

## ELECTION

### God Chooses His Own

*For [God] says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.*  
Romans 9:15-16

- The verb *elect* means "to **select** , or choose out."
- From the Reformed perspective, *election* refers to "the unconditional and loving choice of **GOD** by which He determines who *must believe*. It is the cause of man's faith.
- The doctrine of election, like every truth about God, involves mystery and sometimes stirs controversy. But in Scripture it is a pastoral doctrine, brought in to help Christians see how great is the grace that saves them, and to move them to humility, confidence, joy, praise faithfulness, and holiness in response.
- **Reprobation** is the name given to God's eternal decision regarding those sinners whom He has not chosen for life.

Jl Packer, *Concise Theology*

## ELECTION

### A Biblical Overview

1. The whole human race is lost in sin, and each individual is totally corrupted in intellect, will, and emotions by sin (*total depravity*). Man is unable to respond to God's offer of salvation because he is spiritually dead.

**Jeremiah 17:9** (ESV) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

**John 6:44** "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."

**Romans 3:1-23** (esp. 9-18) (NKJV) "What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after

God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.'

'Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lip; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.'"

**Ephesians 2:1-3** "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

**So, before the fall of Adam, man was free to sin or not sin.** If he did not sin he would live. If he sinned he would die (spiritually and physically). **After the fall man's will is in bondage to sin to the degree that man has no desire to seek and/or please God.** Man has "free will" in the sense that his choices are not to seek God. NOTE: total depravity is not identical to utter depravity.

**Key Point:** Once we accept total depravity as biblical truth then the doctrine of election is more easily accepted [though we are not dealing ultimately with philosophy and/or logic].

2. God is sovereign in all He does, and He does all according to His good will and pleasure. He does not answer to man, because He is the Creator and can choose whomever He wills to save.

**Romans 9:20-21** (ESV) <sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

**Ephesians 1:5** "... he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,"

**Philippians 2:13** "... for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

**Revelation 4:11...** Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

3. God has chosen certain people for His special grace, irrespective of their physical descent, character, or good deeds. Specifically in salvation He has chosen to save certain people through faith in Jesus Christ.

**John 6:37** “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”

**John 6:44** “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

**John 6:65** “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

**John 15:16** “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”

**Acts 13:48** “And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and *as many as were appointed to eternal life* believed.”

#### **Romans 9:6-24**

<sup>6</sup> But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, <sup>7</sup> and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” <sup>8</sup> This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. <sup>9</sup> For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>10</sup> And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, <sup>11</sup> though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order *that God’s purpose of election might continue*, not because of works but because of him who calls— <sup>12</sup> she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup> As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

<sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” <sup>16</sup> So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” <sup>18</sup> So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

<sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” <sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup> in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of

mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— <sup>24</sup> even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

**Ephesians 1:4-5** “...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will...”

4. Election is an expression of God’s sovereign will and is the **cause** of faith.

**Ephesians 2:8-10** “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; *it* is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- The antecedent of “it” is “faith.”

5. Election is certainly effective for the salvation of all the elect. Those whom God chooses will certainly come to faith in Christ.

**Romans 8:29-30** “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

- Foreknowledge does not mean those whom God knew would exercise faith.

6. Election is from all eternity and is immutable.

**Ephesians 1: 4, 9-11** “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him...making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...”

