

some horrible, monstrous decree by a divine tyrant. There is a harsh prejudice against the whole subject of predestination. Notice, however, that the Apostle Paul shows no hesitation in discussing election and predestination. In fact, Paul quickly moves from the introduction of his letter to a glorious praise of God for these great truths of God's grace. Instead of being a horrible doctrine, election is a most warm and joyous teaching. It is a humbling doctrine. It strips away all trust in the flesh, all religious pride, and brings you to see the sovereignty of God's grace in Christ.

I. YOU SHOULD REALIZE GOD HAS ELECTED CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS TO SALVATION FROM ETERNITY (V-3-4)

1. THE TRUTHFULNESS OF ELECTION - "He hath chosen" (V-4)

The Bible teaches in the clearest possible manner that God has chosen certain individuals upon which to bestow His grace. These chosen people are known as the elect. You may say, "I don't like that idea." Maybe you do not, but whether or not you like it is really immaterial. Here is the main question: "Is the doctrine of election taught in God's Holy Word?" The Bible repeatedly stresses the fact that God has elected people. Any unbiased reading of Scripture demonstrates this fact.

Matt 13:20 "For the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days" [relating to the Tribulation].

Jn 13:18 "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen."

Acts 13:48 "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Rom 8:30 "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

Rom 11:7 "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the elect hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

I Thess 5:9 "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

II Thess 2:13 "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

II Tim 2:10 "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

Titus 1:1 "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect."

So what Paul teaches here is not some isolated or obscure doctrine, but one which is found in nearly every book of the New Testament. You cannot deny the doctrine of election if you read your Bible with an open mind. It is clearly stated in Scripture. You may hate the idea of election and despise and reject it. You may even dare to question God's justice, but who can deny the presence of election in the Bible?

2. ELECTION IS PERSONAL - "He hath chosen us" (V-4)

Many people when confronted with the doctrine of election try to avoid its implications by saying that it only refers to a national election (Israel) and not to individuals. It should be obvious that the word "us" is not referring to a nation. What nation is Paul addressing? The pronoun "us" must be explained in light of its context. Paul is writing to "the saints" and "the faithful in Christ Jesus" (V-1). V-3 makes it clear that "spiritual blessings" (defined in V-4-14) are in view, not some basic national benefits. Besides, how would you explain Rom 11:7 (quoted above) if election merely refers to national Israel?

"There never was a more foolish subterfuge than that of trying to bring out national election. What is the election of a nation but the election of so many units, so many people?...If there be any injustice in God choosing one man and not another, how much more must there be injustice in choosing one nation and not another. No! the difficulty cannot be rid of thus, but is greatly increased by this foolish wresting of God's Word" (C.H. Spurgeon).

Also the word "us," while including Paul himself along with these believers, cannot mean everyone. Paul's point is obvious. God has chosen specific persons. While others are rejected, these individuals are "chosen" to receive the "spiritual blessings" of God. Did not Jesus say, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Lk 10:20)? This shows that God's election to eternal life is of particular persons for their individual names are recorded in the book of life (Phil 4:3).

Abraham - "Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham" (Neh 9:7).

Jeremiah - "Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew [loved] thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified [set apart] thee, and I ordained [predestinated] thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer 1:4-5).

Jacob - "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom 9:10-13).

John the Baptist - "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Lk 1:15).

Apostle Paul - "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth" (Acts 22:12-14). "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen: immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood (Gal 1:15-16).

Rufus - "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord..."

"Blessed is the man (individual) whom thou choosest (election) and causet to approach unto Thee" (Psa 65:4).

3. ELECTION IS UNTO SALVATION - "He [God the Father] hath chosen us IN HIM [God the Son]" (V-4)

If you look carefully at this passage, you will see that Jesus Christ Himself (as well as all the elect) was chosen by God the Father. This is implied in V-3, where God is said to be the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The future incarnation of Jesus Christ, as the Redeemer of His people, is in view. A human nature had to be united to the Second Person of the Godhead in order for the Lord Jesus Christ to become the God-man and provide salvation. Thus, Christ as man (regarding His human nature) was predestinated and chosen as surely as all the other elect of God. Whenever God made a covenant with a person in the Bible, He was known as the God of that person - "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc." Since God appointed Jesus Christ to act as the Head and Savior of the elect, the Father became known as the "God...of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Son of God is co-equal with the Father, but in outworking of the plan of salvation, He placed Himself under the Father's authority to redeem the People of God. This is why Christ is said to be chosen and elected: "To Whom coming as unto a Living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but CHOSEN OF GOD, and precious" (I Pet 2:4. Cf. Isa 42:1, I Pet 2:6).

When God determined to create, among all the thousands of creatures, both angelic and human, which rose up in the divine mind, to be brought into existence by Him, the man Christ Jesus was singled out of them. He was appointed to be united with the Second Person of the Holy Trinity and become the God-Man. Now since the elect are chosen in Jesus Christ, Christ was made the Head of the elect. He is the Head and all the other elect are the members of His body.

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the HEAD of the church: and He is the SAVIOUR of the body" (Eph 5:23).

When a baby is born, it is normal for its head to come out of the womb first, then the rest of the body follows. In election, Jesus Christ as the Head came out of the womb of God's purpose first, then all the rest of the elect as His body followed. Since this election is "in Christ," it has reference to salvation. Jesus Christ was chosen as Representative, Head, and Savior of the elect. This is why He is called "Jesus," for He came to "save His people from their sins" (Matt 1:21). Thus, being elected means that "God hath...chosen you to salvation" (II Thess 2:13).

"Election does not find men in Christ, but puts them there. It gives them a being in Christ and union to Him, which is the foundation of their manifestive being in Him at conversion. In the infinite mind of God, He willed to love a company of Adam's posterity with an immutable love, and out of the love wherewith He loves them, He chose them in Christ. By this act in His infinite mind, God gave them being and blessedness in Christ from everlasting. Though, while all fell in Adam, yet all did not fall alike. The non-elect fell so as to be damned, they being left to perish in their sins, because they had no relation to Christ - He was not related

to them as the Mediator of union with God...But the elect had all spiritual blessings bestowed upon them in Christ, their gracious and glorious Head (Eph 1:3). They could not lose these, because they were secured for them in Christ. God had chosen them as His own: He their God, they His people; He their Father, they His children. He gave them to Christ to be His brethren, His companions, His bride, His partners in all His communicable grace and glory" (A. W. Pink).

4. ELECTION IS ETERNAL - "before the foundation of the world" (V-4)

Paul is speaking as though the world (universe) was constructed by God like a building having a foundation. He is teaching that God's choice of individuals to salvation was an eternal choice. Before any created thing came into existence, indeed, before the universe came into being, even before time itself began, God's election took place. When there was no motion of the planets, no sun, moon and stars, no angels, no man or beast, God elected. When God was alone in His eternity, in His mind all was planned and blueprinted. Thus, God's choice is immutable. Nothing can happen in time or eternity to change or shake His determination to save His elect people. God's elect will most certainly be brought to salvation and enjoy all the "spiritual blessings" which are found in Jesus Christ. Those who perish will discover their "names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world" (Rev 17:8). God had no intention of granting salvation to them. But the salvation of the elect person is sure and certain for God promises, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life" (Rev 3:5). God's chosen people will hear the words of Christ on the Last Day, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt 25:34).

Summary: You should realize God has elected certain individuals to salvation from eternity.

II. YOU SHOULD REALIZE ELECTION IS BASED SOLELY ON GOD'S SOVEREIGN GOOD PLEASURE (V-4b-5)

1. ELECTION IS UNTO HOLINESS AND SONSHIP - "...that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself..." (V-4b-5a)

Suppose you and your spouse are going to have a child. Before the baby is born, you decide to make a special investment for this child. You take \$10,000 and invest it in the stock market and plan to give the money to this child when he becomes 21 years of age. Now you keep this inheritance a secret. The child is born and grows up, but knows nothing about your investment. Suppose the investment grows enormously so that before the child reaches 21 it has become one million dollars. What you have done is to predetermine a future inheritance for your child. At 21, all of a sudden, he is made a millionaire! Your son didn't do anything to earn or merit this great inheritance. You simply planned ahead for him to have it! Election is God's eternal purpose to grant individuals a wonderful inheritance. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph 1:11). God's inheritance isn't money and possessions, it is holiness and sonship.

God chose people to be holy and without blame before Him. This holiness certainly refers to the perfect holiness of the world to come (Eph 5:25-27). And it may also entail the personal holiness of life which all believers possess - i.e. purity of heart. “Without blame” indicates an outward or external condition of purity. The picture conveyed is that of fruit, let’s say a peach, which has no specks on it. There are no little brown spots or blemishes indicating the first signs of initial decay. It is wholesome and without putrefaction. If you look at a peach, it may appear to be fine on the outside, yet have some rottenness within. The words “holy” and “without blame” cover both aspects of purity. In this manner you can have fellowship with God - “walk before Him in love.”

God predestinated people to sonship - “adoption of children.” You become part of God’s family (Eph 3:14-15). You are adopted into this family, for sinners are aliens and strangers to God by birth (Eph 2:12). “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 Jn 3:1). You have the legal right, as an adopted child, to share in the inheritance of God.

2. ELECTION IS NOT BASED UPON FORESEEN FAITH

The implication of an election unto holiness and sonship is that election isn’t based upon foreseen faith in the individual. You may grant that election is personal and regards salvation, but still attempt to evade the implications of this text. You might think: “Sure God chooses men. From eternity God knew who would believe and who would not, and He chose people based upon His foreknowledge.” In other words, you might think God telescoped His vision into the future and saw who would become His sons and be holy, and then elected accordingly. In this view God is a fortune teller. This is a very common theory. You choose God and then, based upon your foreseen decision to believe on Christ, God chooses you. Yet the Bible teaches just the opposite. “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you” (Jn 15:16). Election is “unto” holiness and sonship. God’s choice is what leads to your sonship and holiness. This is why, in explaining the choice of Jacob and rejection of Esau, the Word of God says:

“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (Rom 9:11-13).

When the Bible says that election and reprobation are not based upon people having done “any good or evil” it means the decision is unconditional. For a person to place their faith in Christ would be a “good” thing. But the Scripture denies this is the basis of God’s election.

“[I]t is not God’s *foreview* of these things in men which moved Him to choose them. God’s foreknowledge of the future is founded upon the determination of His *will* concerning it. The divine decree, the divine foreknowledge, and the divine predestination is the *order* set forth in the Scriptures. First, ‘Who are the called according to his purpose’; second, ‘for whom he did foreknow’; third, ‘he also did predestinate’ (Rom 8:28,29). The decree of God as *preceding* His foreknowledge is also stated in, ‘Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God’ (Acts 2:23). God foreknows

everything that *will* be, because He has ordained everything that *shall* be; then it is to put the cart before the horse when we make foreknowledge the cause of God’s election” (A. W. Pink).

During a national election do you wait until you see which candidate is going to win before picking one for which to vote? That would be useless and foolish! Why have a divine election if God is merely going to “rubber stamp” what man eventually will do in time? This is nonsense!

3. ELECTION IS PURELY OF SOVEREIGN GRACE - “according to the good pleasure of His will” (V-5b)

What is the moving cause of election? Foreseen faith, holiness, and good works are excluded for the Bible clearly provides the moving cause. It is God’s “good pleasure.” God’s choice is entirely according to what pleases Him. “But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased” (Psa 115:3). God has the right as Creator to do what gives Him pleasure with those whom He planned to bring into existence. He is the sovereign Potter who has the right to decide whether a person will be a “vessel of mercy” or a “vessel of wrath.” He predetermines your eternal destiny!

“Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles” (Rom 9:21-24).

God is free to love and choose those He wishes and to reject and hate whom He pleases simply because He is God. This is why Paul speaks of “the election of grace” (Rom 11:5). Now “grace” is unmerited favor. Simply put, nothing within a person would possibly be the reason for God bestowing electing favor. As God expressly declares, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” (Rom 9:15).

Summary: You should realize election is based solely on God’s sovereign grace. It cannot be based upon foresight of faith, for election is unto holiness and sonship and is a matter of God’s sovereign good pleasure.

MAIN CONCLUSION:

1. DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE DOCTRINE OF UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION?

When Jesus taught, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me” (Jn 6:37) and “no man can come unto Me except it were given unto him of My Father” (Jn 6:65), people became very angry. Are you like that? Fewer words have bred more controversy than “He hath chosen us.” Man doesn’t like a sovereign God who saves whom He pleases. You may not want to accept the fact that God completely controls the matter of salvation. You need to repent of those thoughts. For unless you acknowledge God’s right to save “according to the good pleasure of His will,” you will end up claiming some part in salvation. You will claim it was your faith, your understanding of the Gospel, or your good works which God foresaw, which led

to your election unto salvation. You must see that granting salvation is entirely up to God’s sovereign will. Election is a humbling doctrine, if properly understood.

“We see then that faith depends upon God’s election, else we make S[aint] Paul a liar. And so you see that all such as cannot abide to have predestination plainly and openly spoken of are deadly enemies of God’s grace; they would deface it to the uttermost of their power. For the hiding of it is the overthrowing of all religion” (John Calvin).

2. THE HOPE OF SALVATION DEPENDS UPON THE FACT THAT GOD DOES ELECT

You may know very little about salvation in Jesus Christ. You have read about this doctrine of election and found it to be very difficult to swallow. Yet your only hope of being saved is in embracing the doctrine of election. “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48). If you come to believe in Christ for salvation it is only because of an eternal divine choice. God could have determined to have all sinners perish in their sins. You would then be faced with a hopeless situation. But God ordained some to eternal life. Some will enjoy holiness and sonship in the family of God. God has predestinated it will be so.

Suppose I could assure you that ten unsaved people in an assembly of a thousand will be saved. Now no one knows who the ten are. As the Word of God is preached it will most certainly accomplish God’s purpose of saving the ten and not return unto Him void (Isa 55:11). Divine predestination and election assures the salvation of some. So don’t let election frighten you away. Jesus said, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me (divine election) and he that cometh to Me (your responsibility) I will in no wise cast out.” If you come to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and trust in His blood and righteousness, you will discover you are one of the elect! Christ casts out none who come to Him in faith. Here is the promise of God:

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom 10:9).

You may say, “I don’t care for all this religious hogwash. I could care less about being a child of God or being holy. I like my sinful pleasures.” Well, then, why complain about the doctrine of election? Why charge God with being unfair, when you don’t want anything to do with salvation? If, however, you are drawn to Christ by the Holy Spirit, realize that nothing within you moved God to save you. Come with this humble thought: “Why me Lord? What wonderful grace you have shown to me!”

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UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

The Truth About Election And Predestination BY JACK A. WERTH

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” - Eph 1:3-5 KJV

I would like to try a little experiment. Please carefully follow my instructions.

Pick a number between 1 and 10.

Multiply your number by 9.

If your number has two digits, add the first and second digits together.

Subtract 5.

Pick the letter of the alphabet that corresponds to your number (A=1, B=2, etc.).

Think of a country in the world that begins with that letter.

Take the next letter in the alphabet and think of an animal that begins with that letter.

Of all the countries and animals in the world, do you think I can tell you which ones you chose? You chose Denmark and elephant didn’t you? Was I right? How did I do it? I predetermined your answer, even though, you may not understand how I did it!

Paul uses two key terms in this passage: “hath chosen” and “having predestinated.” The entire passage revolves around these two ideas. The term “predestinated” means: “To mark off in advance.” The idea is that of determining in advance what will happen. In other words, to map out beforehand what will take place. If you were taking a vacation to Florida, you would choose routes in advance and mark them on the map before leaving home for Daytona Beach. You don’t want to end up in Dallas, Texas! “Hath chosen” means that God has chosen certain individuals to be His people and has purposed to grant them all the “spiritual blessings” found in Jesus Christ (V-3). The Greek word for “chosen” is “eklego.” It means to “pick out” or “select” for oneself. This word is used of Christ’s choice of His disciples. Obviously, the concept is seen in our own political elections. There is no major distinction to be drawn between choosing and predestinating. They relate to the same Divine act.

When the term predestination or election is used a shiver goes up and down the spine of many people. Sirens go off and red lights begin flashing! There seems to be a terrible aversion to the doctrine of election. Election is portrayed as HOMERUN