

Election

Does God *elect* who is to be saved and who is to be lost?

The doctrines of election and predestination have been grossly distorted, and in their present form, were unheard of until John Calvin came along 1,800 years after the apostles. The *biblical* teaching declares the sovereignty of God over man in such a way that the freedom of the human will is also preserved. Calvin's understanding can be summarized as "the belief that God chooses who is to be saved and who is to be lost, apart from human desire."

Election and Predestination—What Are the Differences?

Election is God *choosing* people while predestination deals with God's *prior knowledge of events* before they happen. Predestination is dealt with in a separate article. What is the biblical definition of 'election'? Does God choose people or do they choose Him?

1. Election is Christ-centered: A person's election occurs only in union with Christ.

- He chose us in Christ (Eph 1:4)
- Jesus is first of all the elect of God. (Rom 8:29)
- Only in union with Christ do we become members of the elect:

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 to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will. (Eph 1:4-5)

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, so that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:11-12)

2. Election is "In Him...through His blood."

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. (Eph 1:7)

God purposed before creation to form a people through Christ's redemptive death on the cross. (Eph 1:4)

3. Election in Christ is primarily corporate, an election of a people.

- Called the "body of Christ" (Eph 4:12)
- "My church" (Matt 16:18)
- A people belonging to God (1 Pet 2:9)
- Bride of Christ (Rev 19:7)

All of these are corporate, not individual. Election embraces individuals only as they identify and associate themselves with the body of Christ (Eph 1:22-23)

4. Election is always certain.

The certainty of election remains conditional by faith in Christ and remaining in fellowship with Him. The church—body of believers—is to be holy and blameless in His sight (Eph 1:4)

- How are we made holy & blameless? By the forgiveness of our sins. (Eph 1:7)
- To the church's sanctification & holiness (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:16)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:10)

B. Fulfillment of this purpose for the corporate church is certain:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. (Eph 5:25-27)

This is conditional on our faith:

He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard. (Col 1:22-23)

5. Election to salvation in Christ is offered to all.

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. (1 Tim 2:3-6)

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men (Titus 2:11)

...we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. (Heb 2:9)

To summarize:

1. Election is centered in Christ.
2. Election is in Christ's blood.
3. Election is corporate, not individual.
4. Election is certain.
5. Election is conditional on our faith.

From these scriptures, we see that both God and humans have a decision in election.