

Election: Does God Choose? The Donelson Men in Christ

Mankind has sinned. *All* have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). As a result, we are a "sin" sick in our creation on a planet in rebellion. Sin has brought four terrible results or effects in our lives:

- A. Death: Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3
- B. Dread: Genesis 3:10; Psalm 139:7-12; Revelation 6:12-17
- C. Distance: Genesis 3:23-24; Ephesians 2:12
- D. Disinclination/depravity/ inclined to evil: Genesis 6:5; Ephesians 4:18-19

Without God's intervention for us, we would all be lost. God elected first to create us (Genesis 1:25). Then God willed to purify us. All the issues of faith begin in the **ELECTION** or choosing of God. Here is how Jesus spoke:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; ³⁰ then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; ³¹ and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Matthew 24:29-31

Here is Paul:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. He chose/elected us in Christ before the foundation of creation to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the his good, and pleasing will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the One of his love. In him we have deliverance through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the great wealth of his grace that he lavished on us. In harmony with his pleasing goodness, that he set forth in Christ, he has made us to know all wisdom and insight into the mystery of his will. This is his plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things, things in heaven and things on earth, in Christ. In him we have also obtained our inheritance, being destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your liberation, placed your faith in him, and were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit; this is the guarantee of our inheritance forward to redemption as God's own people – all of this to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:2-14

There may be no subject more divisive and none that causes greater controversy than the issue of election. Among the denominations that make up Christianity there are many who believe that God has chosen who will ultimately be saved. They are, by that, elected by God to be his people and therefore they can be called “the chosen people.” Many who do not believe in this form of predestination do in fact hold that God made a covenant with Abraham in which the descendants of Jacob/Israel became the elect people. Not all the descendants of Abraham are the elect but only those who descent from Jacob. In today’s confused world there are others who will teach that it is “the Jews” who are chosen without understanding that when they say such a thing they have now said that only one of the twelve tribes of Israel is the chosen. That of course is not found anywhere in scripture. All the Hebrews would include all members of the twelve tribes and it is improper to speak of the Jews as chosen.

The Workings of God

First let’s have a simple vocabulary lesson. The word election appears in fourteen different references of the New Testament but may be translated in your different Bibles by the words “chose” and “chosen.” It is hard to deal simply with this subject because we are all carrying different and favorite translations. The readings of verses can be translated slightly different and remain accurate by the theology of the person who does the translating. Our word election can appear as a verb “to elect or to choose” and as a noun “the elect and the chosen” or as an adjective “chosen-elected.”

In the past 200 years this subject has dominated the churches because of the division among well-meaning Bible believers in the western hemisphere. In 1948 Israel became a country again and it created a new preaching about Israel itself as being chosen and many believers saw the State of Israel as an act of God. No discussion of election is complete without a discussion of the new theology which is taught and is being taught among theologians today. Many believe it is the original Christian belief.

I have been persuaded that the Jews were chosen by God to be his instrument – elected to a mission in the world. They are to be a nation of priests who will bless the entire world. They blessed the world by giving salvation until the Gentiles come to the light of God. With Paul, this position holds that God did not elect Abraham’s descendants but that he chose them to bring forth the single seed which is Christ. Christ is the chosen and those who are chosen are chosen in him. This teaching lays an emphasis on the elected one [that is, that God has chosen one]. God has chosen all things in Christ. See Psalm 89:3, Isaiah 42:1, Luke 9:35 and Luke 23:55. Notice then in Ephesians 1:4 (above) it reads “Just as he has chosen [elected] us in Christ before the foundation of the world” The strong point of this teaching is the emphasis on Christ as the instrument of election. The chosen people are those who are “in Christ.”