

Election: Chosen by God | Doctrine of Salvation | Theological Equipping Class

February 11, 2024

Controversy & Revelation

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Why do we need to talk about election?

1. For the sake of God's revelation
2. For the sake of our obedience

Defining Terms

- *Predestination*: God's sovereign decrees of salvation for the elect and damnation for the reprobate
- *Election*: God's sovereign decree of salvation for those in Christ
- *Reprobation*: God's sovereign decree of damnation for those apart from Christ

The Options

Everyone: those who choose God were chosen by God

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| <p>I. <u>Arminianism</u>: <i>God chose us because we choose him</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Election is based on foreknowledgeB. Synergism: we cooperate with God's grace to believe the gospel<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ God makes us "savable" (prevenient grace) but the response depends on us■ "Enabling grace"C. Notable Adherents<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ John Chrysostom■ John Wesley■ C.S. Lewis■ Billy GrahamD. Heresy to Beware: Pelagianism | <p>II. <u>Calvinism</u>: <i>we choose God because he chose us</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Election is based on sheer graceB. Monergism: we rely entirely on God's grace to believe the gospel<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ God brings us all the way■ "Effective grace"C. AKA: Doctrines of Grace, Reformed Soteriology, TULIP, etc.D. Notable Adherents<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Augustine■ John Calvin■ Johnathan Edwards■ John PiperE. Heresy to Beware: Hyper-Calvinism |
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Election & the Doctrine of Sin

The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (Romans 8:7)

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked (Ephesians 2:1-2a)

“Some people say that we were drowning in the ocean / Barely floating until God threw us the rope then / Our free will helped us as we groped / Our faith is the hand that grabbed the rope and God put us back in the boat / Nope! Without apology I deny that analogy / Reality: we were dead at the bottom of the sea / I was a swollen corpse with hope no more / Until Jehovah the Lord dove from the shore to the ocean floor / He brought me out, not an act of my volition / Breathed life into my lungs and didn't ask for my permission.” (Shai Linne, Election)

The Biblical Data on Election

I. A Primary Text: *Romans 9*

⁶ *It is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.⁹ For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”¹⁰ And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac,¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—¹² she was told, “The older will serve the younger.”¹³ As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”*

¹⁴ *What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.*

¹⁹ *You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?”²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?²² What if God,*

desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? (Romans 9:6-24)

II. Corroborating Texts

A. Election as salvation according to God's will

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:3-14)

B. Election as the Father's gift to the Son

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. (John 6:37)

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:44)

²⁶ You do not believe because you are not among my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:26-29)

C. Election as the consistent assumption of the biblical authors

1. Paul's salvation

¹³ For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵ But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, ¹⁶ was pleased to reveal his Son to me... (Galatians 1:13-16)

2. Peter's description of Christians

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles...³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:1, 3)

3. James' view of total divine sovereignty

¹⁴ You do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." (James 4:14-15)

4. Matthew's summary of what separates believers from unbelievers

For many are called, but few are chosen. (Matthew 22:14)

5. Luke (author of Acts) describes Paul's security on the basis of election

⁹ The Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, go on speaking and do not be silent, ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people." (Acts 18:9-10)

The Doctrine of Election is...

I. Biblical

"Our first aim must be to know only the doctrine of predestination as it is set out in God's Word." (John Calvin)

II. Difficult

A. What about free will? ("Love is impossible without free will")

- Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin." (John 8:34)
- The Panda & the Wolf: nature determines choice

B. Isn't this anti-evangelism?

1. The Bible doesn't think so

- The Parable of the Sower is about God's sovereignty over the response to the gospel (Matthew 13:10-17) *and* indiscriminate sharing of the gospel (Matthew 13:1-8)

- The same Jesus who declared “Many are called but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14) gave the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

2. Church history doesn’t think so.

- Under Calvin’s leadership, Geneva exported hundreds of missionaries
- The First Great Awakening was highly Calvinistic: Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, etc.
- Famous Calvinist missionaries: William Carey, David Brainerd, John Paton, Adoniram Judson, David Livingstone, Henry Martyn
- The modern Calvinist movement has a strong evangelistic emphasis (cf. CrossCon, David Platt, John Piper)

III. Humbling

“We will never be convinced as we ought, that our salvation flows from God’s free mercy, until we understand eternal election” (Calvin, Institutes)

IV. Encouraging

He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:4-5)

“If we are in communion with Christ, we have proof clear and strong enough to show that our names are written in the Book of Life” (Calvin, Institutes)

²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.* ²⁹ *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* ³⁰ *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.* (Romans 8:28-30)

V. God-glorifying

He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace. (Ephesians 1:5-6)

² *We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers...* ⁴ *For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you.* (1 Thessalonians 1:2,4)

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

¹⁸ *Moses said, "Please show me your glory."¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. (Exodus 33:18-19)*

*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!
"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"
"Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be glory forever.
Amen.
(Romans 11:33-36)*

Recommended Resources

- *Chosen By God*, RC Sproul
- *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God*, JI Packer
- *Election*, Shai Linne (song)