

# Election

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So just who are "*the elect*?" Those who are chosen. That's pretty clear isn't it?

Ephesians 1:4 says "*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*"

OK. That proves predestination and that God chose us individually, right? Well, not exactly, keep reading...

*"...For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding." Ephesians 1:4-8*

It is clear that what was predestined was God's plan for us to be adopted through Christ, that our sins are forgiven through the blood that Jesus shed, not because God decided from the beginning that He was going to save some and not others but because God wanted that "whoever will believe in him" to be saved.

*John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29*

*He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:2*

Present at the Synod of Dort in 1618 was Bishop John Davenant (1572-1641) from England who said:

It may be truly said before Augustine and Pelagius, there was no question concerning the death of Christ, whether it was to be extended to all mankind, or to be confined only to the elect. For the Fathers...not a word (that I know of) occurs among them of the exclusion of any persons by the decree of God. They agree that it is actually beneficial to those only who believe, yet everywhere confess that Christ died in behalf of all mankind...

Augustine died in AD 429, and up to his time, at least, there is not the slightest evidence that any Christian ever dreamed of a propitiation for the elect alone. Even after him, the doctrine of limited propitiation was but slowly propagated, and for long but partially received.

Source: James Morrison, *The Extent of Atonement*, (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1882), 114-17.

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## **Who are the elect?**

Calvinism teaches a person is one of the elect *before* he accepts Christ as Lord and Savior while those in the non-Calvinist camp teach that a person becomes one of the elect *when* they accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

D. L. Moody used to put it very simply: "*The elect are the 'whosoever wills'; the non-elect are the 'whosoever wont's.'*" In other words: *the elect* are those who accept Christ.

J. Vernon McGee said this about election:

The word *predestination* comes from the Greek *proorisos*, and it literally means "*to define, to mark out, to set apart.*" ... predestination has to do with God's purpose with those He chooses... I cannot repeat often enough that election is God's choosing us in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Election can refer either to God's choosing of persons for some type of service *or* to God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ and identifying those who believe.

Jesus said He would not lose any that God gave. But who is God giving to Jesus? Those that were predestined to be given? No, God is giving Jesus those who have made a decision to follow Him.

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*...and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48*  
from *John Wesley's Commentary*:

Luke does not say foreordained. He is not speaking of what was done from eternity, but of what was then done, through the preaching of the Gospel. He is describing that ordination, and that only, which was at the very time of hearing it. During this sermon those believed, says the apostle, to whom God then gave power to believe. It is as if he had said, "They believed, whose hearts the Lord opened;" as he expresses it in a clearly parallel place, speaking of the same kind of ordination, Acts 16:14, etc. It is observable, the original word is not once used in Scripture to express eternal predestination of any kind. The sum is, all those and those only, who were now ordained, now believed. Not that God rejected the rest: it was his will that they also should have been saved: but they thrust salvation from them. Nor were they who then believed constrained to believe. But grace was then first copiously offered them. And they did not thrust it away, so that a great multitude even of Gentiles were converted. In a word, the expression properly implies, a present operation of Divine grace working faith in the hearers.<sup>2</sup>

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## **How does God choose and still allow free will?**

*But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their*

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*tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. Judges 7:4-6*

J. Vernon McGee called this, “*one of the finest lessons concerning divine election and man's free will.*” McGee went further on to say, “*This is the way they work together. God said to Gideon, "I am going to choose the men that I want to go with you, but the way I will do it is to let them make the choice. Bring them down to the water, and the ones who lap water like a dog, just going through and throwing it into their mouths, are the ones I have chosen. You can put aside those men who get down on all fours and take their time drinking. I don't want them."* <sup>3</sup>

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Another commentary <sup>4</sup> has this to say:

*Election* is the pre-designed destiny of every one who believes in Christ. *Predestination* means that the believer has a part in this “*pre-designed*” plan of God. *Election* is the word that sums up that plan. It describes the “*status*” of the believer who, not only possesses an eternal destiny, but now “*in time*” has a functional responsibility to represent the “*light*” viewpoint of God to the world of darkness in which he lives.

*Election* is the present possession of every person who has trusted in Christ as savior. Colossians 3:12, “*as the elect of God*” (Romans 1:6-7)

One is *elected* based on God’s *grace*. There is no personal merit or works involved at all. Grace provides our destiny. All man needs to do is accept it by personal trust in Jesus as the Messiah-Savior. Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Corinthians 8:9.

The basis for election is the election of Christ.

- He is the elect of God: Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 2:4, 6.  
His election was established from eternity past. Acts 4:28; 2:23; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8.
- The believer is made a partner with Christ and actually shares His destiny, which is His election. 1 Corinthians 1:9; Romans 8:17
- This is accomplished through union with Christ. i.e. being identified into the “one” body of Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13) and is represented by the term “in Him” Ephesians 1:4. 1 Peter 5:10, “called you to His eternal glory IN CHRIST.”

The “standard of THE ELECTION” refers to God’s plan for saving those who trust in the Messiah. That is why it is called “an election of GRACE,” (Romans 11:5).

## **The difference between “called” and “elect”**

- **Called:** The word group, klätos (kaleö, kläsis) describes our election with emphasis on the believer’s function and responsibility here on earth. It also is used to indicate the

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“invitation” aspect of God’s plan of salvation. “many are called (as in *all*) but few are chosen,” Matthew 22:14

- **Elect:** The word group, *eklektos* (*eklegomai*) describes our election with emphasis on the believer’s position in union with Christ, the STATUS of election. Sometimes this word is translated as “chosen.” We are “chosen” by God to be part of His plan because we accept His invitation through faith.
  - Both words are used together at: Revelation 17:14; 2 Pet. 1:10; Mat. 22:14
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It is interesting when people claim to be 3 point Calvinists and choosing Total Depravity and Unconditional Election as two of their three points. Total Depravity and Unconditional Election are both tied to and cannot be separated from Limited Atonement. You cannot have T and U without L...

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## **When there is doubt go back and ask yourself:**

- Why was man created?
- Did God create sin?
- Why we were told to do some things and told not to do others?
- Think about God's love and justice.
- Ask yourself why God gets angry; and why we even need the scriptures or Jesus' death on the cross?
- What does “takes away the sins of the world” mean?
- What does “whosoever will” mean?
- Why does God say He takes no pleasure from the death of the wicked, especially if He created certain of us for eternal damnation?

If God was going to say, “*I choose you, you, and you. The rest of you go to hell*” then the answers to those questions are meaningless.

## **HOW DO WE KNOW THAT GOD FREES MAN'S WILL SO HE CAN TURN TO GOD?**

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The exhortations to turn to God (Prov 1:23; Isa 31:6; Ezek 14:6; Matt 18:13; Acts 3:19).

The exhortations to repent (I Kings 8:47; Matt 2:3; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38).

The exhortations to believe (II Chr 20:20; Isa 43:10; John 6:29; 14:1; Acts 16:31).

The exhortations to obey (Acts 5:32; II Thess 1:8; Heb 5:9).

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1. *Thru The Bible Commentary* on Ephesians by J. Vernon McGee <http://www.ttb.org>
2. *Wesley's Commentary* see verse 48:  
<http://eword.gospelcom.net/comments/acts/wesley/acts13.htm>
3. *Thru The Bible Commentary* on Judges by J. Vernon McGee <http://www.ttb.org>
4. <http://www.biblefrances.com/>
5. <http://christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-t008.html>