

SOTERIOLOGY (80)

3) Some see election as a pre-temporal election.

This view basically suggests that God, according to His eternal plan and His good pleasure, selected some to salvation before time began and before the foundation of the world. This view states that those God has elected are fully, finally and eternally His elect.

As we shall see, this view of election does seem to fit best with the entire teaching and theology found in the Bible. This view also seems to best let the Bible speak for itself.

QUESTION #19 – What are the key words that establish the fact that the doctrine of election is a biblical doctrine connected to salvation?

Dr. Charles Ryrie says, “Often the chief problem in understanding this doctrine is not including enough facets of it. No human mind will ever harmonize sovereignty and free will, but ignoring or downplaying one or the other in the interests of a supposed harmony will solve nothing” (*Basic Theology*, p. 311).

Truth of the matter, when it comes to election, any attempt to downplay it or ignore it actually winds up demeaning God. God has put into writing certain concepts communicated by certain words which directly or indirectly establish the doctrine of election:

1) Election - This word “eklectos” (εκλεκτος) means to make a choice of selection.

This particular word is used in regard to Israel (Matt. 24:22, 24; Mark 13:20, 22, 27); to the Christian (Rom. 8:33; I Pet. 1:1); to Paul (Titus 1:1) and in regard to Christ (I Pet. 2:6).

2) Chosen - This word “eklego” (εκλεγω) means to pick out or choose.

This particular word is used in reference to the disciples (Luke 6:13; John 6:70; 13:18; 15:6, 19; Acts 1:2). It is also used in reference to Israel (Mark 13:20). It is also used in reference to individuals (Acts 1:24; 13:17; 15:7; Eph. 1:4).

3) Drawing - This word “elko” (ελκο) means to draw, to lead, to impel.

As it relates to human beings in its biblical usage, this word seems to imply a forced leading which would not be consistent with the desired will of the individual (Acts 16:19; 21:30; James 2:6).

This particular word is clearly used in connection with salvation (John 6:44). John 12:32 indicates that this drawing will include all types of people, both Jews and Gentiles (John 10:16; 11:51-52).

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4) Calling - This word “kaleo” (καλεω) means to call or summons.

It is a word that is clearly used in the context of God calling a person to salvation (Rom. 8:30; 9:24-25; I Cor. 1:9; 7:17-18; Gal. 1:6; I Thess. 2:12; 5:24; I Pet. 1:15; II Pet. 1:3).

5) Purpose - This word “protithami” (προτιθημι) means to set up a purpose or plan or to establish a purpose or plan beforehand.

This word particularly speaks of the plan of God (Rom. 3:25), which seems to not be in harmony with the plan of man (Rom. 1:13). This word is clearly connected to personal salvation (Eph. 1:9).

6) Foreknowledge - This word “proginosko” (προγινωσκω) means to know beforehand.

When this word is used in the Bible, it seems to suggest a knowledge that is absolutely certain of what will happen (II Pet. 3:17). It speaks of a very intimate knowledge (Acts 26:5) which includes the idea of both knowing and ordaining (i.e. I Pet. 1:20).

This word is clearly used in connection with God saving an individual (Rom. 8:29; I Pet. 1:2).

7) Predestinate - This word “proorizo” (προοριζω) means to predetermine and foreordain beforehand.

This is a word that is used in connection with the work of Christ (Acts 4:28; I Cor. 2:7). It is also used in connection with individual salvation (Rom. 8:29-30). It is clearly used in the predetermination of a sinner to become a child of God (Eph. 1:5, 11).

When we look at these words which have been inspired by God, we must come to the conviction that the doctrine of election is most certainly a biblical doctrine. The concept of it is definitely found in the Word of God. As Dr. Chafer writes: “Whatever reaction to the fact of divine election may be recorded by the mind of man, the doctrine stands as an unequivocal revelation” (Vol. 3, p. 168).

QUESTION #20 – What is the purpose of election?

The ultimate purpose of the doctrine of election is to manifest the glory of God!

This is clearly revealed as this doctrine relates to a believer (Eph. 1:5, 6, 12, 14).

This is clearly revealed as this doctrine relates to an unbeliever (Rom. 9:18, 23; Rev. 17:8). God will glorify Himself even in the destruction of the wicked (Prov. 16:4).

Regardless of what our minds may or may not understand concerning election, we may conclude that this doctrine clearly is designed to exalt and to magnify Almighty God.

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It would seem a logical conclusion that a believer's acceptance or rejection of this doctrine becomes one of the ways that he brings glory to God or does not bring glory to God. Fully understanding the doctrine is not needed to glorify God, but not rejecting the doctrine is needed to bring glory to God.

The purpose of all true biblical doctrine is to elevate God, not man !

QUESTION #21 – When were elective decisions made regarding the eternal destiny of an individual?

Even though we may not be able to grasp the magnitude of this point, we must be willing to accept what God reveals to us in His written Word.

The Bible plainly and clearly states that individuals were elected before the foundations of the world.

Dr. Chafer writes: “All things which related to human history were determined in the eternal counsels of God before man was created” (Vol. 3, p. 172).

The truth that God made elective choices before the foundation of the world may be established in at least two distinct areas:

Area #1 - This truth can be clearly established for those who are saved .
Eph. 1:4; II Thess. 2:13-14; II Tim. 1:9

Area #2 - This truth can be clearly established for those who are lost .
Prov. 16:4; Jude 4; Rev. 17:8

When we consider these passages, we conclude that God wants us to realize that His elective choices were made concerning individuals “before the foundation of the world.”

There are some who accept this, but only in regard to believers. In other words, the position is that election has no reference whatsoever to the unbeliever. However, it must be biblically admitted that this is not a correct belief system (Rom. 9:17; Rev. 17:8). In fact, it can be even logically demonstrated that this is not a correct system of belief.

Dr. Chafer writes: “The idea of election, or selection, cannot be applied to an entire class as unrelated to any others. Hidden in the word election is the implied truth, which is unavoidably a part of it, that others are not chosen, or are passed by. The thought expressed by the word election cannot be modified. It asserts an express intention on the part of God to confer salvation on certain persons but not all. It is not a mere purpose to give salvation to those who may believe; it rather determines who will believe” (*Ibid.*, p. 172).