

Christian Beliefs: 2016 Summer Study

What is Election?

1. Cautions.

- a. This subject has been cause of much division in the church.
- b. Our convictions on this subject must be held in humility.
- c. Election is NOT an essential doctrine for salvation, but it IS important.

2. Definition.

"Election is an act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure." *Grudem*

3. What is the history of the doctrine?

- a. Pre-Augustine
- b. Augustine
- c. Reformation

4. Scriptural support for the doctrine of election.

a. Romans 8:28-30

i. What is foreknowledge?

yada = "taking knowledge of one with loving care" or "making one an object of loving care." Genesis 4:1; 18:19; Amos 3:2, etc.

ginosko = "to know someone or something." John 2:24; Matt. 7:23

proginosko = "to know beforehand." Rom. 11:2; 1 Peter 1:20

ii. What did God foreknow?

V 29 "For **whom** He foreknew, He also predestined"

iii. What is predestination?

"decide on beforehand, determine in advance"

Acts 4:27-28

iv. What is the result?

Calling, justification, glorification.

b. Ephesians 1:3-12

i. V 4 "chose (*elect*) us...before the foundation of the world..."

ii. V 5 "predestined us to adoption as sons..."

iii. V 11 "having been predestined according to His purpose..."

c. 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

i. V 4 "beloved of God" – think of the idea of *yada* or "knowing"

ii. V 4 "having been chosen by God"

iii. V 4-5 "knowing...*because*..."—Paul knew they were chosen *because* they had received his message with faith.

5. Scriptural objections.

- a. All passages that command belief or even obedience (Acts 16:31, etc.)
A command to obey does not imply ability to obey. The Law was given to demonstrate our inability to keep it (Gal. 3:22-25).
- b. John 3:16
- c. 1 Timothy 2:4, "who desires **all** men to be saved"
"all" is in the context of "all men, for kings and all who are in authority" (v 1-2) and may mean "all without distinction" not "all without exclusion."
God clearly has both a will of decree and a will of command or desire
- d. 2 Peter 3:9 "not wishing **any** to perish but for **all** to come to repentance"
"The Lord is not slow about His promise (to you), but is patient toward you, not wishing any (of you) to perish but for all (of you) to come to repentance."

6. What about freedom of the will?

- a. What is "free will"?

"Libertarian free will means that our choices are free from the determination or constraints of human nature and free from any predetermination by God... If our choice is determined or caused by anything, including our own desires...it cannot properly be called a free choice."

"...what is critical to free will is not the ability to choose differently in identical circumstances but rather not being caused to do something by causes other than oneself. It is up to me how I choose, and nothing determines my choice. W.L. Craig

- b. Is the unbeliever "free"?

- i. Romans 8:5-7

"according to the flesh" speaks of the person's nature

"hostile toward God" speaks of root causes in the person's nature

"it is not even able" speaks to human inability with respect to God

- ii. Romans 6:21-22

"when you were slaves of sin" there's no conditional "if" you were

"now having been freed" what is it about us that has been freed?

Cf. v 17 "you **were** slaves of sin"

- iii. Mark 5:1-13

Was this man "free"?

- c. Does God "coerce" people to believe?

- i. Acts 26:16-18 (cf. Isaiah 35:5)

- ii. John 9 (man born blind), John 11 (Lazarus)

- iii. John 3:3

"Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to *embrace* Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel." *Westminster Catechism*