

Preliminary

Question: If fallen man can only choose evil, how can he choose the Gospel and be saved?

Answer: People aren't naturally seeking God; He seeks us out to save us

Doctrinal Definition

[L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 114] – "... that *eternal act of God* whereby He, in *His sovereign good pleasure and on account of no foreseen merit in them*, chooses a certain number of sinners to be the recipients of special grace and of eternal salvation; it may be said to be *God's eternal purpose to save some of the human race in and by Jesus Christ.*"

[BCF 1689, III.5] – "Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath *chosen in Christ*, unto ever-lasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them"

Terminology

OT Hebrew: בָּחַר (b'har) = to choose; בָּחִיר (bachiyir) = elect, Isa 42:1

NT Greek: ἐκλογή (eklogē = election); ἐκλεκτός (eklektos = elect); Verb – ἐκλέγομαι (eklegomai = to choose for oneself)

Other Terms: Gk. ἐκκλησία (Ekklesia = the Called-Out Ones)

- The word "beloved" is another word that refers to the elect... 2 Thes 2:13
- "Sheep" as God elect... Jn 10:26

PROPOSITIONS on Election unto Salvation

Proposition 1: It is sovereign in its ground

Note: It is based on God's pleasures... Isa 46:10; Ps 115:3; 135:6; Mt 11:26, 27; Eph 1:5, 11

Absurdity: Most Christians have been taught that sinners who repented and put his faith in God, becomes born again – e.g., altar call, sinners prayer

Wrong Concept: A God of unconditional love would never pass over any of his lost creatures whom accepted him¹

- The Arminian acknowledged the Biblical teaching that God chooses who will be saved... as *foreseen election* [Articles of Faith of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Article IX] – "God determined from the beginning to save all who should comply with the conditions of salvation. Hence by faith in Christ men become His elect."
- [C.G. Finney, *Systematic Theology*, 618] – "The elect were chosen to salvation, upon condition that God *foresaw* that He could secure their repentance, faith, and final perseverance"

Calvinist Response: Due to man's inability to save himself, the new birth will cannot be program and determine by man – it happens and man experience it... Eph 2:1; Jn 1:12, 13

Acts 9:5 = "Who are you, Lord?"

- (a) Salvation is the effort of God alone without the human effort (*monergistic*)... cf. BCF III.6

Note: It was not made at any point of human history... It is a decree of eternity past

- Rom 9:11-16 = It falls on God's 'I will'
- 2 Tim 1:9 = There was already purpose/grace before time
- Eph 1:4 = It is not on the foundation of the world, but before, an expression of eternity past... cf. Jn 17:24
- 2 Thess 2:13 = God from the beginning chose you for salvation

[Lorraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, 71] – "... Salvation is absolutely and solely of grace—that God is free, in consistency with the infinite perfections of his nature, to save none, few, many, or all, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his will. It also follows that salvation is not based on any merits in the creature, and that it depends on God, and not on men, who are, and who are not, to be made partakers of eternal life. God acts as a sovereign in saving some and passing by others who are left to the just recompense of their sins"

- (b) It excludes any foreseen condition in man as cause of election

Rom 8:29 = *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son*

Note: The word *foreknew* states that God knew the individuals themselves... cf. Eph 1:4

- The word "whom" is the object of the verb and the object denotes persons, not events or happenings [Joe Morecraft III, *Amazing Grace*, 149] – "But before the beginning of time the Bible says whom He foreknew He predestined to be conformed into the image of His Son (Eph. 1:4, 5). The word foreknow does not mean foresee. It means to fore love... And so in Romans 8 it says whom He foreloved, those whom He foreknew, those He predestined, whom He set his love upon. Those whom He chose according to the good pleasure of His will. He determined that in time they would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ"

Illustration: Paul's used of two real, flesh and blood OT figures: Jacob and Esau

Rom 9:11-16 = "... [for] the purpose of God according to election might stand... it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who show mercy."

- God's love was not conditional but *unconditional* – for neither Jacob nor Esau had yet been born nor done anything good or evil

Point: Election is *of*, and *by*, and *through* God – Nowhere is man given even a scintilla of responsibility for his election

Rectification: God loves all men (Mt 5:45), but there are some people for whom He has had a special love – the objects of His affection

[C.H. Spurgeon, *Jacob and Esau*, 239.200] – “Why did God love Jacob and hate Esau? I can tell you why God loves Jacob; it is sovereign grace! There was nothing in Jacob that could make God love him; there was everything about him that might have made God hate him as much as He did Esau, and a great deal more. But it was because God is infinitely gracious that He loved Jacob and because He is sovereign in His dispensation of His grace that He chose Jacob as an object of that love.”

Biblical Presentation: God elected an innumerable amount of people that will respond to the Gospel²

Eph 1:4-5 = “*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will*”

(c) The Just God

Romans 9:14 = “*What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!*”

Premise of objection: “It is not fair!” – What God gives to one, He must give to all in order for Him to be just

Answer: All sinners deserve damnation... Ezek 18:4; Rom 6:23

Note: Elect and non-elect are no different in their sinful standing

Point: If God does not intervene for one man, that man only gets the damnation he deserves. If another is saved by God's intervention, it highlights the undeserved mercy of God...

➤ Romans 9:20-23 = “*from the same lump*”... one demonstrates his wrath, the other his mercy

[Richard Phillips, *What's So Great About the Doctrine of Grace*, 74.0/183] – “Paul's answer to the question of fairness in unconditional election is important. Essentially, he replies, “Did you say *justice*?” If justice is what we want—if we want to be treated fairly by God—then the result will be the damnation of us all. No one who wants things to be fair with God can ever hope for heaven, for the simple reason that fairness demands that all sinners be damned. No, says Paul, when it comes to predestination—or salvation in general—the right category is mercy. And mercy, by definition, is sovereignly granted. It cannot be earned. It never is a matter of fairness, but always is a gift of grace (Rom 9:15, 16)”

[John Gill, *Gill's Expositor*, Vol. 7, 769] – “God is represented as the potter, and men as clay in His hands...

[and God] appoints[s] out of it persons to different uses and purposes, for His own glory, as He sees fit...”

[Walter Chantry, *Amazing Grace*, 152] – “God owes salvation to know one. God would be entirely just if he had condemned Adam, condemned the race immediately after the Fall. God would be just to send every single person to hell because what our sin deserves is the eternal wrath and curse of God. And if He would have mercy on some, He has the right to do that”

(d) The opposite of Election: Reprobation... *BCF III.3b*

Note: The election involves the non-election of the rest

Point: It is part of God's eternal decree to by-pass the rest of sinners not elected which leads to their punishment

➤ Appointment of persons to destruction... 1 Sam 2:25; 2 Chr 25:16; Pro 16:4; Jn 17:12; 1 Thes 5:9; 1 Pt 2:8; Jd 4

➤ God's withholding of grace and means... Dt 29:4; Isa 6:9, 10; Rom 11:7, 8; Mt 13:11

➤ God's hardening of men in their sin... Dt 2:30; Ex 7:3; 8:15, 32; 1 Ki 22:20-23; Ps 105:25; Mt 13:14f, Rom 1:24-28

➤ God's sovereign discrimination... Rom 9:11, 15-18, 21ff

Proposition 2: It has salvation for its purpose

Issue: Did God elect men as sinners, or as creatures to be loved and to be saved for his own glory? Was the decree of election prior to, or after, the permission for the Fall?

Division among Calvinists: Supralapsarian vs. Infralapsarian (see the chart below)

Term: *lapse* = mankind's fall into sin; *supra* = before; *infra* = after

(a) Supralapsarian – God's election before the permission for the Fall – election is irrespective of man's identity as a sinner

Excess: Supralapsarianism focuses on God ordaining the fall, creating certain people for the sole purpose of being condemned, and then providing salvation for only those whom He had elected

(b) Infralapsarian – God's election is after the permission for the Fall; thus, election of sinners

Note: The Infralapsarian view is that of historic Calvinism

Position: The eternal connection of God's purpose/choice is ‘*in Christ*’ – the elect are conceived by God in their union with Christ as Redeemer in the Covenant of Grace... cf. Rom 11:5-7; 1 Pt 1:2

Point: The elect were chosen (because of God's mercy) in their identity as sinners... 2 Thess 2:13 = *chosen for salvation*

Proposition 3: It is infallibly certain in its result... *BCF III.4*

Note: The purpose of eternity cannot be frustrated by any events in time.

Biblical Presentation:

John 6:37-40 = *all that the Father has given me shall come to me* – bound up in the Father-Son agreement³

John 10:16 = in reference to all the sheep = *them*, *I must bring* – bound up in the Son's redemption

Acts 13:48 = *as many as were ordained to eternal life believed* – eternal purpose co-extensive with actual result

Implications:

1. Unconditional election promotes humility and not pride... Eph 2:8, 9

2. It deepens our understanding of grace that gives glory to God... Rom 9:15; 11:36

3. The good works of the Christian are fruits of election, never the cause.

➤ It makes us new creatures in Christ... Ezekiel 36:26

➤ The visible assurance of election is conversion and evidence of holiness... Eph 1:4

➤ Election enriches our worship to God

B.B. Warfield's handout on *The Order of Decrees* from the book, *The Plan of Salvation*

The Order of Decrees										
Supernaturalistic									Naturalistic	
Evangelical						Sacredotal				
Particularistic			Universalistic							
Consistently Partioularistic		Inconsistently Partioularistic								
Supralapsarian	Infralapsarian	Amyrldian	Lutheran	Wesleyan	Pure Universalistic	Anglican	Roman	Orthodox Greek	Remonstrant	Pelagian
Election of some to eternal life with God.	Permission of Fall - guilt, corruption and total inability.	Permission of Fall - corruption, guilt and moral inability.	Permission of Fall - guilt, corruption and total inability.	Permission of Fall - guilt, corruption and total inability.	Permission of Fall.	Permission of sin.	Permission of Fall - loss of supernatural righteousness	Permission of Fall - loss of original righteousness, involving loss of knowledge of God and proneness to evil.	Permission of Fall - (physical) deterioration (followed by moral).	Gift of free will by virtue of which each may do all that is required of him.
Permission of Fall - guilt, corruption and total inability.	Election of some to life in Christ.	Gift of Christ to render salvation possible to all.	Gift of Christ to render satisfaction for sins of the world.	Gift of Christ to render satisfaction for sins of the world.	Predestination of all to life.	Gift of Christ to make satisfaction for the sins of all men.	Gift of Christ to offer satisfaction for all human sins.	Gift of Christ to reconcile sinful mankind with God.	Gift of Christ to render gift of sufficient grace possible.	Gift of the law and gospel to illuminate the way and persuade to walk in it.
Gift of Christ to redeem the elect and ground offer to all.	Gift of Christ to redeem the elect and ground offer to all.	Election of some for gift of moral ability.	Gift of means of grace to communicate saving grace.	Remission of original sin to all and gift to all of sufficient grace.	Gift of Christ to expiate the sin of all.	Establishment of Church as living agent for communicating God's sufficient grace.	Institution of the Chruch and the sacraments, to apply satisfaction of Christ.	Establishment of the Chruch "for the continual supply of the benefits of the cross."	Gift of sufficient (suasive) grace to all.	Gift of Christ to (expiate past sind and to) set good example.
Gift of the Holy Spirit to save the redeemed.	Gift of the Holy Spirit to save the redeemed.	Gift of the Holy Spirit to work moral ability in the elect.	Predestination to life of those who do not resist the means of grace.	Predestination to life of those who improve sufficient grace.	Gift of the Spirit to apply the expiation of Christ to all.	Communication of this grace through the sacraments as indispensable channels.	Application of satisfaction of Christ through sacraments, under operation of second causes.	Instruction, justification end edification through the ordinances of the church.	Salvation of all who freely co-operate with this grace.	Acceptance of all who walk in right way.
Sanctification of all the redeemed and regenerated.	Sanctification of all the redeemed and regenerated.	Sanctification by the Spirit.	Sanctification through the means of grace.	Sanctification of all who co-operate with sufficient grace.	Salvation of all.	Salvation through the sacrament of baptism imparting life and of the Eucharist nourishing it.	Building up in holy life of all to whom the sacraments are continued.	Building up in grace through the seven sacraments.	Sanctification by co-operation with grace.	Continuance in right-doing by voluntary effort.

References:

1. Jerry Walls (Arminian), "An Interview with Jerry Walls," *Modern Reformation*, Vol. 15, No. 5, Sept/Oct. 2006, 28
2. Biblical Presentations:
 Old Testament: Deut 7:6, 7; 10:14, 15; Ps 33:12; 65:4; 106:5; Hag 2:23; Mal 1:2, 3
 New Testament: Mt 20:16; 24: 14, 22, 24, 31; Lk 18:7; Jn 15:16; Mk 13:20,27; Act 13:48; Rom 8:28-30, 33; 11:7; 1 Cor. 1:26-30; Eph 1:12; 2:10; Col 3:12; 1 Thes 5:9; 1 Tim 5:21; 2 Tim 2:10; Tim 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2; 5:13; 2 Jn 1:1, 13; Jude 1; Rev 17:14
3. CoR = Covenant of Redemption