cannot be a matter of mercy. But we must not expect that those whose eyes are blinded by pride should understand anything of the infinite demerits of sin, of their own utter unworthiness and vileness; and therefore it is impossible that they should form any true concept of Divine grace, and perceive that when grace is exercised it is necessarily exercised in a sovereign manner. But after all that has been pointed out above some will be ready to sneeringly ask, "Does not the Bible declare that God is 'no respecter of persons': how then can

He make a selection from among men?" The calumniators of Divine predestination suppose that either the Scriptures are inconsistent with themselves, or that in His election God has regard to merits. Let us first quote from Calvin: "The Scripture denies that God is a respecter of persons, in a different sense from that in which they understand it; for by the word person it signifies not a man, but those things in a man which, being conspicuous to the eyes, usually conciliate favor, honor, and dignity, or attract hatred, contempt, and disgrace. Such are riches, power, nobility, magistracy, country, elegance of form, on the one hand; and on the other hand, poverty, necessity, ignoble birth, slovenliness, contempt, and the like. Thus Peter and Paul declare that God is not a respecter of persons because He makes no difference between the Jew and Greek, to reject one and receive the other, merely on account of his nation (Acts 10:34, Rom. 2:11). So James uses the same language when he asserts that God in His judgment pays no regard to riches (2:5). "There will, therefore, be no contradiction in our affirming, that according to the good pleasures of His will, God chooses whom He will as His children, irrespective of all merit, while He rejects and reprobates others. Yet, for the sake of further satisfaction, the matter may be explained in the following manner. They ask how it happens, that of two persons distinguished from each other by no merit, God, in His election, leaves one and takes another. I, on the other hand, ask them, whether they suppose him that is taken to possess any thing that can attract the favor of God? If they confess that he has not, as indeed they must, it will follow, that God looks not at man, but derives His motive to favor him from His own goodness. God's election of one man, therefore, while He rejects another, proceeds not from any respect of man, but solely from His own mercy; which may freely display and exert itself wherever and whenever it pleases." To have "respect of persons" is to regard and treat them differently on account of some supposed or real difference in them or their circumstances, which is no warrantable ground or reason for such preferential regard and treatment. This character of a respecter of persons belongs rather to one who examines and rewards others according to their characters and works. Thus, for a judge to justify and reward one rather than another because he is rich and the other poor, or because he has given him a bribe, or is a near relative or an intimate friend, while the character and conduct of the other is more upright and his cause more just. But such a denomination is inapplicable to a disburser of charity, who is granting his favors and bestowing freely undeserved gifts to one rather than to another, doing so without any consideration of personal merit. The benefactor has a perfect right to do what he will with his own, and those who are neglected by him have no valid ground for complaint. Even if this expression be taken in its more popular acceptance, nothing so strikingly evidences that God is "no respecter of persons" than the character of the ones He has chosen. When the angels sinned and fell God provided no Saviour for them, yet when the human race sinned and fell a Saviour was provided for many of them. Let the unfriendly critic carefully weigh this fact: had God been a "respecter of persons" would He not have selected the angels and passed by men? The fact that He did the very reverse clears Him of this calumny. Take again that nation which God chose to be the recipients of earthly and temporal favors above all others during the last two thousand years of Old Testament history. What sort of characters were they? Why, an unappreciative and murmuring, stiffnecked and hardhearted, rebellious and impenitent people, from the beginning of their history until the end. Had God been a respecter of persons He surely had never singled out the Jews for such favor and blessing! The very character, then, of those whom God chooses refutes this silly objection. The same is equally apparent in the New Testament. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world" (James 2:5): blessed be His name, that it is so, for had He chosen the wealthy it had fared ill with many of us, had it not? God did not pick out magnates and millionaires, financiers and bankers, to be objects of His grace. Nor are those of royal blood or the peers of the realm, the wise, the gifted, the influential of this world, for few among them have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. No, it is the despised, the weak, the base, the non-entities of this world, whom God has chosen (1 Cor. 1:26-29), and this, in order that "no

flesh should glory in his presence." Pharisees passed by and publicans and harlots brought in! "Jacob have I loved": and what was there in him to love!—and echo still asks "what?" Had God been "a respecter of persons" He certainly had never chosen worthless me!

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-pink/the-doctrine-of-election-5-its-justice/>

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