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# EXPOSITOR

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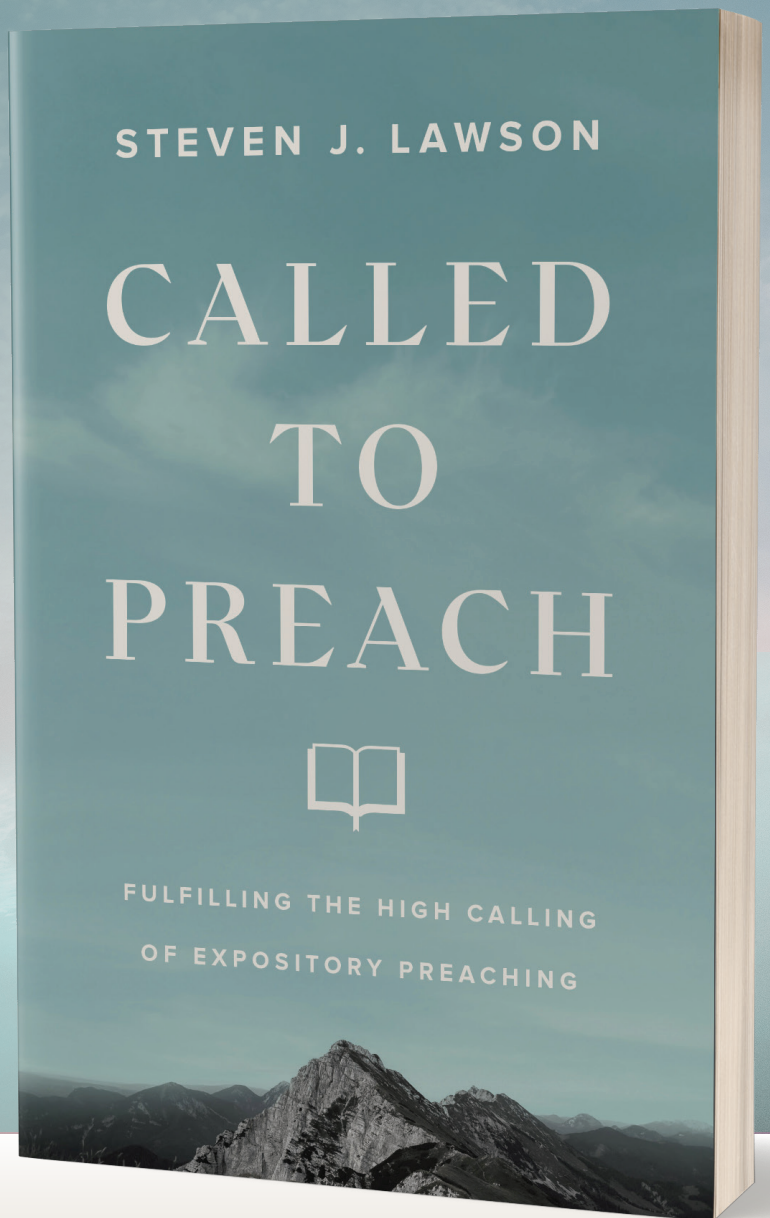
P R E A C H I N G

# *Unconditional Election*

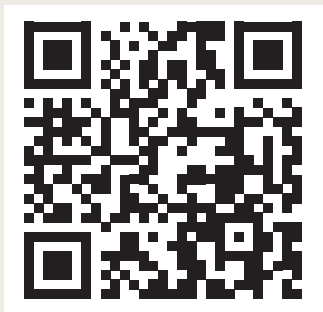


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# THE GLORY OF GOD ON DISPLAY

DR. STEVEN J. LAWSON, PRESIDENT, ONEPASSION MINISTRIES



Teaching the truth of the sovereignty of God in election can be one of the greatest challenges any pastor will face. Few teachings in the Bible provoke a greater response of opposition than this doctrine.

How do we best teach this core truth that appears throughout the pages of Scripture?

Granted, this doctrine is antithetical to the natural thinking of the average person. It certainly runs contrary to man's normal sense of fairness. It stands in juxtaposition to a democratic way of thinking, where every individual exercises their will to vote however they so choose.

We admittedly need help in knowing how to best present this truth.

Some say sovereign election should be presented only to professing Christians but withheld from unbelievers. However, Scripture is unashamed of this truth, so we also should declare it boldly. The glory of our God is displayed

in these weighty matters, so we must be faithful to present them well.

In this issue, we want to address how to best preach the doctrine of election. This is a doctrine that is absolutely necessary in every pulpit. It should be a main dish in the spiritual feast presented to your congregations.

May God give you much wisdom and grace as you proclaim this cornerstone truth. ♦

*Steven J. Lawson*



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**EXPOSITOR**  
ONEPASSION



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STEVEN J. LAWSON

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# PREACHING THE WONDER OF SOVEREIGN ELECTION



**STEVEN J. LAWSON** is founder and president of OnePassion Ministries. He is a Ligonier Ministries teaching fellow, director of the doctor of ministry program at The Master's Seminary, and host of the Institute for Expository Preaching. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Daring Mission of William Tyndale*.

One of the greatest privileges for any preacher is to proclaim the truth of sovereign election. Few doctrines are more God-exalting and worship-inspiring than this magnificent truth. Preachers soar to the heights of heaven when we make known this glorious reality. Expounding this towering doctrine enlarges our minds and exhilarates our souls. To exposit this transcendent truth brings us low in humility, then lifts us up, as if into the very throne room of heaven. It is an indescribable joy to teach sovereign election from the pulpit.

But at the same time, preaching this doctrine can also be a great challenge. Few truths can stir up more controversy than this teaching. In large part, the response depends on how well your church has been taught theologically and where your congregation is spiritually. Whenever this truth is proclaimed, it will be humbly received by teachable lives. But this potent doctrine may also be provocative to and even refused by others.

The same sun that melts the snow also hardens the clay. When the doctrine of sovereign election is taught, it will soften some hearts but harden others. This explosive subject can either unite a church or divide it. Much depends upon how you present this robust topic. You must have the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job to effectively present this truth. This prolific teaching requires your greatest pastoral sensitivity.

## THE MEANING OF ELECTION

What is the sovereign election of God in salvation? It is the truth that in eternity past, God chose a vast multitude of specific individuals whom He would save from their sin and eternal punishment. Before time began, God selected from fallen, perishing humanity those whom He would rescue from His wrath. This election was not based upon the merit of the one chosen, but solely on the unmerited grace of God in Christ. For reasons known only to God, He chose whom He would save and predestined their salvation, making it irrevocable and certain.

In his *Systematic Theology*, theologian Louis Berkhof defines election as “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 men to be the recipients of special grace and of eternal salvation.” Berkhof describes it as “an expression of the sovereign will of God” that is “immutable, and therefore renders the salvation of the elect certain.” This divine choice, Berkhof writes, is “eternal,” “unconditional,” “irresistible,” and “not chargeable with injustice.” This is the summary essence of this doctrine.

This truth of unconditional election by God the Father

is the second doctrine of grace. As we discussed in the last issue of *Expositor*, the first doctrine is total depravity, the teaching that the mind, heart, and will of every person are entirely corrupted by sin and rendered inoperative toward God. Because of man’s fallen condition, the truth of sovereign election is absolutely necessary if sinners are to be saved. Since an unconverted person is spiritually dead in sin and cannot choose to believe in Jesus Christ, God must take the initiative to choose to save individual sinners. The teaching of total depravity makes divine election absolutely mandatory. Without it, no one would be converted to Christ.

The doctrines of sovereign grace teach how each person of the Godhead acts together in perfect unity as one Savior. God the Father is a Savior in choosing His elect and giving these chosen ones to the Son to be His love gift. God the Son is a Savior in redeeming these elect ones. God the Holy Spirit is a Savior in convicting, drawing, and regenerating these same chosen ones. Each person of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—has His own unique role and distinct responsibility in rescuing sinners from their just punishment in eternal hell. From eternity past to eternity future, it is God alone who saves sinners.

In this article, we want to explore how to preach the doctrine of sovereign election. The following headings will help to guide us in effectively proclaiming this truth.

## EXPOSIT THE SCRIPTURE

The sole basis for preaching the sovereign election of God is the teaching of Scripture alone. We must always make our appeal based upon the written Word of God. Whatever God says in the Bible is the first and final authority. “Thus says the Lord” is vastly more important than what any theologian or philosopher teaches.

We do not preach sovereign election because early church fathers like Augustine did. Neither do we proclaim this teaching because Reformers like Martin Luther or John Calvin expounded it. Nor do we herald it because noted Puritans such as John Owen or William Ames confessed it. Instead, we preach what we preach because we find it in the divinely inspired Word of God.

From cover to cover, the entire Bible speaks in perfect agreement on this weighty subject. Beginning with Genesis and extending through Revelation, the Scripture unequivocally teaches God’s eternal choice of individual sinners unto eternal life (John 15:16; Acts 13:48; Rom 9:6–18; 11:5–7; Eph 1:4–5; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4). This towering truth is not relegated to a few obscure pages in the Bible. Instead, this doctrine is prominently featured in many highly visible places throughout the Scripture. From Moses




and the prophets to Jesus and the apostles, the teaching of unconditional election holds a strategic place in the Word of God.

In fact, it would be impossible to preach through entire books in the Bible and not address this core doctrine. In many books of the Scripture, this profound truth is found in the opening verses of the first chapter (Jer 1:5; Mal. 1:2–3; John 1:13; Acts 1:2; 1 Cor 1:27–28; Eph 1:4; 1 Thess 1:4; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1). If you preach sequentially verse-by-verse through entire books in the Bible, you will inevitably teach sovereign election. This truth is simply

that prominent in the Scripture. Likewise, major sections of chapters in the Bible feature this teaching (John 6:37–44, 65; 17:2–10, 24; Rom 8:28–39; 9:6–18; Eph 1:3–6).

When you preach consecutively through books in the Bible, no one can accuse you of going out of your way to teach this doctrinal truth. By following this sequential method in your pulpit ministry, you will directly address the truth of divine election from the Scripture. This systematic approach guarantees that you cover this subject in your verse-by-verse exposition as it appears in the passage. Whoever has trouble with you preaching this truth



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actually has trouble with the clear testimony of the Bible, which you are accountable to uphold.

### EXEGETE THE TEXT

As you teach sovereign election from the Bible, you must carefully exegete each individual passage under consideration. More than merely quoting Scripture, you must show the congregation what this verse teaches. This necessitates that you point out the specific details of your verse. You will need to conduct in-depth studies of the key words and phrases. For example, you will want to explain what “chose” (*eklegō*), “foreknowledge” (*proginōskō*), and “predestination” (*prohorizō*) mean in the original language. You will also need to analyze the grammatical structure of your passage, noting what part each word plays in the sentence.

Further, you will need to parse the verbs and note each tense, mood, and voice. When Paul writes that God “chose us in [Christ]” (Eph 1:4), the verb (*eklegō*) is in the middle voice. This indicates that God chose us by Himself and for


Himself. God is the one who was active in election, not us. God acted toward us, not we toward Him. When Paul states that God “foreknew” (Rom 8:29) His predestined ones, he writes in the aorist tense. This indicates that He chose to love them all at once. In other words, He did not choose some of greater importance first and others of lesser importance later. Rather, He chose all His elect at one time.

Proper exegesis also requires that you follow the laws of interpretation. You must seek the plain meaning of the passage unless the context dictates otherwise. Detect differences in literary genres and interpret the passage accordingly. For example, the discourse on the Good Shepherd in John 10 is an allegory. Therefore, attention should be directed to the significance of the sheep given to Jesus. John 10 implies they were chosen by the Father and entrusted to Jesus long before they ever came to Him.

The analogy of Scripture, or the *analogia Scriptura*, must also be used, which states that Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture. What is unclear in one passage is made



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# As we preach the doctrine of election, we must show how it connects with other truths in the larger body of theology. No one doctrinal truth stands independent of the other teachings of Scripture.


clear in another set of verses. Let us remember that the Bible never contradicts itself and that it speaks consistently on every subject it addresses. For example, when Peter writes that believers “are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Pet 1:1–2), foreknowledge is properly defined later in the chapter. The same word is used concerning Jesus Christ, who “was foreknown before the foundation of the world” (v. 20).

No right-thinking person would ever say that God the Father looked down the tunnel of time and, as a passive spectator, foresaw that Jesus was unexpectedly taken captive by the angry mob and crucified. Instead, foreknowledge means that Jesus was deeply loved by the Father and was the One chosen to be the Redeemer of His people. In like manner, the Father did not look into the future to

see who would choose His Son and, in turn, choose them back. Foreknowledge means that the elect were selected by the Father, and He intentionally set His redeeming love upon them.

## **EXPLAIN THE CONNECTIONS**

As we preach the doctrine of election, we must show how it connects with other truths in the larger body of theology. No one doctrinal truth stands independent of the other teachings of Scripture. This includes the truth of sovereign election. Like a beautiful tapestry in which each thread is tightly interwoven with the other threads, unconditional election must be connected to other major doctrines. As you stand in the pulpit, you must explain the close relationship that sovereign election has with total depravity.



**In the pulpit, you should take every opportunity to magnify the perfections of God's attributes in sovereign election. By this truth, you should teach that His will is perfectly holy, without spot or blemish. All His choices in His eternal election are never erring and always perfect. His will is eternal, made before time began. His sovereign will is merciful, showing pity toward those suffering in their sin. His divine will is immutable, never changing within time toward His elect.**

The moral inability of man, including the bondage of the will, demands that God must exercise His will in choosing individual sinners. This is because no unbeliever who is spiritually dead can choose God. If God did not first choose specific individuals, no one would ever choose Christ.

In addition, you should show how sovereign election is inseparably connected to the extent of Christ's atonement. Jesus came into this world to lay down His life for the sheep, the elect of God (John 10:11, 14). He then said, "I and the Father are one" (v. 30). This means that the Father and the Son are of one divine will to save. That is, they are of one saving purpose, perfectly united in their efforts to rescue the same sinners. Those whom the Father chose to save are those whom the Son laid down His life to redeem. The doctrine of sovereign election determines the intent and extent of the saving death of Christ upon the cross (Rom 8:32–34).

You should also show how sovereign election is inseparably connected to the doctrine of regeneration. Those chosen by the Father before time began are those whom the Spirit causes to be born again. The Bible teaches, "In the exercise of His will, He brought us forth by the word of truth" (Jam 1:18). The Father's sovereign will to save defines the extent of the Spirit's activity to save. Precise unity exists between the Father's sovereign election and the Spirit's sovereign regeneration (1 Pet 1:1–3). The new birth is the result of the sovereign choice of God to save the elect (Acts 2:39; 13:48).

In the pulpit, you should also show the unbreakable connection between sovereign election and the perseverance of the saints. It is the former that guarantees the latter. Sovereign election always leads to the final glorification of these same ones. All those chosen by the Father in eternity past will be ushered into His presence in eternity future (John 6:37, 39; Rom 8:29–30).

We must clarify the nuances of this truth. We must speak with negative denials and positive assertions. We state what this teaching involves and what it does not mean. With any truth, we must be deliberate in being theological expositors—and sovereign election is no exception.

### **ELEVATE THE WORSHIP**

When you preach sovereign election, you are giving great glory to God (Eph. 1:4–6, 12, 14). The Apostle Paul makes this clear when he writes,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would

be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved (Eph 1:3–6).

Everything in salvation originates from the sovereign will of God. Every aspect of saving grace proceeds from His eternal purpose. The entire plan of salvation, along with who will be included in its blessings, proceeds from His eternal decree. In an altogether comprehensive statement, Paul writes, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (Rom 11:36). "From Him" means that the eternal design and intention in salvation is entirely from God. Within time, our sovereign Lord is bringing to pass every aspect of the redemption He purposes to achieve.

Other passages teach the same, that everything in salvation begins with God. This truth of sovereign election exalts the greatness of His grace. Paul writes, "There is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him" (1 Cor 8:6). He is the source of all things pertaining to salvation—including all who will be saved. Again, Paul reiterates, "All things originate from God" (1 Cor 11:12). This includes the salvation of the elect. This, too, originates with God. Elsewhere, Paul asserts there is "one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph 4:6). All saving grace is from Him, through Him, in Him, and to Him.

In the pulpit, you should take every opportunity to magnify the perfections of God's attributes in sovereign election. By this truth, you should teach that His will is perfectly holy, without spot or blemish. All His choices in His eternal election are never erring and always perfect. His will is eternal, made before time began. His sovereign will is merciful, showing pity toward those suffering in their sin. His divine will is immutable, never changing within time toward His elect. His sovereign will is omnipotent, never successfully resisted. His supreme will is loving, choosing to show grace to undeserving sinners. His eternal will is righteous, and His every choice is just and right.

When you preach sovereign election, you should stress that the will of God is greater than the will of man. Teach that the grace of God is greater than the sinfulness of man. Declare that the mind of God is irrevocable and His will is immutable. Man changes. Society changes. Values change. But God remains unaltered in His saving purposes toward His elect.

### **EXALT THE LORD**

As you preach sovereign election, you must magnify the



name of Jesus Christ. Paul explains that we were “chosen in Him” (Eph. 1:4), a reference to Jesus Christ as the sphere in which believers were chosen. God elected them not because of anything good in them. Instead, He did so because of the perfect merit of the person and work of Christ, who would act on their behalf. God elected them because Jesus is their appointed Head and Representative (Col. 1:18). The Father selected His elect on the basis of what Christ would do for them. It was because of Christ living and dying in their place that they were chosen.

Once the Father chose the elect, He gave them to Jesus as an expression of His love. Long before they believed in Christ, they were already entrusted to Him to be His precious possession. Jesus said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me” (John 6:37). This means the elect already belonged to Jesus as His chosen bride before they ever came to Him. That they were elected in Christ in eternity past guarantees they will come to Him within time.

All those chosen ones will never be eternally lost. Jesus promises to not lose any of these given ones. He says, “Of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day” (v. 39). All the elect given to Jesus in eternity past will be saved throughout eternity future. The certainty of the salvation of the elect is because they were chosen in Christ.

In the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus, He interceded, “To all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:2–3). Election is not merely to serve God, as important as that is. They are chosen for the high purpose that Jesus may give eternal life to the elect. The essence of eternal life is to know Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent to achieve this salvation.

Concerning these chosen ones, Jesus makes intercession for them alone. He did not undertake the work of salvation for the whole world. Referring exclusively to the elect, He said, “I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but for those You have given Me. For they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them” (John 17:9–10). We cannot understand sovereign election apart from Jesus Christ, the sole Savior of His people.

## **EXPECT THE OBJECTIONS**

Whenever this truth is taught, it is often met with objections. Many of these responses are sincere questions. Some of these objections will be, “If sovereign election is true, then why bother to pray?” Or “If God is going to save all the elect anyway, then why witness?” Or “If God has predestined the salvation of the elect, why be involved in missions?” Or “Why make sacrifices for the gospel?” Sometimes, people feel like

# The doctrine of sovereign election should be preached evangelistically even to unbelievers.

throwing their hands up in the air and saying, “Why do anything?” These are legitimate questions that many of your congregants will raise as they process your preaching on this subject.

In response to these questions, you should explain that not only has God foreordained the end of all things, but He has also foreordained the means to accomplish these ends. In other words, not only has God appointed the salvation of the elect, but He has appointed prayer for the lost, the spread of the gospel message, and the sending of missionaries around the world. It would be a fatalistic worldview to only believe the salvation of the elect is predetermined by God, but not believe that the appointed means are also fixed by God. Our responsibility is to pray and preach, and to leave the results with our sovereign God.

Further, every preacher should explain the necessity of obedience to the commands of Scripture. God has commanded that we pray for the salvation of unconverted people (Rom 10:1; 1 Tim 2:1–4). God requires that we go into all the world and make disciples (Matt 28:19; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). This mandates our obedience, whether we understand how it all fits together or not. The fact remains: this is what God commands every Christian to do.

## ENDURE THE OPPOSITION

When I was in seminary, one professor told us that if you preach on sovereign election and there is no pushback, you did not explain carefully enough. Yet there will always be some whose objections will go too far. They will become combative and want to argue with you. We must keep in mind this simple truth: these people are not rejecting you, but rather the clear teaching of God’s Word.

When Jesus taught the truth of sovereign election, He encountered resistance. He taught the crowd, “No one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father” (John 6:65). Inseparably connected to this statement

was what He said earlier, that there are those who have been given to Him by the Father (vv. 37, 39). These given ones are the elect of God. What was the response to this preaching by Jesus? “As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore” (v. 66). Even when Jesus taught this truth, the crowd rejected Him. We can expect no different.

In preaching sovereign election, we must not become fearful in the face of the persecution that will inevitably come. If those to whom you preach have never been taught this truth, it will surely create controversy and conflict. We must know this from the beginning and choose to persevere in the face of adversity. Preaching this truth may cost you being at peace with others who violently disagree. It may cost you your reputation. It may even cost you your ministry and livelihood.

If so, hear the words of Jesus again,

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matt 5:10–12).

Few people will believe the teaching of the doctrine of election the first time they are confronted with it. That may have been the case with you. There is a natural resistance to this truth. Consequently, we must be patient with people as they process what the Bible teaches on this subject. Remember to present this truth lovingly. The goal of our declaration of sovereign election is not to win an argument, but to demonstrate the grace we are presenting. We must be longsuffering with those who hear us preach this



doctrine. Lead with love toward those who disagree with you. Perhaps no truth in the Bible requires greater forbearance than this teaching.

### EVANGELIZE THE LOST

The doctrine of sovereign election should be preached evangelistically even to unbelievers. It is often believed that this truth should be reserved for believers only. But few recommendations could be further from the truth. The full counsel of God should be preached to all people. This includes proclaiming the sovereign choice of God to save certain individual sinners while passing over others and leaving them in their sin.

In the public ministry of Jesus Christ, He certainly did not withhold this truth from unbelievers. Our Lord is the greatest preacher who ever lived. He did not hesitate to preach to unbelievers, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out” (John 6:37). Standing behind this statement is the truth of sovereign election. Jesus understood that God the Father chose His elect and gave them to Him to be His possession. All of these elect will come to faith in Him. When they come, Jesus promises that He will never refuse them.

On another occasion, Jesus preached to the unbelieving Pharisees that His sheep will hear His voice and follow Him with saving faith (John 10:3–4). The Lord’s sheep were appointed by the Father for salvation from before the foundation of the world. Jesus had no hesitancy or holding back of this truth of sovereign election from unbelievers. Instead, it was a central drive in His evangelistic message to them. Preachers today who reason that the doctrine of election should be withheld from the unconverted should revisit the Bible to correct their thinking.

This same approach in preaching can be said of the apostle Peter. On the day of Pentecost, he stood before

thousands of unbelievers, many of whom had weeks earlier called for the crucifixion of Jesus. He declared “the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). This foreordination by God included not only the death of Christ for the elect, but the choice of God Himself to save “as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself” (v. 39). Here is implied the doctrine of sovereign election that was declared to these unbelievers.

Like Jesus and Peter, you should openly declare to unbelievers the powerful truth of sovereign election. This doctrine is used by God to humble perishing sinners and bring them to the place of throwing themselves upon the saving mercy of the Lord. This teaching is a great pride-crusher that has brought many lost souls to cry out and call upon the name of the Lord. You must preach this doctrine on Sunday morning to unconverted visitors and not keep it as only a passing mention during a midweek service.

### THIS WE MUST PREACH

During the Reformation, a saying in Latin accompanied *sola Scriptura*, “Scripture alone.” It was another Latin saying—*tota Scriptura*, or “all of Scripture.” By this affirmation, the Reformers proclaimed that all Scripture must be proclaimed. That is to say, every hard truth in the Bible must be preached from the pulpit. No difficult doctrine can be avoided. No hard saying can be neglected. But every teaching of Scripture must be brought out into the open and shouted from the housetops.

In keeping with this commitment, the full disclosure of this doctrine must be a theme in every pulpit. This truth must not be silenced. Instead, may you lift up your voice and declare sovereign election with great precision and power. Here is the fountain from which all blessings flow. May this stream of truth bring glory to God as you declare, “Thus says the Lord.” ♦





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OnePassion Ministries has partnered with Ligonier Ministries to host events to equip and encourage anyone who teaches and preaches the Word of God. Our goal is to encourage pastors, church leaders, Bible teachers, and those interested in the ministry of biblical preaching to stand strong and to equip them to correctly exposit the Word of God. Dr. Steven Lawson will gather with pastors, church leaders, Bible teachers, and anyone interested in the ministry of biblical preaching and teach multiple sessions on expository preaching.

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J. I. PACKER

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# ELECTION: GOD CHOOSES HIS OWN

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**J. I. PACKER** (1926–2020) served as the Board of Governors' Professor of Theology at Regent College. He authored numerous books, including the classic best seller *Knowing God*. Packer also served as general editor for the English Standard Version Bible and as theological editor for the *ESV Study Bible*.

“For [God] says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy” (Rom 9:15–16 *ESV*).

The verb “elect” means “to select, or choose out.” The biblical doctrine of election is that before creation, God selected out of the human race, foreseen as fallen, those whom He would redeem, bring to faith, justify, and glorify in and through Jesus Christ (Rom 8:28–39; Eph 1:3–14; 2 Thess 2:13–14; 2 Tim 1:9–10). This divine choice is an expression of free and sovereign grace, for it is unconstrained and unconditional, not merited by anything in those who are its subjects. God owes sinners no mercy of any kind, only condemnation; so it is a wonder, and a matter for endless praise, that He should choose to save any of us; and doubly so when His choice involved the giving of His own Son to suffer as sin-bearer for the elect (Rom 8:32).

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. It is the family secret of the children of God. We do not know who else He has chosen among those who do not yet believe, nor why it was His good pleasure to choose us in particular. What we do know is, first, that had we not been chosen for life, we would not be believers now (for only the elect are brought to faith), and, second, that as elect believers we may rely on God to finish in us the good work that He started (1 Cor 1:8–9; Phil 1:6; 1 Thess 5:23–24; 2 Tim 1:12; 4:18). Knowledge of one’s election thus brings comfort and joy.

Peter tells us we should be eager to “make [our] calling and election sure” (2 Pet 1:10 *KJV*)—that is, certain to us. Election is known by its fruits. Paul knew the election of

the Thessalonians from their faith, hope, and love, the inward and outward transformation of their lives that the gospel had brought about (1 Thess 1:3–6). The more that the qualities to which Peter has been exhorting his readers appear in our lives (goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love; 2 Pet 1:5–7), the surer of our own election we are entitled to be.

The elect are, from one standpoint, the Father’s gift to the Son (John 6:39; 10:29; 17:2, 24). Jesus testifies that He came into this world specifically to save them (John 6:37–40; 10:14–16, 26–29; 15:16; 17:6–26; Eph 5:25–27), and any account of His mission must emphasize this.

Reprobation is the name given to God’s eternal decision regarding those sinners whom He has not chosen for life. His decision is, in essence, a decision not to change them as the elect are destined to be changed, but to leave them to sin as in their hearts they already want to do, and finally to judge them as they deserve for what they have done. When in particular instances God gives them over to their sins (i.e., removes restraints on their doing the disobedient things they desire), this is itself the beginning of judgment. It is called “hardening” (Rom 9:18; 11:25; cf. Ps 81:12; Rom 1:24, 26, 28), and it inevitably leads to greater guilt.

Reprobation is a biblical reality (Rom 9:14–24; 1 Pet 2:8), but not one that bears directly on Christian behavior. The reprobates are faceless so far as Christians are concerned, and it is not for us to try to identify them. Rather, we should live in light of the certainty that anyone may be saved if he or she will but repent and put faith in Christ.

We should view all persons that we meet as possibly being numbered among the elect.

Excerpt from *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* by J. I. Packer

**The elect are, from one standpoint, the Father’s gift to the Son.**



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JOHN MACARTHUR

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**AN ETERNAL  
EXPRESSION  
OF LOVE:  
ELECTION  
AND  
CHRIST**



**JOHN MACARTHUR** is pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, CA, and president of The Master's College and Seminary. He has authored many books and is a regular contributor to *Expositor Magazine*.

We often skim quickly over the introductory parts of Paul's epistles, but they are usually pregnant with meaning—and in the case of his letter to Titus, profoundly so. In the seemingly simple salutation that opens chapter 1, Paul gives us some vivid insight into how the plan of redemption started.

In verses 1 and 2, Paul describes his work as “a bond-servant of God.” He identifies his gospel work in three distinct categories—justification, sanctification, and glorification. Paul's focus was never merely on making converts—God's saving work continues until we're with Him in eternity.

But notice the end of verse 2, which is the key: this whole unfolding miracle of salvation comes from God, “who cannot lie,” and, as it says at the end of verse 2, “promised [it] long ages ago.”

“Long ages ago” is a biblical expression referring to eternity past—the age before time began (cf. Acts 15:18; Rom 16:25). It is equivalent to the expression “before the foundation of the world” (cf. John 17:24; Matt 25:34; 1 Pet 1:20). Paul is saying that God decreed the plan of redemption and promised salvation before the beginning of time.

“Promised”—to whom? Not to any human being, because none of us had been created. And not to the angels, because there is no redemption for angels. Second Timothy 1:8–9 helps answer the question. There it says,

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.

To whom did God make this promise? It's an intra-Trinitarian promise; a promise from the Father to the Son.

This is sacred ground, and our best understanding of it is still feeble, so we must tread carefully. We recognize that there is an intra-Trinitarian love between Father and Son, the likes of which is incomprehensible and inscrutable to us (John 3:35; 17:26).

But this we know about love: it gives. And at some eternal moment, the Father desired to express His perfect love for the Son, and the way He determined was to give to the Son a redeemed humanity—whose purpose would be, throughout all of the eons of eternity, to praise and glorify the Son and serve Him perfectly. That was the Father's love gift.

The Father wanted to give this gift to the Son, and He predetermined to do it. Not only that, but He predetermined who would make up that redeemed humanity, and wrote their names down in a Book of Life before the world began. He set them aside for the purpose of praising and glorifying the name of Christ forever.

That means, in a sense, that you and I are somewhat incidental to the real issue here. Salvation is primarily for the honor of the Son, not the honor of the sinner. The purpose of the Father's love gift is not to save you so you can have a happy life; it is to save you so that you can spend eternity praising the Son.

### AN ETERNAL EXPRESSION OF LOVE

John's Gospel gives us remarkable insight into this very theme. In John 6:37, Jesus said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.” Every redeemed individual is a part of an elect body chosen from humanity in order to be given as a gift of love from the Father to the Son. This is not a matter of contingency. Jesus said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to me.”

Jesus further says, “No one can come to Me unless the





# The same infinite, inscrutable love that set us aside as a gift in eternity past now holds us secure in loving gratitude forever.

Father who sent Me draws him” (John 6:44). All that the Father gives are drawn; all who are drawn come; all who come will be received, and He will never cast any of them out. Why would the Son reject a love gift from the Father? Our salvation in Christ is secure not because believers are so inherently desirable—we’re not. We’re secure because we are a gift from the Father to the Son, and because of the love of the Son for the Father. Christ responds to the Father’s expression of love in perfect gratitude, opening His arms to embrace the gift. The same infinite, inscrutable love that set us aside as a gift in eternity past now holds us secure in loving gratitude forever.

There’s more here; in verse 39 we read, “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.” Apparently, this is how it worked: The Father chose all of those who would be redeemed in humanity that are to be given to the Son as an expression of love. He wrote down their names in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Then, in time, the Father draws them. When the Father draws them, the sinners come; when they come, the Son receives them. When He receives them, He keeps them and raises them on the last day to bring the plan to fruition. He must do this, according to verse 38: “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” And this is the will of the One who sent Jesus: that of all the Father has given Him, He loses none, but raises each one up on the last day.


## **ETERNAL SECURITY**

Inherent in this doctrine, then, is the security of the believer—better known as the perseverance of the saints. It is all built into the plan. Consider the incident in John 18, when the soldiers came to take Jesus into captivity in the garden

of Gethsemane. Twice Jesus said, “Whom do you seek?” (John 18:4, 7). They responded, “Jesus the Nazarene” (vv. 5, 7). Then He said to them, referring to the disciples, “Let these go their way” (v. 8). Why did He want the disciples to escape arrest? John explained that it was in order “to fulfill the word which He spoke, ‘Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one’” (v. 9).

Hypothetically, if Jesus had allowed them to be arrested, their faith wouldn’t have survived the test—so He never let it happen. That’s how He holds His own: It’s not just because He said it. It’s because He does it. He has lost none of them, and never will. He’ll bring them all the way to resurrection, because they’re love gifts from the Father. They’re precious, not inherently in who they are, but in the fact that they are expressions of the Father’s perfect love to Him for the purpose of glorifying, honoring, and serving Him throughout all eternity.

If there is a circumstance that would be more than they could bear, He’ll make sure it doesn’t happen to them. He “will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (1 Cor 10:13). If He has to, He’ll providentially intervene. Meanwhile, as He sits at God’s right hand, He “intercedes for us” (Rom 8:34). Hebrews 7:25 points to the security we have through Christ’s ongoing work on our behalf: “Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” The perseverance of the saints is guaranteed, not by some detached divine fiat; rather, the success of God’s saving work is assured by the ongoing, personal, attentive care of the Savior, the High Priest, who intercedes for His people to ensure that we are held secure in the plan of redemption.



**Looking ahead to the terror of the cross in John 17, Jesus prayed not for Himself, but for His own. He had the responsibility to hold on to them, losing none, and to raise them up at the last day. And even when He was on the verge of giving His very life for them, His concern was not about His own suffering; it was about what might happen to His people in an interval in which He would not be in a position to care for them.**

Consider the High Priestly Prayer in John 17. Jesus was anticipating the cross, realizing that He would suffer the wrath of God against the sins of the world, expressed in those provocative words, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matt 27:46). And there were elements of that experience which are infinitely appalling—a horror that cannot be fathomed by the finite human mind. But He wasn’t concerned about Himself. He could say on the cross, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit” (Luke 23:46). He had no problem in trusting God with Himself.

Looking ahead to the terror of the cross in John 17, Jesus prayed not for Himself, but for His own. He had the responsibility to hold on to them, losing none, and to raise them up at the last day. And even when He was on the verge of giving His very life for them, His concern was not about His own suffering; it was about what might happen to His people in an interval in which He would not be in a position to care for them.

So, he prayed for them. “Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours” (John 17:7–9). He was saying: “They are Yours, You gave them to Me, and I’m not going to lose them—but I’m going to go through something here, and I don’t know what’s going to happen to them when I’m not there to hold them, even if just for a moment.”

He continued: “I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name” (v. 11). That’s the main request of the whole chapter—“keep them in Your name.” It’s an incredible request: “Father, I can’t hold them for this time when your wrath will be poured out on Me; would You just take over for Me and keep them? I have been faithful to hold them—but there’s going to be a moment when I can’t hold them. Would You do it, then?” And continuing in the next verse: “While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled” (v. 12). He said, “I’ve been keeping them just as I said I would. Now I just need you to keep them for the time when I’m suffering on their behalf.”

Why did the Father give them to the Son? Toward the end of His prayer, Jesus reaffirmed why: “for You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (v. 24). This is the key—the Father’s perfect love for the Son.

From heaven’s perspective, the ultimate end of election and the ultimate purpose behind God’s grace poured out on us is the eternal glorification of the Son.

But to understand God’s individual purpose in electing His people for salvation, we need to consider Romans 8:29: “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”

### CONFORMING TO CHRISTLIKENESS

God’s elective purpose is not merely about the beginning of our salvation—He predestined us to the absolute perfection we will (by His grace) enjoy at the end of the process. Paul didn’t say, “He predestined them to be justified,” but “He also predestined [them] to become conformed to the image of His Son.”

When will that happen? It’s happening now, if you are a believer, even if the progress seems so slow as to be imperceptible. And it will be brought to instant completion “when He appears” (1 John 3:2). That is a reference to the second coming, when the bodies of the saints are resurrected and glorified. Thus redemption will be complete. The verse goes on to say, “We will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” That’s what Romans 8:19 refers to as “the revealing of the sons of God.” And Christ then becomes the chief One among many who are made like Him.

As much as glorified humanity can be like incarnate deity, we’ll be like Christ, and He will not be ashamed to call us brothers. Paul said, “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:14). What’s the prize of the upward call? Christlikeness. If someone is saved in order to be like Christ in glory, then his goal here is as much as possible—by the power of the Spirit—to be like Him now. That’s the goal all believers must press toward. We will be made like Christ, conformed to the image of the Son, and He will be the chief One among us all. This is the elective purpose of God. And nobody’s going to fall through the cracks. His perfect plan will come to pass, without fail.

There’s a remarkable conclusion to this in 1 Corinthians 15:24–28. A time is coming when the last enemy—death—will be abolished; when Christ, the King of the universe, will take His rightful throne and reign supreme because all enemies will be in subjection under His feet. All redeemed humanity will be gathered into glory and made like Jesus Christ. When all of that is done—“When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all” (v. 28).

That verse does not mean Christ takes a place of subordination or inferiority to the Father, but just the opposite. What that text suggests is that when the love gift of redeemed humanity has been given to Jesus Christ, He will take them and give it, along with Himself, back to the Father as a reciprocal expression of the same infinite love. Then (without divesting Himself of humanity or His role as our great High Priest), He takes His former place in the Godhead, to reign in His former, full, and glorious place at the Father's right hand—"so that God may be all in all."

Thus, the doctrine of election cannot be taken as if it were an insignificant idea, or isolated as fodder for debate. It encompasses the whole of redemptive history.

### CHRIST'S ROLE IN THE GRACE OF GOD

There's one remaining component to address: the role that Jesus played. There had to come a point where the Father said to the Son, "In order to make this happen, You must go into the world and be the offering for their sins." When Jesus said in John 6:38 that He came into the world to do the Father's will, He meant that He had come to die. This is how precious the church is: it's a gift from the Father to the Son, but the Father had to sacrifice His Son to obtain it.

It is also precious because of what it cost the Son to receive this gift. In 2 Corinthians 8:9 we read, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." How rich is God? Boundlessly, infinitely rich. Jesus was rich spiritually with the riches of God, and yet He did something in order that you might become spiritually rich with the riches of God: He became poor.

Many theologians and commentators agree that, in this verse, Paul was giving a description of Jesus' earthly financial condition—His earthly poverty and economic deprivation. But I would suggest that the Son's earthly economic status is insignificant in terms of His redemptive work. The poverty spoken of here is not earthly economics; it is a divestiture of the prerogatives of His deity.

That poverty is defined in Philippians 2:6–8:

Although [Christ Jesus] existed in the form of God, [He] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

How poor did he become? Second Corinthians 5:21 tells

us: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."


Those fifteen Greek words may be the most profound in the New Testament, and the greatest summary of the doctrine of justification. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin." What does that mean? Some of the "word of faith" teachers espouse this meaning: on the cross, Jesus became a sinner, and He needed to go to hell for three days to have His sins expiated through punishment, after which God released Him to the resurrection. Is that what it means that He became sin?

No—in fact, that's blasphemous. Hanging on the cross, Jesus was as sinless and perfect as ever before or since. If He had been guilty of anything, He couldn't have died for us. He was the spotless Lamb of God, without blemish; He was not a sinner.

In what sense, then, was He "made . . . sin"? In one simple sense: on the cross Jesus was guilty of nothing, but the guilt of His people was imputed to Him—charged to His account. God treated Jesus as if He personally had committed every sin of every person who would believe. God treated Him that way, though in fact He committed none of them. God exploded the full fury of His wrath for all the sins of all who will ever believe against Jesus, and exhausted His wrath on Him. He did it on our behalf, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

That's why Jesus had to live all those years in perfect obedience: He needed to fulfill all righteousness, so that His life could be imputed to us. We're not righteous; we all know that. On the cross Jesus wasn't a sinner, but God treated Him as if He was. And although you're not righteous, He treats you as if you are—because on the cross God treated Jesus as if He had lived your life, so that He could treat you as if you had lived His.

That's imputation. That's substitution—perhaps the greatest expression of God's grace to us. Jesus came and became poor to exchange His life for yours, in order to fulfill the elective plan of God, that He might do the will of God perfectly and in the end give back to God the very love gift that the Father had given to Him.

The truth of God's sovereign election is high doctrine—far beyond our ability to comprehend completely. It is, after all, dealing with intra-Trinitarian expressions of love that are ultimately unfathomable. And yet, it is a glorious and uplifting, soul-satisfying truth, if we faithfully embrace what Scripture does reveal about it. 



## A QUESTION WITH ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES

Have you ever been asked by a stranger, “Are you saved?” Many Christians use this question as an opportunity to tell someone about Jesus. But a common response to that question might catch us off guard: “Saved from what?” Until this essential question can be answered, we won’t be able to make sense of Christ’s sacrifice or explain it to others. In *Saved from What?*, Dr. R.C. Sproul reveals that the greatest danger we face is the holy wrath of God against our sin. But the glory of the gospel is that the One from whom we need to be saved is the very One who saves us. As we better understand the severity of our sin and the sufficiency of Christ’s atonement, the truth of God’s grace will deepen our worship and drive us to make His salvation known.

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R. C. SPROUL

# WHAT IS PREDESTINATION?

Usually when people think of predestination, they think about whether or not somebody was hit by an automobile on a given day because God had decided ahead of time that that should happen on that day.

But theologically, the principal issue of predestination in the Bible has to do with God selecting people for salvation beforehand. The Bible clearly does teach that somehow God chooses people for salvation before they're even born. Virtually every Christian church believes that, because this concept is so clearly taught in Scripture.

Paul refers to Jacob and Esau. Before they were even born, before they had done any good or evil, God decreed in advance that the elder would serve the younger: "Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated" (Rom 9:6–13). The point there is that God had chosen certain benefits for one of those two before they were even born.

The real debate is, therefore, on what basis does God predestine? We know that He predestines, but why does

He predestine, and what is the basis for His choices? Many Christians believe that God knows in advance what people are going to do, what choices they're going to make, and what activities they're going to be involved in. As He looks through the corridor of time and knows what choices you will make, for example, He knows that you will hear the gospel. He knows whether you will say yes or no. If He knows that you are going to say yes, then He chooses you for salvation on the basis of His prior knowledge.

I don't hold that position. I think that God does this sovereignly, not arbitrarily, not whimsically. The only basis I see for predestination in the Bible is the good pleasure of His own will. The only other reason is to honor His only begotten Son. The reason for His selection is not in me and not in you and not in some foreseen good or evil, but in His own sovereignty. ♦

Excerpt from *Now That's a Good Question* by R. C. Sproul.



**R. C. SPROUL** was founder of Ligonier Ministries, founding pastor of Saint Andrew's Chapel in Sanford, FL, first president of Reformation Bible College, and executive editor of *Tabletalk* magazine. In addition, he was author of many books, including *Chosen By God*.



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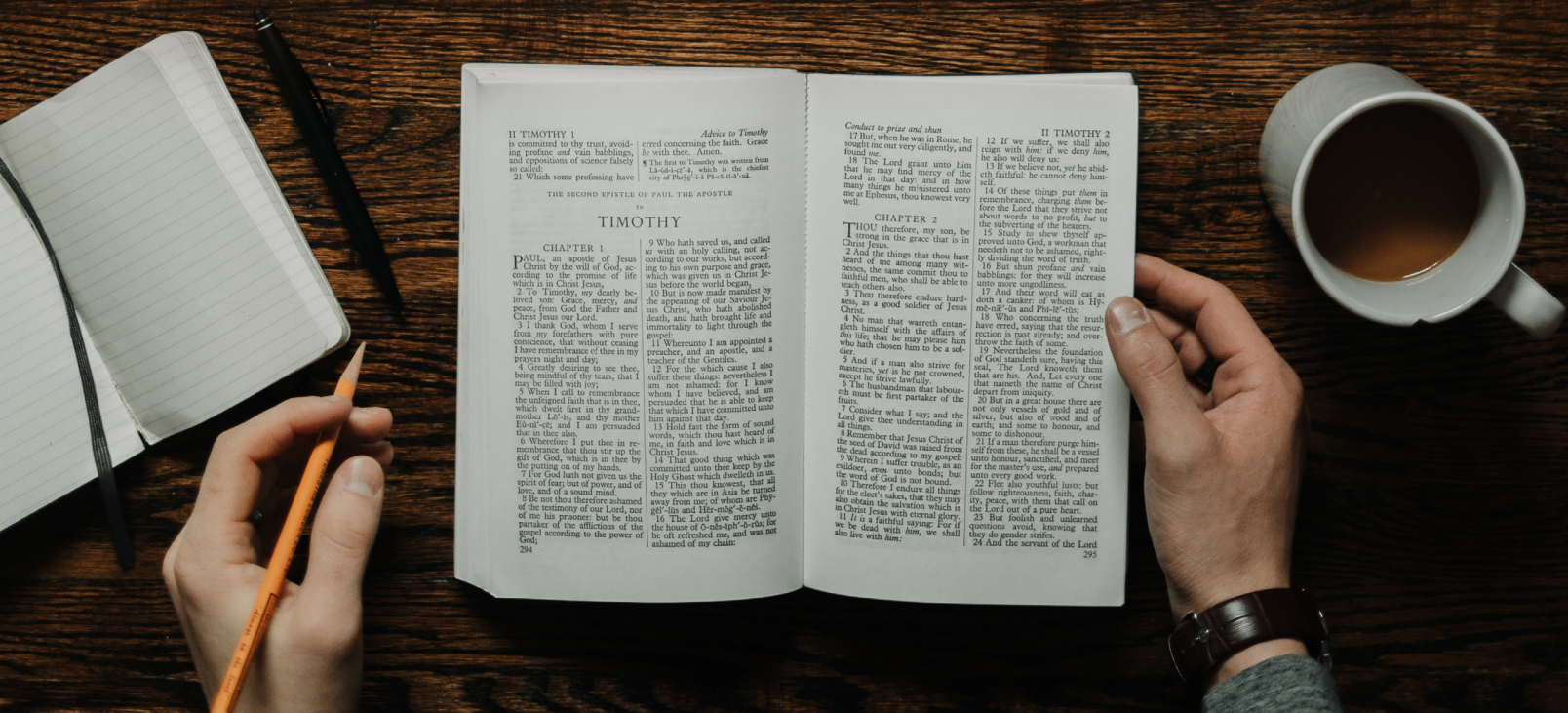
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11 TIMOTHY 1  
I am committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.  
21 Which some professing have

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

## TIMOTHY

### CHAPTER 1

1 PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.  
2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.  
3 I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.  
4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy.  
5 When I call to remembrance the undefiled faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.  
6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.  
7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.  
8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.  
9 Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.  
10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:  
11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.  
12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.  
13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.  
14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.  
15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phileas and Hieronymus.  
16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:  
17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.  
18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

### CHAPTER 2

1 THOU therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.  
2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.  
3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.  
4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him.  
5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet so he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.  
6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruit.  
7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.  
8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:  
9 Wherin I suffer trouble, as when I am bound, yet unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.  
10 Therefore I endure all things, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.  
11 It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.  
12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.  
13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.  
14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words, to no profit but to the subverting of the hearers.  
15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.  
16 But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness.  
17 And their word will eat as doth a canker of whom is Hypocrites and Pharisaees.  
18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.  
19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, that they which call on the name of the Lord shall be saved: but they which call on the name of the Lord must have faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.  
23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they gender strifes.  
24 And the servant of the Lord

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.  
13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.  
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WILLIAM PERKINS

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# ELECTION

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**WILLIAM PERKINS** (1558–1602) was a graduate of Christ’s College, Cambridge. From 1584 until his death, Perkins served as preacher at Great St. Andrew’s Church, Cambridge. His influence as a theologian continued unabated after his death because of the widespread popularity of his writings.

Election is God's decree whereby, on His own free will, He has predestined certain men to salvation to the praise of the glory of His name (Eph 1:4–6; 1 Thess 5:9). Far from being a tangential doctrine, election is the golden thread that runs through the whole Christian system. Moreover, election is the friend of sinners—and therefore a most blessed doctrine.

Election is God's positive choice, by His sheer sovereignty, to love some out of His grace for salvation (Rom 9:13–26; 1 Thess 5:9). God's election is in no way universal or general, for God did not ordain all mankind to be reconciled to Himself. Rather, those whom He foreknew, He predestined (Rom 8:29). Here, “foreknew” is used in the sense of choosing or ordaining people (1 Pet 1:2; cf. Rom 11:2). Because many have wrongly attributed divine knowledge of man's future faith as causative of God's decree, it is essential to note that God's wise foreknowledge is both free and logically (in contrast to temporally) secondary to His willful ordination. Before the foundation of the world, God singled out and appointed some to salvation (2 Thess 2:13). He did not appoint those whom He foreknew would be conformed to Christ; rather, those whom He foreknew (favorably chose), He predestined to be conformed to His own image.

Jesus Christ is the whole foundation of election. Christ was called of His Father from all eternity to perform the work of salvation for His people (Heb 5:5; 7:22; 13:20). In Christ's election to perform the work of salvation, Christ is not subordinate to the Father with regard to the decree itself, since He has decreed all things with the Father (John 15:16), but He became subordinate in its execution through His servanthood and humiliation (1 Pet 1:20).

Election can never be separated from Christ, as the elect are so only in Christ. Furthermore, election is so closely linked to Christ that in order to understand the true nature of election itself, one must look to the ordaining of the Mediator (Isa 42:1; Heb 9:15). This is why any who struggle with understanding election must be brought to view election particularly in Christ, for in Him are all those who are chosen of God (Eph 1:4). The believer is chosen in Christ as His own inheritance (Deut 32:9; Ps 2:8; Heb 12:2; cf. John 6:39; 17:16; Eph 1:11; 1 Pet 2:6, 9).


The covenant of grace is the means of election. This is God's contract with His people in Christ regarding life eternal. In this covenant, God freely promises Christ to His people, who receive Christ's benefits upon repentant faith (Hos 2:18–20; Ezek 36:25–27; Mal 3:1).

The degrees of execution are the working out of election in the life of the believer. These are the steps by which God puts into action His eternal love (cf. Acts 13:48). For

those whom God has elected to inherit eternal life, He has also ordained the subordinate means whereby, in steps, they attain their ordained end (Eph 1:4–5; 2 Thess 2:13; cf. John 6:37; Eph 2:8–9). Without these steps, by which God puts into action His eternal love, salvation would be unobtainable (Rom 8:29–30). Broadly speaking, these steps are known as effectual calling, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. Thus, salvation worked out experientially in the soul of the believer is inseparable from sovereign election in Christ. The decree in Christ and the experience in Christ are conceptually and realistically linked.



## Jesus Christ is the whole foundation of election.

Sadly, some view election as a stumbling block to coming to Christ by faith. Unfortunately, their worry is not first “Have I Christ?” but rather “Am I elect?” Such have wrongly viewed election through a convoluted lens. It must be recognized that election is impossible to ascertain apart from the prior receiving of salvation by faith, upon which, with the resultant works, election is made sure (cf. 2 Pet 1:10). Furthermore, since Christ declares to all sinners, “Repent and believe, and you will be saved,” there need not be a question of one's status, other than that of sinner. Thirsty sinners (Isa 55:1); willing sinners (Rev 22:17); heavy-laden sinners (Matt. 11:28); adulterous sinners (Jer 3:1); lost sinners (Luke 19:10); and, yes, even the chief of sinners (1 Tim 1:15)—to all the Lord declares, “Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men” (Prov 8:4). Therefore, as the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, “Repent ye and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). 

Excerpt from *A Golden Chaine* by William Perkins



STEVEN J. LAWSON

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# WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION?

The idea that God does what He wants, and that what He does is true and right because He does it, is foundational to our understanding of everything in Scripture, including the doctrine of election.

In the broad sense, election refers to the fact that God chooses (or elects) to do everything that He does in whatever way He sees fit. When He acts, He does so only because He willfully and independently chooses to act. According to His own nature, predetermined plan, and good pleasure, He decides to do whatever He desires, without pressure or constraint from any outside influence.

The Bible makes this point repeatedly. In the act of creation, God made precisely what He wanted to create in the way He wanted to create it (cf. Gen 1:31). And ever since

creation, He has sovereignly prescribed or permitted everything in human history, in order that He might accomplish the redemptive plan that He previously had designed (cf. Isa 25:1; 46:10; 55:11; Rom 9:17; Eph 3:8–11).

In the Old Testament, He chose a nation for Himself. Out of all the nations in the world, He selected Israel (Deut 7:6; 14:2; Pss 105:43; 135:4). He chose the Israelites not because they were better or more desirable than any other people, but simply because He decided to choose them. In the words of Richard Wolf, “How odd of God to choose the Jews.” It might not have rhymed as well, but the same would have been true of any other people God might have selected. God chooses whomever He chooses for reasons that are wholly His.



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The nation of Israel was not the only recipient in Scripture of God's electing choice. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is called "My Chosen One" (Luke 9:35). The holy angels also are referred to as "chosen angels" (1 Tim 5:21). And New Testament believers are called "God's chosen ones" (Col 3:12; cf. 1 Cor 1:27; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:9; 5:13; Rev 17:14), meaning that the church is a community of those who were chosen, or "elect" (Eph 1:4).

When Jesus told His disciples, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you" (John 15:16), He was underscoring this truth. The New Testament reiterates this in passage after passage. Acts 13:48 describes salvation in these words: "As many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." Ephesians 1:4–6 notes that God "chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." In his letters to the Thessalonians, Paul reminds his readers that he knew God's choice of them (1 Thess 1:4) and that he was thankful for them "because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved" (2 Thess 2:13). The Word of God is clear: believers are those whom God chose for salvation from before the beginning.

The foreknowledge to which Peter refers (1 Pet 1:2) should not be confused with simple foresight. Some teach this view, contending that God, in eternity past, looked down the halls of history to see who would respond to His call and then elected the redeemed on the basis of their response. Such an explanation makes God's decision subject to man's decision and gives man a level of sovereignty that belongs only to God. It makes God the one who is passively chosen rather than the one who actively chooses. And it misunderstands the way in which Peter uses the term "foreknowledge." In 1 Peter 1:20, the apostle uses the verb form of that word, *prognōsis* in the Greek, to refer to Christ. In that case, the concept of "foreknowledge" certainly includes the idea of a deliberate choice. It is reasonable, then, to conclude that the same is true when Peter applies "prognosis" to believers in other places (cf. 1 Pet. 1:2).

The ninth chapter of Romans also reiterates the elective purposes of God. There, God's electing prerogative is clearly displayed in reference to His saving love for Jacob (and Jacob's descendants) as opposed to Esau (and Esau's lineage). God chose Jacob over Esau, not on the basis of anything Jacob or Esau had done, but according to His own free and uninfluenced sovereign purpose. To those who might protest, "That is unfair!" Paul simply asks, "Who are

you, O man, to answer back to God?" (v. 20 ESV).

Many more Scripture passages could be added to this survey. Yet as straightforward as the Word of God is, people continually have difficulty accepting the doctrine of election. The reason, again, is that they allow their preconceived notions of how God "should" act (based on a human definition of fairness) to override the truth of His sovereignty as laid out in the Scriptures.

## Believers are those whom God chose for salvation from before the beginning.

Frankly, the only reason to believe in election is because it is found explicitly in God's Word. No man and no committee of men originated this doctrine. It is like the doctrine of eternal punishment in that it conflicts with the dictates of the carnal mind. It is repugnant to the sentiments of the unregenerate heart. Like the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the miraculous birth of our Savior, the truth of election, because it has been revealed by God, must be embraced with simple and unquestioning faith. If you have a Bible and you believe it, you have no option but to accept what it teaches.

The Word of God presents God as the controller and disposer of all creatures (Dan 4:35; Isa 45:7; Lam 3:38), the Most High (Pss 47:2; 83:18), the ruler of heaven and earth (Gen 14:19; Isa 37:16), and the One against whom none can stand (2 Chron 20:6; Job 41:10; Isa 43:13). He is the Almighty who works all things after the counsel of His will (Eph 1:11; cf. Isa 14:27; Rev 19:6) and the heavenly Potter who shapes men according to His own good pleasure (Rom 9:18–22). In short, He is the decider and determiner of every man's destiny, and the controller of every detail in each individual's life (Prov 16:9; 19:21; 21:1; cf. Exod 3:21–22; 14:8; Ezra 1:1; Dan 1:9; James 4:15)—which is really just another way of saying, "He is God." ♦

Excerpt from *Foundations of Grace* by Steven Lawson.



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CONRAD MBEWE

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**ELECTION:  
MOTIVATION  
FOR  
PREACHING  
AND  
EVANGELIZING**



**CONRAD MBEWE** is pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church in Lusaka, Zambia, and senior lecturer at African Christian University. Conrad has authored and contributed to many books and articles. He and his wife, Felistas, have three children and three foster children.

One of the questions often asked when the truth of God's sovereignty is taught is, "What is the point of evangelizing sinners if God has already chosen those who are to be saved?" This question is often asked by those who are enemies of the truth of God's absolute sovereignty in electing those who would be saved. To them, this is the unsailable trump card, a query that will end all conversation.

Sometimes, however, this is a gnawing question in the minds of those who have seen this truth in the Scriptures and simply want a biblical answer for it. Behind the question is the sick feeling of being cheated. It is like being asked to sit an exam when the examiner has already decided who will pass and who will fail. What is the point in studying hard for such an exam? After all, the end result has already been predetermined. People feel that if God has already chosen those who are to be saved, then elect sinners will still get saved even if we do not do anything. So, why bother?

In fact, those who do not make any distinction between Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism have blamed the absence of evangelistic fervor in some apparently Calvinistic churches on this teaching. They see the logic to be as clear as day and wonder why anyone would contest this conclusion. Due to this deduction, they have thrown the baby out with the bathwater. They want to see evangelistic work done with real enthusiasm, but they see the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty as an enemy to this.

This problem is real. We must face it squarely if we are going to help our people be biblically balanced. The safe position is to maintain both God's absolute sovereignty and human responsibility at the same time. To choose one against the other is to fail to represent Scripture in all that it has revealed about God and us as creatures made in His image.

### **THIS IS TAUGHT IN SCRIPTURE**

We must first face the fact that both God's sovereignty in salvation and our duty to evangelize are taught side-by-side in the Bible. One example is Acts 13:48–49. The Bible says, "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. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region" (ESV).

No one can read the book of Acts without coming away with the realization that the apostles were sold out to the work of evangelism and missions. They had turned Jerusalem upside down with their evangelistic work. They were going from town to town not only evangelizing but also starting new churches. Luke recorded that "the word of the

Lord was spreading throughout the whole region" (Luke 4:37, 7:17, paraphrased). Yet, Luke not only spoke about Paul and Barnabas laboring away in the arduous task of evangelism but also about the fact that only the elect responded to the gospel. It must be clear that, to the first-century believers, these two realities were not self-contradictory. They could be spoken about in the same breath with no fear of confusion and inconsistency.

We also see this balance between God's absolute sovereignty and human responsibility in the events recorded for us in Acts 27:1–32. The key events are as follows: Paul was being conveyed as a prisoner on a ship to face judgment before Caesar. Paul warned his captors that the sea was unsafe, but they did not listen to him and continued the journey. They were hit by a violent storm, and the ship was badly battered. The sailors did everything they could to rescue the ship from sinking, but by the third day they gave up all hope of being saved. Paul stood up among the people on the ship and told them that an angel had informed him that none of the people on the ship would die; they would all get to safety.


This speaks of God's sovereign control of all affairs. However, when the sailors tried to run away by letting down the lifeboats, Paul said to the soldiers, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). This speaks of human responsibility. It is clear again that to these early Christians, there was no inconsistency in speaking of God's sovereignty and human responsibility at the same time. The two were not incongruous. The Bible teaches both truths, and not one or the other. We must begin by admitting this, or else we will never arrive at the biblical balance in this matter.

### **THE ELECT ARE UNKNOWN**

Let us apply this to the situation at hand. How could the Apostle Paul and Barnabas go about fervently evangelizing if God had already chosen those who would believe? The answer is that the elect are not known until after they respond positively to the gospel. This truth belongs to God's secret will. God has revealed the doctrine of election to us in order for us to better appreciate His grace in salvation.

This is how Paul spoke about it. To the Ephesians he wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the





**Some of the people who are totally antagonistic to the gospel are actually God's elect. Think of the Apostle Paul before his conversion.**

**He hated the Christian cause and persecuted the church. Yet, he was one of God's elect, and on God's appointed day Paul was brought to repentance and faith in Christ. What this means is that we evangelize everyone. We do not know God's elect among the unconverted.**

Beloved” (Eph 1:3–6, ESV).

Notice how the very atmosphere in which these words were written is one of praise to God. It begins with “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” and it ends with “to the praise of his glorious grace.” To Paul, this was not a matter for debate but for doxology: God is good. Look at what He has done for us!

What has He done? Paul begins before the creation of the world and says, “He chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world...He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ.” According to Paul, we cannot fully extol God and His grace if we refuse to acknowledge His acts of election and predestination. Those of us who are saved now are fruit of His electing grace. Those of us who will get to heaven will do so because of God’s predestinating grace. It is all of grace! This is why God has revealed these truths to us. It enables us to give Him the glory that is due to His name.


The sovereignty of God in salvation is not meant to guide us as to whom we should evangelize. As stated earlier, we do not know those who were elected by God for salvation until they are saved. Remember Acts 13:48? “...and as many

as were appointed to eternal life believed.” That is when we get to know who they are, when they believe. Some of the people who are totally antagonistic to the gospel are actually God’s elect. Think of the Apostle Paul before his conversion. He hated the Christian cause and persecuted the church. Yet, he was one of God’s elect, and on God’s appointed day Paul was brought to repentance and faith in Christ. What this means is that we evangelize everyone. We do not know God’s elect among the unconverted.

### **THE MEANS ARE ORDAINED**

We still have one more question that we have not answered. Why should we bother to evangelize at all, since those who are ordained to eternal life will get saved whether we get involved in evangelizing them or not?

The answer is that God has not only ordained that the elect will be saved, but He has ordained that they will only be saved through the gospel. Notice that connection in 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. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.”



**God has chosen a people from every nation and given them to His Son. Jesus has died for those individuals. The Holy Spirit has now been sent by the Father and the Son to bring those individuals to repentance and faith in Christ.**



They heard the gospel, they glorified the word of the Lord, and the word of the Lord was spreading. We must never divorce salvation from the ordained means—the hearing of the gospel.

We see the same in 1 Thessalonians 1:4–5. Paul wrote, “For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (ESV). Those whom God had sovereignly chosen for salvation before the world began came to be known by Paul and his team when they responded to the gospel. To the elect, the gospel came with irresistible converting power. The gospel is the indispensable means by which God calls His elect into the kingdom.

James says the same when he writes, “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18, ESV). James extols God’s sovereignty when he writes, “Of his own will.” He means that God was not persuaded to do this by any forces outside Himself. Rather, it is something He had elected to do freely or sovereignly.

Notice that the means of bringing us forth, which is a reference to the giving of birth, was the word of truth. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the indispensable means of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is very consistent on this matter.

The responsibility is on our shoulders to preach the gospel to everyone so that the elect may hear and be saved. The Apostle made this an impassioned plea when he wrote to the Romans, saying, “For ‘everyone who calls on the

name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom 10:13–14, ESV). This is our duty. We must preach to all and sundry. The Lord will save His own.

In fact, if we understood the total depravity of the human heart correctly, we would evangelize *because* God has chosen some to eternal life! That would be our encouragement. The unregenerate are spiritually blind and dead in sin. Unless they are first given sight and life by God, they cannot see the sufficiency of the Savior and call upon Him to save them. Does God give sight and life to all and then only some decide to act on it? No, He chooses those to whom He comes in this saving way. That is why those of us who are saved give God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all the glory for our salvation.

You will recall how the Lord encouraged the Apostle Paul when he faced a lot of opposition while he was evangelizing the city of Corinth. God said to him in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people” (Acts 18:9–10 ESV). The many who belonged to God in this city were the elect. God told Paul not to worry about the opposition. He was to keep on preaching, because through his labors, the many elect of God would come to salvation in Christ. Paul could courageously evangelize because God had chosen some to eternal life.

This is also the heartbeat of missions. God has chosen



a people from every nation and given them to His Son. Jesus has died for those individuals. The Holy Spirit has now been sent by the Father and the Son to bring those individuals to repentance and faith in Christ. At the end of history, when Jesus returns, all the elect will have been reached with the gospel and will be in the kingdom of God.

It is this knowledge that has fueled the great missionary movement from the days of William Carey onwards. They believed in God's sovereignty in election. They believed that with His blood Jesus had "ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9 ESV). This did not dampen their zeal. It was the very combustion chamber that propelled it!

### WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN?

God's revealed will is clear. He commands us to evangelize all men. Jesus gave the church its marching orders: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:18 ESV). God also commands all men everywhere to repent. This was the message of Paul to the men of Athens. He preached, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30 ESV). These are our human responsibilities—to preach the gospel and to repent and believe when we hear it. Let us all obey Him.

Let us do our part and leave the rest to God. He will give the increase. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth" (1 Cor 3:6 ESV).

God is sovereign. He will save whomsoever He has chosen to save. We are called to be watchmen. If we do not do our job, their blood will be required at our hands. Fatalism is not biblical. God is sovereign, and we must be responsible.

Allow me to end with a rather lengthy quote from Charles Haddon Spurgeon on this matter, as preached August 1, 1858:

The system of truth is not one straight line, but two. No man will ever get a right view of the gospel until he knows how to look at the two lines at once. I am taught in one book to believe that what I sow I shall reap: I am taught in another place, that "it is not of him that wil- leth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" [Rom 9:16]. I see in one place, God presiding over all in providence; and yet I see, and I cannot help seeing, that man acts as he pleases, and that God has left his actions to his own will, in a great measure. Now, if I were to declare that man was so free to act, that there was no presidency of God over his actions, I should be driven very near to Atheism; and if, on the other hand, I declare that God so overrules all things, as that man is not free enough to be responsible, I am driven at once into Antinomianism or fatalism. That God predestines, and that man is responsible, are two things that few can see. They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory; but they are not. It is just the fault of our weak judgment. Two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is fore-ordained, that is true; and if I find in another place that man is respon- sible for all his actions, that is true; and it is my folly that leads me to imagine that two truths can ever con- tradict each other. These two truths, I do not believe, can ever be welded into one upon any human anvil, but one they shall be in eternity: they are two lines that are so nearly parallel, that the mind that shall pursue them farthest, will never discover that they converge; but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth doth spring. Amen! ♦

T H E R E I S  
M O R E  
T O O U R L I V E S T H A N  
“ N O W . ”

I F T H E R E I S N O T , T H E N E V E N  
T H E N O W I S M E A N I N G L E S S .

|  
*R.C. Sproul*

R I G H T N O W  
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STEVEN J. LAWSON

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# WILLIAM TYNDALE ON GOD'S SOVEREIGN ELECTION

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William Tyndale was committed to the biblical teaching of the sovereign election of God. He believed God acted before time began, in eternal love, in choosing a people whom He would save. God set His heart upon a people, elected out of the mass of fallen humanity, to be His own possession. This election of man was not based upon any foreseen choice within man. Rather, it was entirely by the free exercise of God's will:

Predestination...and salvation are clean taken out of our hands, and put in the hands of God only...for we are so weak and so uncertain, that if it stood in us, there would of a truth be no man saved; the devil, no doubt, would deceive us.

Tyndale was clear that God set His affections upon His elect in eternity past. He stated that God sovereignly chose to love them with a saving love. Tyndale also said that God chose to love His elect for His own glory and for their good:

God is ever fatherly minded toward the elect members of His church. He loved them, before the world began, in Christ.... The end of all things shall be unto His glory and the profit of the elect.

Tyndale understood that it was God who first chose His elect, not sinners who first chose Him, and that God made this distinguishing choice in eternity past. This is to say, all saving grace is traced back to this sovereign choice of God unto salvation:

God chose them [the elect] first, and they not God.... In Christ God chose us, and elected us before the beginning of the world, created us anew by the word of the gospel, and put His Spirit in us, for because that we should do good works.

Divine election is unto salvation, not to be explained away as merely to service. The divine choice determines those chosen would be no longer in Adam, but in Christ. Tyndale taught that election is unto eternal life:

By grace (that is to say, by favor) we are plucked out of Adam, the ground of all evil, and grafted in Christ, the root of all goodness... You are chosen for Christ's sake to the inheritance of eternal life.

Tyndale explained that sovereign election leads to the personal knowledge of Christ in the gospel. The elect are chosen by God to know Christ: "In Christ God loved us,

His elect and chosen, before the world began, and reserved us unto the knowledge of his Son and of His holy gospel."

Tyndale believed not all who attend church are numbered among the elect. Only those chosen by God make up the true church. He explained:

There shall be in the church a fleshly seed of Abraham and a spiritual; a Cain and an Abel; an Ishmael and an Isaac; an Esau and a Jacob; as I have said, a worker and a believer; a great multitude of them that be called, and a small flock of them that be elect and chosen.

While many contend that election is a dangerous doctrine to be feared and withheld from people, Tyndale held the complete opposite. He believed that this divine truth emboldens the preacher, because it ensures the ultimate success of his preaching ministry. No matter how hardened man's heart may be, Tyndale insisted, sovereign election guarantees the reception of the gospel: "When Christ is... preached...the hearts of them which are elect and chosen begin to wax soft and melt at the bounteous mercy of God."

In summary, Tyndale believed that sovereign election exalts God as worthy of all honor. This truth sets God apart from man and above him. God is not subject to man's wisdom or will. This truth of unconditional election exalts God as the supreme ruler over man:

Why does God open one man's eyes and not another's? Paul (Rom. 9) forbids to ask why; for it is too deep for man's capacity. God, we see, is honored thereby, and His mercy set out and the more seen in the vessels of mercy. But the popish can suffer God to have no secret, hid to Himself. They have searched to come to the bottom of His bottomless wisdom: and because they cannot attain to that secret, and be too proud to let it alone, and to grant themselves ignorant, with the apostle, that knew no other than God's glory in the elect; they go and set up free-will with the heathen philosophers, and say that a man's free-will is the cause why God chooses one and not another, contrary unto all the Scripture.

Tyndale affirmed that sovereign election glorifies God, humbles man, initiates salvation, and honors Scripture. This doctrine gave Tyndale great confidence in all his endeavors, as he was reliant upon God for all things. ♦

Excerpt from *The Daring Mission of William Tyndale* by Steven J. Lawson



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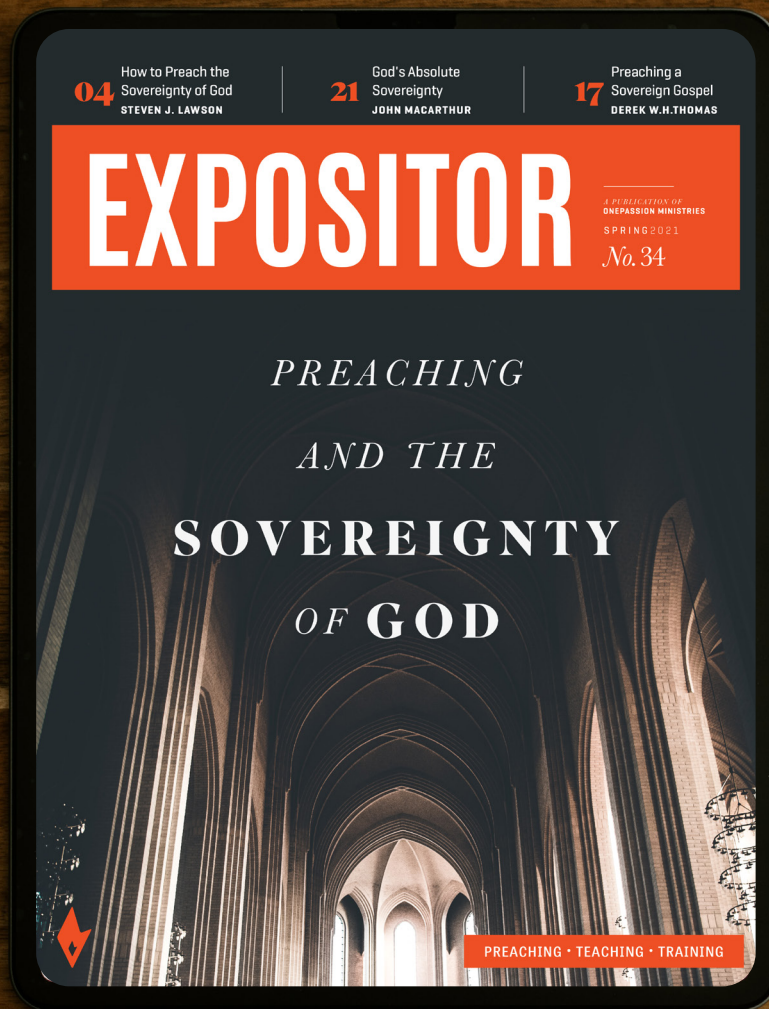
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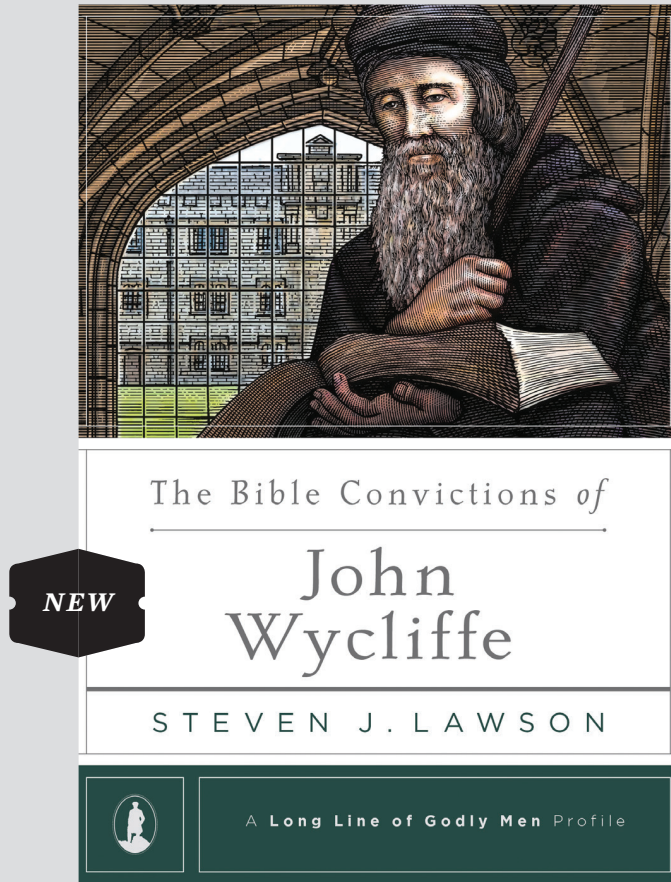


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