

Salvation—Election (1st)

(The study for today is beginning to show that salvation is founded on the sovereign election of God and that it was not based on any action of man as foreseen by God in eternity. If man must do anything for his sins to be remitted then salvation is by works and not by grace.)

In our definition of salvation, we began by saying, “Salvation is that all-inclusive word summing up all spiritual blessings bestowed by God on His elect people in Christ through the Holy Spirit.” We then closed the definition with the following: “This is common salvation; that is, it is common or it belongs to all the elect of God. Jude 3.”

That election is taught in the Bible is clearly found by anyone who honestly reads it. In fact, there are many kinds of elections taught in the Scriptures. It was God Who elected Noah to build the ark to deliver him and his family from drowning in the flood. It was God Who elected Abraham and called him out of Ur of the Chaldees and created the nation of Israel from his seed. It was God Who chose Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. Many other examples could be given to support that God elected some for different purposes and omitted others. Likewise, the Scriptures teach that before God created the universe He elected some people to be saved from their sins and from the wrath to come and that He bypassed others. Immediately, sinful man cries that such an action is not right and that God would never do such a thing. However, we never hear man crying that it was unjust for God to elect some of the angelic host of heaven from falling while allowing others to sin and ultimately be cast into the lake of fire. I Timothy 5:21 tells us that God has elect angels when Paul wrote to Timothy the following: “I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” That there are fallen angels see such passages as II Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7, 9. Obviously, these few verses are merely a small sample of the many passages that speak not only of Satan but of demons or devils which are fallen angels. However, our subject matter is concerning the salvation of God and we will see from the Scriptures that God elected some of the human race to salvation.

While some totally deny this truth and reject it outright, there are others who do accept the truth that God does elect some unto salvation but they affirm that God simply chooses them because of foreseen faith in the sinner. In other words, they teach that God in eternity looked into the future and saw those who would believe and elected them because of their faith. One such passage they used to support their view is I Peter 1:2, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” Regarding this passage, all me to quote from Adam Clarke’s commentary on this verse where he quotes the Arminian John Wesley as follows:

Strictly speaking, there is no foreknowledge, no more than afterknowledge, with God; but all things are known to him as present, from eternity to eternity. Election, in the scriptural sense, is God’s doing any thing that our merit or power has no part in. The true predestination or foreappointment of God is,

1. He that believeth shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin.
2. He that endureth to the end shall be saved eternally.
3. They who receive the precious gift of faith thereby become the sons of God; and, being sons, they shall receive the Spirit of holiness, to walk as Christ also walked.

Throughout every part of this appointment of God, promise and duty go hand in hand. All is free gift; and yet, such is the gift, that it depends in the final issue on our future obedience

to the heavenly call. But other predestination than this, either to life or death eternal, the Scripture knows not of: moreover,

1. It is cruel respect of persons; an unjust regard of one, and an unjust disregard of another: it is mere creature partiality, and not infinite justice.

2. It is not plain Scripture doctrine, (if true), but rather inconsistent with the express written word that speaks of God's universal offers of grace; his invitations, promises, threatenings, being all general.

3. We are bid to choose life, and reprehended for not doing it.

4. It is inconsistent with a state of probation in those that must be saved, or must be lost.

5. It is of fatal consequence; all men being ready, on very slight grounds, to fancy themselves of the elect number.

But the doctrine of predestination is entirely changed from what it formerly was: now it implies neither faith, peace, nor purity; it is something that will do without them all. Faith is no longer, according to the modern predestination scheme, a Divine evidence of things not seen wrought in the soul by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost; not an evidence at all, but a mere notion: neither is faith made any longer a means of holiness, but something that will do without it. Christ is no more a Savior from sin, but a defense and a countenancer of it. He is no more a fountain of spiritual life in the souls of believers, but leaves his elect inwardly dry, and outwardly unfruitful; and is made little more than a refuge from the image of the heavenly, even from righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. *Sword Searcher Bible Software.*

Obviously, time forbids us to enlarge on each and every issue mentioned by Wesley wherein we differ. However, allow me to address somewhat some of the things mentioned. Regardless of the nature of God and His being, God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit had Peter to write "elect according to the foreknowledge of God." (While in the Greek text the word for elect is in verse one designating "elect strangers," that the translators put it later does not do violence to the interpretation.) God used the word "foreknowledge" to express His action toward those He saves. But Wesley declared that "there is no foreknowledge ... with God." He further equated foreknowledge to predestination. Listen again to what he said, "The true predestination or foreappointment of God is, 1. He that believeth shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin. 2. He that endureth to the end shall be saved eternally. 3. They who receive the precious gift of faith thereby become the sons of God; and, being sons, they shall receive the Spirit of holiness, to walk as Christ also walked." Then he gives the follow summation: "Throughout every part of this appointment of God, promise and duty go hand in hand. All is free gift; and yet, such is the gift, that it depends in the final issue on our future obedience to the heavenly call." He says that all is a gift, but he qualifies it by saying that "it depends in the final issue on our future obedience to the heavenly call." In other words, salvation depends on our obedience and not on the sovereign grace of God.

For Wesley, "true predestination" is foreknowledge. However, this is not what the Scriptures teach. Romans 8:29-30 clearly distinguishes between the two. It says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." According to this verse, foreknowledge precedes predestination, and it is not *what* was foreknown but *whom* was foreknown. In other words, it was people that were foreknown and not what anyone did that was foreknown. It is obviously true that God did foreknow everything that would happen from the beginning because Isaiah 46:9-10 says, "Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." However, regarding salvation God predestinated and elected those "whom" He foreknew or loved before the world began. Jesus in His prayer as recorded in John chapter seventeen

clearly stated that God loved His people before the world. In fact, those whom the Father loved were love equally as long as the Father loved Jesus Christ. Jesus said that the Father “loved them, as thou hast loved me” and that the Father loved Christ “before the foundation of the world,” cf. John 17:23-25. No. The election of God unto salvation was not based on any condition or action that anyone would do; it was clearly a sovereign act of God bestowed on those He loved before the foundation of the world.

The Lord willing we will look at more passages that plainly show that election was a sovereign act of God, but our time is up for today. Farewell.