

Unconditional Election

Is it biblical?

Definitions

- Elect means to “select” or “choose” We have elections where we choose a representative.
- Predestinate is made up of a prefix pre, which means “before” and destine which means “determine” so predestinate means to “determine beforehand”.

“The questions to be answered are plainly not what election and predestination denote but rather who or what is elected? Why were they elected? What are they elected for?”

—Laurence Vance, *The Other Side of Calvinism*

What saith Calvinism?

“By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His own glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.”

—Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter III Section 3

“Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, who he from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect, and the foundation of Salvation.”

—Cannons of Dort Chapter I Section 7

“All who will finally be saved, were chosen to salvation by God the Father, before the foundation of the world, and given to Jesus Christ in the covenant of grace.”

—John L. Dagg

“We mean, therefore, by this doctrine, that God in eternity, chose or picked out of mankind whom He would save (by means of Christ’s death and the work of the Holy Spirit), for no other reason than His own wise, just, and gracious purpose.”

—Beck

“Foreordination means God’s sovereign plan, whereby He decides all that is to happen in the entire universe. Nothing in this world happens by chance. God is in back of everything. He decides and causes all things to happen that do happen.

... Predestination is part of foreordination. While foreordination refers to God’s plan for everything that ever happens, predestination is that part of foreordination that refers to man’s eternal destiny: heaven or hell. Predestination is composed of two parts: election and reprobation. Election concerns those who go to heaven, and reprobation concerns those who go to hell. ... Divine election means that God chooses some to go to heaven. Others are passed by and they will go to hell.”

—Palmer, *Five Points of Calvinism*

“Election refers to God’s choosing whom to save. It is unconditional in that there is no condition man must meet before God chooses to save him. Man is dead in trespasses and sins. So there is no condition he can meet before God chooses to save him from his deadness.”

—Piper, 5 Points

What saith the scriptures?

How are these terms (election, elect, chosen, predestinate) used in the Bible?

“O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.”

–I Chronicles 16:13

“He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:”

–Psalm 78:70

God chose Jerusalem to be the city where He would put his name. (I Kings 8:44,48; 11:13,32,36; II Kings 21:7, 23:27

“He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen.”

–Psalm 105:26

*“I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto
David my servant,”*

–Psalm 89:3

“But though, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou are my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.”

–Isaiah 41:8-9

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.”

–Isaiah 42:1 (Mt.12:15-21 cross reference)

“For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.”

–Isaiah 45:4

“I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah and inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.”

–Isaiah 65:9

“They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”

–Isaiah 65:22

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

–Matthew 24:22, 24

“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

–Matthew 24:31

“And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?”

–Luke 18:7

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” —John 15:16

-The context of this passage starts in 13:1 where He is having the last supper with his 12 apostles and after supper He begins to teach the 12, although Judas Iscariot departs in 13:30, so it is actually the 11 apostles He is speaking to.

Acts 1:2—*“Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.”*

“Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?”

—John 6:70

Read I Corinthians 1:17-31

“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:” —I Cor. 1:27-28

(v.18—the preaching of the cross is foolishness)

*“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is
God that justifieth.”*

–Romans 8:33

“Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.”

Not “chosen to be in the Lord”. We are chosen because we
are “in the Lord”

–Romans 16:13

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed by 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, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” Eph. 1:1-7

We are chosen “in him” not “chosen to be in him”

How do we get “in Christ”? Eph. 1:13-14—> 1Cor.12:13—>
Rom. 6:3

“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)

The Bible uses “predestinated” to speak of what God has previously determined will happen to those who are “in Christ”. God has determined beforehand the inheritance of the church, the Body of Christ, which is in the heavenly places. He has determined beforehand that all those in Christ will partake in the adoption of children (Romans 8:23)

-Example: The airline (God) determines beforehand where the airplane (the church, the Body of Christ) is going, they do not determine who (which individuals) gets on the airplane (the church, the Body of Christ).

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 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.”

God has before determined that all believers will be conformed to the image of his Son.

—Romans 8:29-30

“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 older shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

–Romans 9:10-13

- Context of Romans 9—What happened to Israel? The first objection Paul deals with is, Has the word of God “taken none effect”? Romans 9:6. He proves that what the word of God states, will be fulfilled. Both with Abraham (vs.7-9) and with Isaac/Rebekah (vs.10-13) God made promises and they came to pass.
- Genesis 25:22-23, compare with Malachi 1:1-4 and Obadiah
- “the elder shall serve the younger” not “the elder shall be damned to hell but the younger will I unconditional choose to go to heaven”

“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.”

- the “they” is unbelieving Israel. An example of the unsaved elect.

–Romans 11:28

“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: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

—2 Thes. 2:13-14

Concerning this passage, John McArthur says, “Unmistakably, this portion of Scripture looks at what is means to be chosen by God, verse 13, chosen by God from the beginning, the beginning of redemptive purpose, for salvation through sanctification to gain the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. ...No doctrine is more loved and more resented at the same time than the doctrine of eternal election — divine, sovereign choice; predestination. In fact, there are those who suggest that this doctrine is actually devilish.”

What is the key to understanding this
verse?

CONTEXT

- What is the chapter about? the believers thinking that the tribulation that they are experiencing is the great tribulation that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of in Matthew 24, Luke 21, and in the book of the Revelation.
- When we see the word “salvation” we must always ask, “salvation from what?” The context defines salvation as deliverance from the things he is speaking of in verses 3-12.
- So, God chose believers to be delivered or saved from that time to come. Paul tells the Thessalonians this to comfort them so they are not troubled.

2 different views

- Calvinist View—“By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His own glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.” - Westminster Confession of Faith
- My View—“Elect”, “Chosen”, “Predestinated” are generic words that simple mean “to select or choose” and “to determine beforehand” respectively. The context determines who the “elect” and “chosen” are and what they are elected and chosen for. God does not elect or choose any individuals to eternal life but instead those that believe the gospel become one of the elect and chosen because they are “in Christ”, who is the ultimate “elect” one (Is. 42:1). Predestination concerns what God has determined beforehand will happen to those who are “in Christ” by faith. Today, being counted as one of the “elect” is conditioned upon faith in Christ, which is not a work. (Romans 4:4-5)