

Lesson 31

GOD'S ELECTION OF MAN

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GOD'S ELECT

To fully understand God's election we shall examine the following

Use of e-lek'-shun and bachar.

The Divine Order

Conditional versus Non-conditional election

Use of e-lek'-shun and bachar.

As a verb, election means a person is carefully chosen by God for something. The verb "elect" means essentially "to choose or to select." It involves discriminatory evaluation of individuals, groups, means, ends, or objects with a view to selecting upon criteria one above the others, although not necessarily passing negative judgment on the non-elect.

e-lek'-shun (ekloge, "choice," "selection") The word is absent from the Old Testament, where the related Hebrew verb (bachar) is frequent. In both Testaments the Hebrew and Greek words are rendered "elect," "election," "choose," "chosen." In all cases they mean, simply, "chosen," or "to choose"; and are used of both human and divine choices.

- In the latter use **election** is:
 - **Corporate**, as of the nation of **Israel**, or the **church**
 - *Isaiah 45:4* "For the sake of Jacob My servant, And Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor Though you have not known Me.
 - *Ephesians 1:4* "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love
 - **Individual**
 - *1 Peter 1:2* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.
 - Election is according to the **foreknowledge of God** 1 Peter 1:2 and wholly of **grace, without any human merit**
 - *Romans 9:11* for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls
 - *Romans 11:5* In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.
 - *Romans 11:6* But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.
 - **Election proceeds from the divine volition** (divine choice, which proceeds from divine foreknowledge)
 - *John 15:16.* You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.
- Election is, therefore:
 - **The sovereign act of God** in grace whereby certain are chosen from among mankind for Himself.
 - *John 15:19* If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.
 - **The sovereign act of God** whereby certain elect persons are chosen for distinctive service for Him.

- *Acts 9:15* “But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel”
- *1 Corinthians 1:27-28* “but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, [28] and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are”

In the New Testament ‘bachar’ occurs 6 times

- *Romans 9:11* for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,
- *Romans 11:5* In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice.
- *Romans 11:7* What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;
- *Romans 11:28* From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;
- *1 Thessalonians 1:4* knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;
- *2 Peter 1:10*. As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries,

In all these places it appears to denote an act of Divine selection taking effect upon human objects so as to bring them into a special relationship with God.

Election involves God’s will, in that a determination is made based upon whatever criteria God so chooses for his own purpose; a preference expressed that one seeks to bring to reality. If that preference is expressed, the idea of bestowing favor or blessing is often present.

Throughout the Old Testament period, it is clear that the nation Israel was ‘elected’ by God to be His ‘chosen’ people corporately for all time. With the birth of Jesus and the rejection of Christ by Israel, the New Testament period essentially announces the extension of God’s covenant promises to the Gentile world and the transference of some of the covenant privileges from Abraham’s descendants to a predominantly Gentile body along with Christ believing Israelites. This collection of believers forms the body of Christ or ‘**church**’ and consists of all who become Abraham’s true seed and God’s true Israel through faith in Jesus Christ. The church is God’s ‘chosen’ bride. The Lord is the divine Bridegroom who seeks His bride in love and enters into a covenant relationship with her.

As stated above, the church is comprised of those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and have received eternal life. Christ, the Bridegroom, has sacrificially and lovingly ‘chosen’ the church to be His bride. As the bride, we first chosen to be the bride by Christ and we entered the betrothal period upon acceptance of the invitation to marriage. Just as there was a betrothal period in biblical times during which the bride and groom were separated until the wedding, so is the bride of Christ separated from her Bridegroom during the church age. Her responsibility during the betrothal period is to be faithful to Him. At the rapture, the church will be united with the Bridegroom and the official “wedding ceremony” will take place and, with it, the eternal union of Christ and His bride will be actualized.

- *2 Corinthians 11:2* For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.
- *Ephesians 2:11-16* Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- [12] remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. [13] But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought

- *(Cont'd from previous page.) near by the blood of Christ. [14] For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, [15] by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, [16] and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.*
- **Ephesians 3:6-8** *to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, [7] of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. [8] To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,*
- **Ephesians 5:24-27** *But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. [25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, [26] so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*
- **Ephesians 5:31** *FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.*
- **Galatians 3:14** *in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*
- **Galatians 3:29** *And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.*
- **Galatians 6:14-16** *But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. [15] For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. [16] And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.*
- **John 3:26-30** *And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him." [27] John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. [28] You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.' [29] He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. [30] He must increase, but I must decrease.*
- **Luke 5:34-35** *And Jesus said to them, "You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? [35] But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days."*
- **Mark 2:19-20** *And Jesus said to them, "While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. [20] But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.*
- **Matthew 9:15** *And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast*
- **Matthew 21:14** *Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.*
- **Matthew 25:1-12** *"Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. [2] Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. [3] For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, [4] but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. [5] Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. [6] But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' [7] Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. [8] The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' [9] But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' [10] And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. [11] Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' [12] But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'*

- **Romans 4:9-18** *Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." [10] How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; [11] and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, [12] and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised. [13] For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. [14] For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; [15] for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. [16] For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, [17] (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. [18] In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."*
- **Romans 9:6** *But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;*
- **Revelation 19:7-9** *Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." [8] It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. [9] Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."*
- **Revelation 21:2** *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband*
- **Revelation 22:17** *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.*

Israel, the unbelieving nation, rejected Jesus as the Messiah and were thus '... branches [that] were broken off God's olive tree (the elect unbelieving nation of Israel which sprung forth from the Patriarchs) and wild branches were grafted in their place. After faithless Israel rejected Christ, God's judgement was that the international Christian church would take Israel's place as God's chosen people, worshipping God Almighty and proclaiming Him as their God. The church will continue to be God's people until the church is removed from earth at the Rapture. A revival will then sweep Israel and this nation will repent, accept Jesus as their Messiah and once again, become God's elect people living in the world, worshipping God Almighty, proclaiming Him as their God and intent on proclaiming the Gospel throughout the world.

- **Romans 11:16-24** *If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too. [17] But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, [18] do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. [19] You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." [20] Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; [21] for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. [22] Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. [23] And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. [24] For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive*

As stated, election is God's decree that He chose corporately those who will be saved. The big debate among believers is whether or not God's election is individually conditional or unconditional.

- Conditional election states that man, in order to be saved, must respond positively to (or accept) God's call to salvation. Man can resist God's offer.
- Unconditional Election is irresistible in that man has no choice but to respond positively to God's call to salvation. Man cannot resist, and has no power or choice but to accept God's offer.

In both definitions, salvation does not depend on anything outside of God, such as good works, payments, earned rewards, or foreseen faith (*Romans 9:16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.*). The primary difference between the two positions is that one is a gift and the other forced adherence. Election is God's selection of those who will be saved on whatever basis pleases God. Election includes God's examination of individuals.

The Divine Order

The divine order is foreknowledge, election, predestination.

That foreknowledge determines the election or choice is clear from 1 Peter 1:2 and predestination is the bringing to pass of the election. "election looks back to foreknowledge; predestination forward to the destiny." But Scripture nowhere declares what it is in the divine foreknowledge which determines the divine election and predestination. The foreknown are elected, and the elect are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ and adoption as sons of God. And this election is certain to every believer by the mere fact that he believes. (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5)

God elects something He foreknows to be called to a future in which that which is foreknown is to be conformed to the image of Christ and adopted as God's son.

Foreknowledge
Election
Predestination

- *1 Peter 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.*

Conditional Versus Non-Conditional

While the Bible clearly teaches that God elects people to salvation, there are disagreements as to the basis of that election.

Conditional election is the belief that God elects people for salvation based on His foreknowledge. Conditional election says that an all-knowing God knows now (and always has and will know) who will and who will not come to faith in Christ. God is an eternal, all knowing God. (Review the discussion on eternity) It is considered "conditional" election because it is based on the condition of man responding positively to God's free gift. One cannot receive a gift unless they "accept" the gift. The acceptance is the extent of man exercising his own free will. What must be stressed, especially since so much confusion abounds regarding man's acceptance of God's free gift, is that there is no merit by the recipient in the acceptance of a gift. All merit has been initiated and executed by the giver for the giver's good pleasure. According to conditional election, those who accept God's offer and come to faith in Christ are elected by God, and all others are not elected through their rejection of Jesus Christ.

The English word gift means something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation by the recipient. Salvation is transferred from God to man solely by the pleasure of God, solely by the merit of God. The act of acceptance is not work, nor is it merit to the recipient.

Merit has both a general and a legal definition. Generically, merit is defined as "the quality of being particularly good or worthy, especially so as to deserve praise or reward" (*Merriam Dictionary*). Merits, in law, are

The key phrase here is elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God. Or another verse with similar implications is Romans 8:29–30: “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; [30] and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

Yet there really is no debate or disagreement in the fact that God, because He is all-knowing, knows who will be saved and who will not. The debate between conditional and unconditional election is about whether these verses teach that man’s “free will choice” is the cause of God’s election or an acknowledgement that God has the foreknowledge of who will be saved and who will not. If these were the only verses in Scripture that dealt with election, the issue as to whether the Bible teaches conditional election would be up for debate, but they are not. There are other very clear passages that tell us on what basis God elects people for salvation. The New Testament idea of election is as follows:

- Jesus is hailed as God’s elect one by the Father Himself. *“Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!’” (Luke 9:35)* The proclamation by God the Father that Jesus was the elect one, the Messiah was met with contempt by Israel’s leaders. *“And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.’” (Luke 23:35)* In 1 Peter 2:4-6 *“And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, [5] you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [6] For this is contained in Scripture: ‘BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.’”* (This last verse is echoed from Isaiah 28:16)
- The adjective ‘elect’ denotes the Christian church in its character as the chosen people of God, in contrast to the rest of mankind. The elect are those whom God accepts, and will accept, because they have responded to the Gospel invitation and come to the wedding-feast stripped of self-righteousness and clad in the wedding garment provided by the host [God]. The church is an elect race, the object of God’s special care, and having the privileges Israel previously had namely :
 - Access to God
 - Praising and worshipping God
 - Proclaiming God
 - Faithfully guarding God’s truth
- Jesus choice of His apostles and the churches choice of deacons and delegates. This is election to special service from among the ranks of the elect community [church].

The first verse that helps us understand whether conditional election is what the Bible really teaches is [Ephesians 1:4–5](#): “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 as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.” Clearly, we see that God predestines or elects individuals “according to the purpose of His will.” When we consider the idea of adoption and the fact that it is God who chooses us for adoption and that it is done before the foundation of the world, it seems to be clear that the basis of God’s election and predestination is not a choice we would make in the future but solely His sovereign will, which He exercises “in love.”

Another verse that strongly supports unconditional election is [Romans 9:11](#), where God describes “the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls.” While some want to dismiss [Romans 9:11](#) as applying to corporate election and not individual election, we simply cannot dismiss this section of Scripture that clearly teaches that election is NOT conditioned on anything man has done or will do but is solely based on the divine will of a sovereign God.

Another verse that teaches unconditional election is [John 15:16](#), “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.” Further, in [John 10:26–27](#) Jesus says, “But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow me.” Conditional election says that people who believe are chosen as His sheep *because* they believe, but the Bible actually says just the opposite. The reason they believe is that they are His sheep. Election is not conditional upon man’s acceptance of Christ as Lord and Savior but is instead the *cause* of his acceptance.

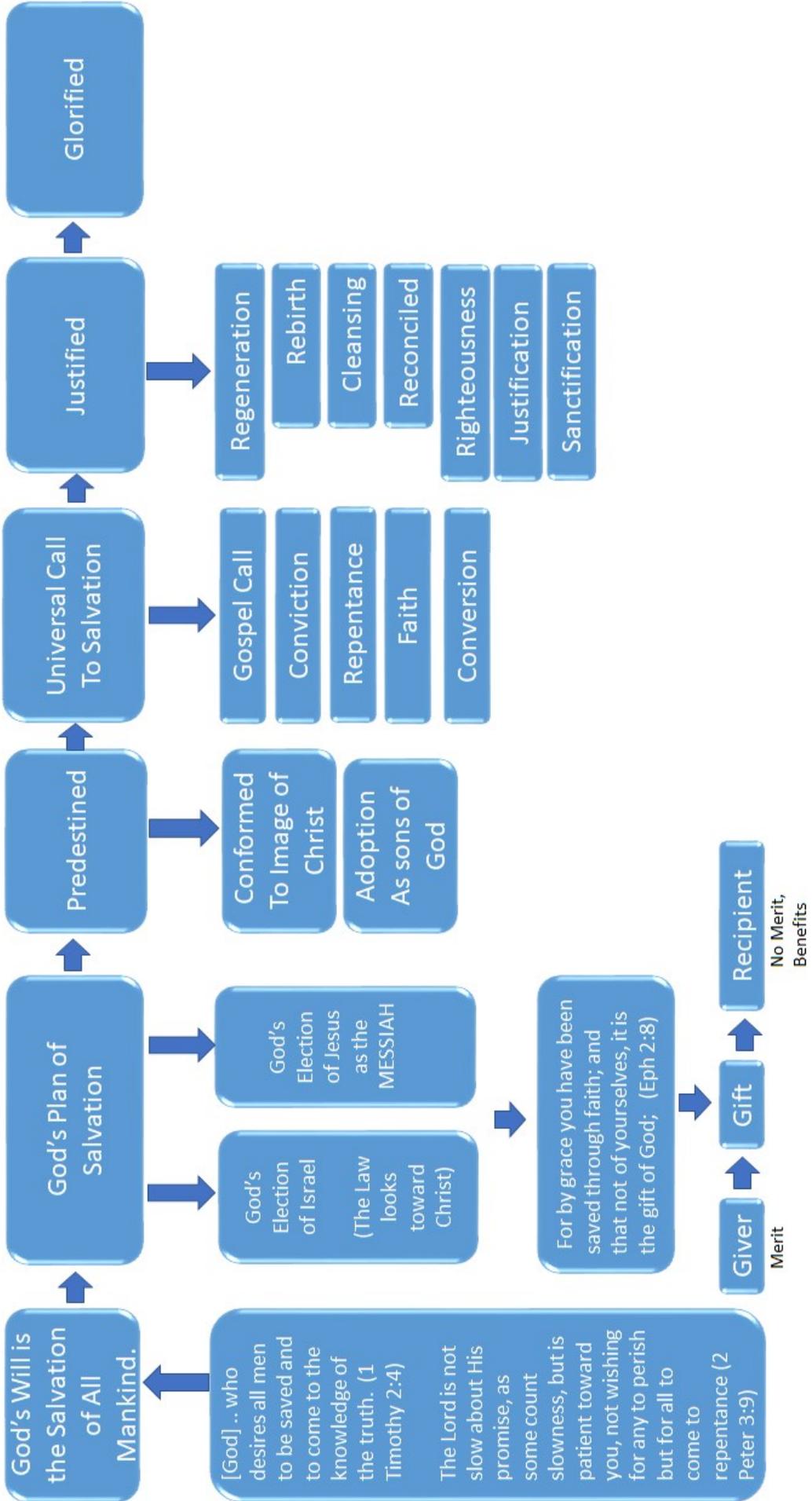
Conditional election is the view that man’s “free will” decision to accept Christ as Savior is the basis for his/her election. Therefore, in a very real sense, man’s decision is the cause of salvation. This view of election is in large part necessary because of the Arminian worldview where man chooses God, instead of God choosing man. Boiled down to its simplest form, Arminian theology is that, ultimately, man’s salvation depends on his “free will decision” alone and not God’s will. Conditional election leads to the conclusion that God’s actions in election are dependent upon man’s free will choices. This view of election and salvation makes God subject to the whims of men and their decisions, and man’s will becomes essentially the cause and effect of salvation.

On the other hand, in unconditional election it is God’s sovereign will that determines who is elected and who is not. Therefore, it is God’s will and God’s grace that are completely responsible for man’s salvation. All those whom God elects to salvation will come to saving faith in Christ, and those whom He does not elect will not ([John 6:37](#)). In this scenario, it is God who gets the glory for His grace and mercy in offering salvation to those who do not love Him and who can’t come to Him on their own ([Ephesians 2:1–5](#)).

These two views on election are not compatible at all. One is true, and the other is false. One makes God’s election and ultimately man’s salvation dependent upon man, ultimately giving man the credit and glory, while the other recognizes that election and salvation depend on God’s sovereign will. One worldview has man being the master of his destiny and, in essence, in control of his salvation, while the other has God rescuing lost, hopeless sinners not because they deserve it but because He wills it. One view exalts man, and the other exalts God. One is a testimony to man’s goodness and ability, and the other is a testimony to God’s amazing grace

The only logical conclusion is that “God’s elect” were not chosen for salvation, but rather to accomplish God’s will. Despite the fact that God is not willing that any should perish, some of God’s elect did perish, Election is not God predetermining (Predestination) individuals to salvation through divine decree or mercy. Being one of God’s elect is being chosen by God’s sovereign will for God’s own purpose.

Predestination, as we have seen within in this book, is not a choice by God for whom shall be saved, rather the plans for those who are saved. The saved are predestined to being conformed to the image of God and adoption as sons of God. The Lost are predestined to hell.



God's Will is the Salvation of All Mankind.

[God] ... who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)

God's Plan of Salvation

God's Election of Israel (The Law looks toward Christ)

God's Election of Jesus as the MESSIAH

Predestined

Conformed To Image of Christ

Adoption As sons of God

Universal Call To Salvation

Gospel Call

Conviction

Repentance

Faith

Conversion

Justified

Regeneration

Rebirth

Cleansing

Reconciled

Righteousness

Justification

Sanctification

Glorified

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; (Eph 2:8)

Giver

Merit

Gift

Recipient

No Merit, Benefits

I. General Prophecies Concerning the Coming of Jesus

- Gen. 49:10; Mic. 5:2 - a kingdom and ruler of Israel shall come from Judah - Matt. 1:1-2, Luke 3:23,33 - Jesus is from the line of Judah.
- Deut. 18:18 - He will be raised up as a prophet - Matt. 21:11, Luke 7:16; John 6:14; 7:40 - Jesus is identified as this prophet.
- Psalm 2:6 - He will be a King - Matt. 21:5; John 18:36-37 - Jesus is this King.
- Psalm 2:7 - you are my Son, today I have begotten you - Matt. 3:17; Acts 13:33 - God the Father said this about Jesus the Son.
- Psalm 69:4; Isaiah 49:7 - He will be hated without a cause - John 15:25 - Jesus was hated without a cause.
- Psalm 69:9 - zeal for thy house has consumed me - John 2:16-17 - zeal consumed Jesus as He drove out the traders.
- Psalm 78:2 - He will speak in parables - Matt. 13:34-35 - Jesus spoke in parables.
- Psalm 110:1; Jer. 23:6 - He will be called Lord - Matt. 22:43-45; Luke 2:11; Heb. 1:10 - Jesus is called Lord by the Lord.
- Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 8:14; 28:16 - He will be the stone rejected by the builders - Acts 4:10-11; Rom. 9:32-33; 1 Peter 2:7-8 - Jesus is the stone rejected by the builders.
- Psalm 118:26; Hag. 2:7-9; Mal. 3:1 - He will come to the Temple - Matt. 21:12; John 2:13-17 - Jesus so came to the Temple.
- Psalm 132:11; Jer. 23:5 - He, the king, shall come from the House of David - Matt. 1:1; Luke 3:23,31 - Jesus is the son of David.
- Isaiah 6:9-10 - they hear but do not understand and see but do not perceive - Matt. 13:14-15; John 12:38-41 - this is why Jesus used parables.
- Isaiah 7:14 - He will be born of a young virgin woman - Matt. 1:18, 24-25; Luke 1:26-35 - Jesus was born of the young virgin Mary.
- Isaiah 9:1 - His ministry will make Galilee glorious - Matt 4:12-17 - Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee.
- Isaiah 9:6 - a woman shall bear a son called Emmanuel ("God is with us") - Luke 1:35 - Jesus is this one, the Son of God.
- Isaiah 11:2 - the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him - Matt. 3:16-17 - the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus like a dove.
- Isaiah 32:3-4; 35:5-6 - His ministry will include miracles curing the blind, deaf, lame and dumb - Matt. 9:32-35 - Jesus so cured the blind, deaf, lame and dumb.
- Isaiah 33:22 - He will be a judge - John 5:30 - Jesus is the judge who judges justly.

- Isaiah 40:3; Mal. 3:1 - He will be preceded by a messenger - Mat. 3:1-3; 11:10; Luke 1:17; John 1:23 - Jesus was so preceded (by Saint John the Baptist).
- Isaiah 53:3 - He will be rejected by His people - John 1:11; 7:5 - Jesus was rejected by His own people.
- Isaiah 61:1-2 - the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him - Luke 4:21 - Jesus says that He has fulfilled this prophecy.
- Zech. 9:9 - He will triumphantly enter Jerusalem on an ass - Matt. 21:5; Luke 19:35-38; John 12:14-17 - Jesus so entered Jerusalem.
- Mic. 5:2 - Israel's ruler shall come from Bethlehem - Matt. 2:1,4-8; Luke 2:4-7 - Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus in His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension

- Psalm 16:10; 30:3 - He will not be spared from death and yet remain incorrupt - Acts 2:31; 13:33,35 - Jesus conquered death and remained incorrupt.
- Psalm 22:1 - My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? - Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34 - Jesus utters this rabbinical formula from the cross declaring that He is the Messiah.
- Psalm 22:7 - the people will wag their heads at Him - Matt. 27:39; Mark 15:29 - the people wagged their heads at Jesus on the cross.
- Psalm 22:7 - He will be mocked - Matt. 27:31; Mark 15:20; Luke 22:63; 23:36 - Jesus was mocked.
- Psalm 22:16; Isa. 53:12 - He will be numbered with the transgressors - Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:32; John 19:18 - Jesus was numbered with the transgressors by being crucified between two thieves.
- Psalm 22:16; Zech 12:10 - His hands and feet will be pierced and they will weep for the first-born - John 19:23,34,37 - Jesus' hands and feet were pierced and his followers wept for Him, the true first-born Son of Israel.
- Psalm 22:17 - they will stare and gloat over Him - Matt. 27:36; Luke 23:35 - the people stood by and stared at Jesus on the cross.
- Psalm 22:18 - they will divide His garments among them - Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23 - they divided Jesus' garments among them.
- Psalm 22:18 - they will cast lots for His garments - Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:24 - they cast lots for Jesus' garments.
- Psalm 30:3; 41:10, 118:17; Hos 6:2 - He will be raised to life on the third day - Acts 13:33, Matt. 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:34,46 - Jesus was raised to life on the third day.
- Psalm 34:20 - He will not have broken bones - John 19:33,36 - none of Jesus' bones were broken.
- Psalm 41:9; 55:12-14 - He will be betrayed by a friend - Matt. 10:4; 26:20-25; Mark 14:18-21; John 13:18 - Jesus was betrayed by a friend

- Psalm 68:18 - He will ascend into heaven - Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; John 20:17; Acts 1:9 - Jesus ascended into heaven.
- Psalm 68:20 - He will escape the powers of death - Acts 2:31; 13:33; Matt 28:6; Mark 16:6, Luke 24:46; John 20:9-10 - Jesus escaped the powers of death through his resurrection.
- Psalm 69:21 - they will give Him vinegar to drink - Matt. 27:34,48; Mark 15:23,36; Luke 23:36; John 19:29 - they gave Jesus vinegar to drink.
- Psalm 110:1 - He will sit at the right hand of God - Heb. 1:3; Acts 2:34-35 - Jesus sits at the right hand of God.
- Isaiah 50:6 - He will be spat upon - Matt. 26:67; Mark 15:19 - Jesus was spat upon.
- Isaiah 50:6; Mic. 5:1 - the ruler of Israel's cheek will be struck - Matt. 26:67; Luke 22:63; John 18:22 - Jesus was so struck and beaten.
- Isaiah 53:5; Zech. 13:6 - He was wounded, bruised and scourged for us - Matt. 27:26; Mark 15:15; John 19:1 - Jesus was wounded, bruised and scourged for us.
- Isaiah 53:7 - He will remain silent before His accusers - Matt. 27:12,14; Mark 14:61;15:5; Luke 23:9; John 19:9 - Jesus remained silent before His accusers.
- Isaiah 53:8-10; Dan. 9:26 - the anointed one shall be cut off and die - Luke 23:46; 24:7; John 19:30 - Jesus the Messiah died.
- Isaiah 53:9 - He will be buried in a rich man's tomb - Matt. 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-53; John 19:38-42 - Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb (the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea).
- Isaiah 53:12 - He will make intercession for the transgressors - Luke 23:34,43 - Jesus made intercession for the transgressors on the cross.
- Amos 8:9 - God will darken the earth at noon - Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44-45 - there was darkness at noon at Jesus' crucifixion and death.
- Jonah 1:17 - three nights and days in the belly of the whale foreshadows Jesus' death and rising on the third day.
- Mic. 1:8 - He will lament and wail, and will go stripped and naked - John 19:23-24 - Jesus lamented and was stripped and naked.
- Zech. 11:12-13 - He will be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver - Matt. 26:15 - Jesus was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.
- Zech. 11:13 - the pieces of silver are cast into God's house - Matt. 27:5 - Judas threw the pieces of silver into the Temple.
- Zech. 12:10 - His side will be pierced - John 19:34, 37 - Jesus' side was pierced.
- Zech. 13:7 - He will be forsaken by His disciples who will scatter - Matt. 26:31, Mark. 14:50 - Jesus' disciples forsook Him and scattered.

9. Election Is God's Decree

Jacob Arminius defined election this way:

“The decree of the good pleasure of God in Christ, by which he resolved within himself from all eternity, to justify, adopt, and endow with everlasting life, believers on whom he had decreed to bestow faith (Eph 1; Rom 9).[Arminius, “Public Disputations,” in Arminius Speaks, 8]”

Elsewhere, Arminius defines it similarly: “An eternal and gracious decree of God in Christ, by which he determines to justify and adopt believers, and to endow them with life eternal.”

Arminius' definition begins by describing election as a decree. More specifically...

- It is God's decree. First, it is “the decree . . . of God.” Arminius writes, “God indeed is the cause, as possessing the right of determining as He wills both about men as His creatures, and especially as sinners, and about His blessings (Jer 18:6; Matt 20:14, 15).”[Ibid., “Public Disputations” in Arminius Speaks, 8-9]
 - Arminius goes on to explain the “efficient,” “inwardly-moving,” “disposing,” “external,” and “instrumental” causes of predestination as well, each of which he locates in God's person and work. [6]
 - In US legal usage, a decree was an order of court equity determining the rights of all parties to a suit, according to equity and good conscience. In 1938, the US Federal courts replace the word ‘decree’ with ‘judgment in most types of suits. Universally a decree is a rule of law, issued by a head of state, according to certain procedures. It has a force of law. In non-legal English usage, the term refers to any authoritarian decision.
 - There are two types of legal ‘decrees’ (judgments):
 - **A final decree** or judgement that fully and finally disposes of the whole litigation, determining all questions raised by the case and it leaves nothing that requires further judicial action. (Since God's court is the highest courts, there are no vehicles for appeals.)
 - **An interlocutory decree** or judgement that is a preliminary decree that does not fully determine the suit and therefore, is not final. An interlocutory decree requires some further proceedings before an entry of a final decree.
 - *“Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. Jeremiah 18:6*
 - *“Take what is yours and go, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?” Mathew 20:14-15*
- The purpose of God's decree or election was to identify upon whom he determined to bestow faith.
- The purpose of God's decree or election was to justify and adopt believers and to endow them with life eternal.

10. Election is God's selection of those who will be saved

11. Election includes God's examination of individuals

12. Election is God exercising His sovereign will to determine or decree Him bestowing mercy on the 'chosen' or 'elected' individuals.

13. Resolving the Great Debate between selecting those who will be saved and God's will that all should come to everlasting life in Christ

Two Views Of Election

With the above analysis of the 'election' of Israel as the Chosen People of God, we have seen this is not an election to salvation.

We also reviewed several New Testament verses which definitely addresses salvation.

But there's a mystery here.

It appears that some verses describe election one way, and then some verses describe election totally different.

How do we handle this?

I have charted the two views below and took an out-of-the-box logical statement to see if we can make sense of this mystery

³ 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, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before ¹ Him. In love ⁵ ¹ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the ¹ kind intention of His will,

Ephesians 1:3-5

Election
Two positions.
How to
reconcile?

⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the ¹ knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony ¹ *given* at ¹ the proper time.

1 Timothy 2:4-6

How do we reconcile these two great eternal truths proclaimed by the same apostle under the Holy Spirit's inspiration? After months of prayer, study and research, it occurs to me that the solution is incredibly simple. There are two elections which allows us to construct a congruent or "eternal now" definitions of election which resolves the tension.

The Bible frequently uses something called a Remez. A Remez is a hint of a hidden message or a deeper meaning; something "below the surface" or "behind the words" that reveals another message or understanding. This is often called the Law of Double Reference. .

In Daniel 8 we are given the details of Daniel's third vision where he sees two horns (Ram and Goat) locked in battle. The Arch-Angel, Gabriel, is sent to explain the meaning of this vision. One of the facts told in this vision concerns a Northern Greek king who rises up, overthrows Israel and sets himself up as king, and erects a statue of a pig in the Jewish temple right in the Holy of Holies. This is called an Abomination of Desolation.

History records the fulfillment of this prophecy in the period 174-164 BC, when Antiochus IV Epiphanes invaded Israel. Antiochus was not the rightful successor to the Seleucid (Northern Greece) throne, but he had forced his way to the throne and acquired the nickname, the madman. Antiochus is believed to be a type of the little horn/beast who would later arise from among the ten horns of the Roman Empire as foretold in Revelation and a later vision of Daniel.

Antiochus was man of excessive pride and replaced Israel's true worship with idolatrous worship. He was responsible for massively killing God's Holy People, abolished sacrifices at the temple. He attempted to trample down many of the godly believers, set himself up as great as the Prince of the host (an arrogant, direct challenge to the God of Israel.)

Antiochus IV Epiphanes 'prefigured' the Antichrist and the Abomination of Desolation as later foretold by Jesus and revealed in Revelation.

Therefore Daniel's third vision had two purposes. First, it prophesized certain events that would come to pass. Secondly, it gave us a bit of information about a much larger prophecy that will also come to past. Israel did not have the full picture of the Antichrist until after later revelations by God in future dreams of Daniel and by Jesus himself.

The point is this. To understand the Antiochus prophecy, Daniel's third vision was sufficient. To understand the Antichrist prophecy, more information was necessary.

Let's apply this 'Law of Double Reference' technique to election and see if we can reconcile why two seemingly opposite positions are revealed by the same apostle.

We have already seen that the Bible has revealed two different kinds of election. Let's call the first Abrahamic Election since it deals with the 'election' of the nation Israel as the Chosen People of God. Let's call the second Salvation Election since it deals primarily with the individual saints (Old or New Testament). By separating 'election' into these two camps a lot of confusion dissipates.

Abrahamic Election is substantially different from Salvation Election.

- Abrahamic Election explains how God chose the Jews to be His chosen people (nation).
 - *Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*
- Abrahamic Election is corporate and only provides a 'special selection of people' to enjoy God's protection as a nation.
- All Jews were elected as a Chosen People of God.
- But not all Jews were saved. Many, many rebelled against God, and will spend eternity separated from God.

Salvation Election pertains to how God brings about eternal salvation of individual human beings, both Jew and Gentile, in both the Old and New Testaments.

Salvation Election is individual and is to eternal salvation. In God's providence, He has chosen to reveal His dealings with His people more fully in the New Testament.

- All people who were Salvation Elected were predestined to be conformed to the image of God and to become the adopted sons (and daughters) of God, the Father and every one of them will spend eternity with God.
- Not all who claim to be followers of Christ will spend eternity with God.

A third difference between Abrahamic (corporate) and Salvation (individual) Election needs to be introduced. God revealed in the New Testament that Salvation Election is somehow intertwined with, and connected to foreknowledge in a significant way. And in order to understand foreknowledge, we need to understand eternity. Then election will make sense.

Must Understand Eternity



Must Understand Foreknowledge



To Understand Election

- 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; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. Romans 8:29-30
- Romans 11:2 ² God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?
- 1 Peter 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, ^[a] to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace ^[b] be yours in the fullest measure.

As Paul anticipated Jewish objections to the preaching of the Gospel of grace to the Gentiles (Rom. 9-11), He explained that God always had “a remnant chosen by grace....His people whom he foreknew) (Rom. 11:1-5), those such as Abraham in the Old Testament and the apostle Paul in the New Testament, who experienced Salvation Election as well as Abrahamic Election.

I believe one of the problems John Calvin and subsequent Calvinists may have had resulted since they failed to see the difference between Israel and the individual. They were not attuned to God dealing differently with Israel as a special people and the individual elect in Salvation Election.

When differences between Abrahamic Election and Salvation Election are as substantial, one should not extrapolate between them as if there were no differences and they were interchangeable. For example, whenever these issues are raised people ask, “What about Jacob and Esau?” (Rom 9:11-13). H. A. Ironside explains the differences between Abrahamic Election and Salvation Election succinctly, and why they should be differentiated and not conflated:

“There is no question here of predestination to Heaven or reprobation to hell; we are not told here, nor anywhere else, that before children are born it is God’s purpose to send one to heaven and one to hell....The passage has entirely to do with privilege here on earth.” (Ironside, Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans, p. 116)

I challenge all interested readers to read Romans 9-11 carefully from the prospective of the two types of election-Abrahamic (corporate) and Salvation (individual), remembering that “Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Neither are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants” (Rom. 9:6-7 ⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; ⁷ nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s ^[a] descendants, but: “^[b] THROUGH ISAAC YOUR ^[c] DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED.”).

One was not saved because they were ‘elected’ by the corporate election and were Israelites. So this election did not bestow salvation or the guarantee thereof.

One of the biggest arguments I’ve seen proposed by hyper-Calvinists is that election is not based on foreknowledge, but rather God’s conscious thinking, decision and implementation, and that this all happened in eternity prior to the foundation of the world being formed. Let’s examine this concept by defining eternity.

Defining Eternity

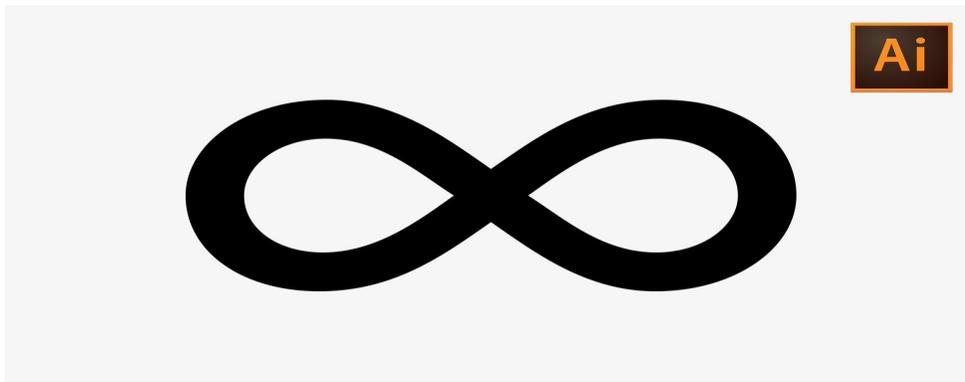
Christians refer to *eternity* all of the time, but rarely stop to think about what it means. Many think that eternity means “a really long time” or “endless time.” These concepts are helpful to some, but they do not even begin to accurately describe eternity. Therefore they’re equally deficient to enable understanding of God’s foreknowledge.



I took quite a number of math courses while at the University of Nevada to support my studies in engineering and I remember when I was first introduced to the infinity variable.

The definition of infinity is two fold. In general, infinity is the quality or state of endlessness or having no limits in terms of time, space, or other quantity. In mathematics, infinity is the conceptual expression of such a "numberless" number. It is often symbolized by the lemniscate (also known as the *lemniscate of Bernoulli*), which looks something like the numeral 8 written sideways. This symbol for infinity was first used in the 1600s by the mathematician John Wallis

As a mathematical definition, it is larger than the largest value that can ever be created, as a non-mathematical definition infinity is defined without bounds.



As stated above, the symbol for infinity is this simple image, which looks like the number 8 turned on its side, is actually known as the Lemniscate, which means "ribbon." It was first introduced during the seventeenth century by John Wallis, an English mathematician who wanted to create a symbol to represent the idea of infinity - a sum that is larger than any number that can ever be created

In many cultures **infinity symbolizes eternity, empowerment, and everlasting love.** Infinity comes from the Latin word "infinitas," meaning boundlessness. It has no beginning and no end,. For just a moment, visualize all events, all thought, all action, everything as constantly circling around the ‘8’ at a speed much greater than the speed of light, or any speed man has been able to achieve or comprehend. And for just a moment, visualize yourself standing right in the center of the Lemniscate ribbon where all four lines intersect. This would mean that all events, thoughts, actions, everything would be passing by you so frequently, so quickly it would appear they would all be happening simultaneously. You would not need to look to the past or to the future to know what would or what did happen. That is because it all happens ‘now’.

Bill Pratt, is a Christian apologetics author, teacher theologian and philosopher. Pratt holds a Masters Degree in Christian Apologetics from Southern Evangelical Seminary, and wrote the following in his published article, What Does Eternity Mean,

“The difficulty we have is that we are time-bounded creatures trying to describe a timeless God. Our words cannot comprehend eternity, but we can make claims about what eternity is not. Eternity literally means “timelessness” or “nontemporality.” It refers to the nonexistence of time. God lives outside of time and is not limited by time. Although the universe He created is ‘now’ in time, God is not.”

A. W. Tozer, an American Christian pastor, preacher, author, magazine editor, and spiritual mentor. For his work, he received two honorary doctoral degrees, comments, *“Time marks the beginning of created existence, and because God never began to exist it can have no application to him.”* He continues, *“Time is known to us by a succession of events. It is the way we account for consecutive changes in the universe.”*

God does not experience anything as a sequence of events. He does not think or act in terms of step 1, then step 2, then step 3. He experiences everything as one Eternal Now. He sees our entire earthly existence in one eternal “instant.”

Therefore, the second truth, relating to the understanding of Salvation Election, is understanding God’s relation to, and the experience of, “time”. While God experiences “time” in the linear, time-space continuum, or chronological experience as a function of his omniscience, and omnipresence, He alone is not bound by “time’s” constraints or parameters. Unlike man, God has always existed in what C. S. Lewis termed “Eternal Now.”

God has always experienced the totality of time and everything eternal (eternity past – before time and eternity future – after time) as the present. Thus, God is described as living in the Eternal Now and knowing all things simultaneously.

Defining Foreknowledge

The Bible is telling us in the concept of “foreknowledge” that God does not just know all things that have, or ever will happen, as if they were the present moment to Him, but that He has, and always has had, the “experience” of all things, events, and people as a punctiliar present moment?



That, I believe, is precisely what is suggested by the biblical concept of foreknowledge. From God’s perspective **there can never have been a single moment when God has not had the totality of His experience (their acceptance and after, or their rejection and after) with each and every human being as part of His “present” punctiliar (i.e. eternal) experience and knowledge.**

God has always experienced those accepting him and praising him in the New Heaven and New Earth as well as those who have rejected him and have been sent to perdition. Thus, the ones He has always experienced accepting and worshipping him are elect and He works in an especially solicitous fashion to make their call effectual and they will believe as opposed to must believe.

Conversely, God has always experienced the rebellion and the rejection of those who are lost and they will not accept his invitation and call (as opposed to cannot accept, as in the Calvinist model).

Romans 8:29-30 provides additional meaning to foreknowledge and the process of salvation. 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;* ³⁰ *and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

The second word in verse 20 is the key....‘those’. ‘Who are the those’? Are they mankind? Everyone? Believers? Non-Believers? They can be non-other than ‘Believers’. Thus the correct reading of this verse is that those Believers God foreknew in eternity (NOW), he predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son (and adopted as sons), so that He (Jesus) would be the first born among many breather, and those whom He predestined, He also called (or elected) to be saved, and those whom he called (elected) to be saved, He also justified, and those whom He justified, He also glorified.

Defining Election to Salvation



Christ must be central to election as both its object and its subject. God elects Jesus Christ to be the Savior, and then elects people only "in him." In Jesus and his cross, God has said, "Yes!" to all people; there is no corresponding divine "No!" If anyone has been elected to salvation, it is because God first elected Jesus Christ and then, by grace, included sinners in that election. If anyone rejects their inclusion in Christ's election, it is solely because of their inexplicable rejection of the grace God extended to them in Jesus Christ.. Salvation is by grace alone and Christ alone." Election to salvation is good news, because it is not dependent on the frail and faltering free will of sinners, and no one is excluded except those who willfully exclude themselves.

God's Election to Salvation of Believers and the Believing Community.

In Scripture salvation is considered the work of God. People are lost from spending eternity with God and it is God alone who saves them; besides Him there is no other savior (*Isa 43:11 "I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me.*) There is no other plan of salvation (*Acts 4:12 ¹² And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*")

Whatever it be, whether false gods, other human beings, angels or other supernatural beings, or even ourselves, they cannot save us. Because it is God alone who saves, those who are saved are seen to be the ones whom God has chosen (or elected) to be saved.

This does not mean that man was not in some way involved in their salvation, but it does mean that God took the initiative, effected the plan, provided the grace, and deserves all the credit for the salvation of his people. None who is ultimately redeemed can boast that they saved themselves or that they added anything to the salvation that they received through Jesus Christ.



1. Those who are saved, the believers in Jesus Christ, are called "the elect (chosen)"

- *Matt 24:22* ²² Unless those days had been cut short, no ^[a]life would have been saved; but for the sake of the ^[b]elect those days will be cut short.
- *Rom 8:33* ³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;
- *Col 3:12* ¹² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and ^[a]patience.
- *Titus 1:1* I Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, ^[a]for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,
- *Rev 17:14* ¹⁴ These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

2. They are called the elect because God chose them to be saved

- *Matt 22:14* ¹⁴ For many are ^[a]called, but few are chosen."
- *John 6:37* ³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.
- *John 6:39* ³⁹ 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
- *John 15:16* ¹⁶ You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you
- *John 15:19* ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.
- *Acts 13:48* ⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of ^[a]the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.
- *Rom 11:5* ⁵ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's ^[a]gracious choice.
- *1 Thess 1:4* ⁴ knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;

3. This election is understood to be an eternal act in accordance with God's foreknowledge or predetermination

- *Eph 1:4⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before ^[a]Him. In love*
- *1 Peter 1:1-2_Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, ^[a]to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace ^[b]be yours in the fullest measure.*

4. The term is applied to those who believe and also to potential believers those whom God has yet to save are called the elect

- *2 Tim 1:9⁹ 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,*

Inasmuch as God has chosen some to be saved, he has also chosen how he will save them.

1. Jesus the Messiah is God's Chosen One and believers are chosen in him

- *Eph 1:4⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before ^[a]Him. In love*
- *God chooses to regenerate through the word of truth*
- *James 1:18¹⁸ In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be ^[a]a kind of first fruits ^[b]among His creatures*

2. The work of the Holy Spirit

- *1 Peter 1:1-2_Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, ^[a]to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace ^[b]be yours in the fullest measure.*

3. Personal Faith

- *2 Thess 2:13¹³ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you ^[a]from the beginning for salvation ^[b]through sanctification ^[c]by the Spirit and faith in the truth.*

God's elect are chosen specifically to

• Show God's praise

- *1 Peter 2:9⁹ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*

• To live in obedience to Christ

- *1 Peter 1:2² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, ^[a]to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace ^[b]be yours in the fullest measure.*

• As God's chosen ones they are protected by Him.

• God works everything together for their good

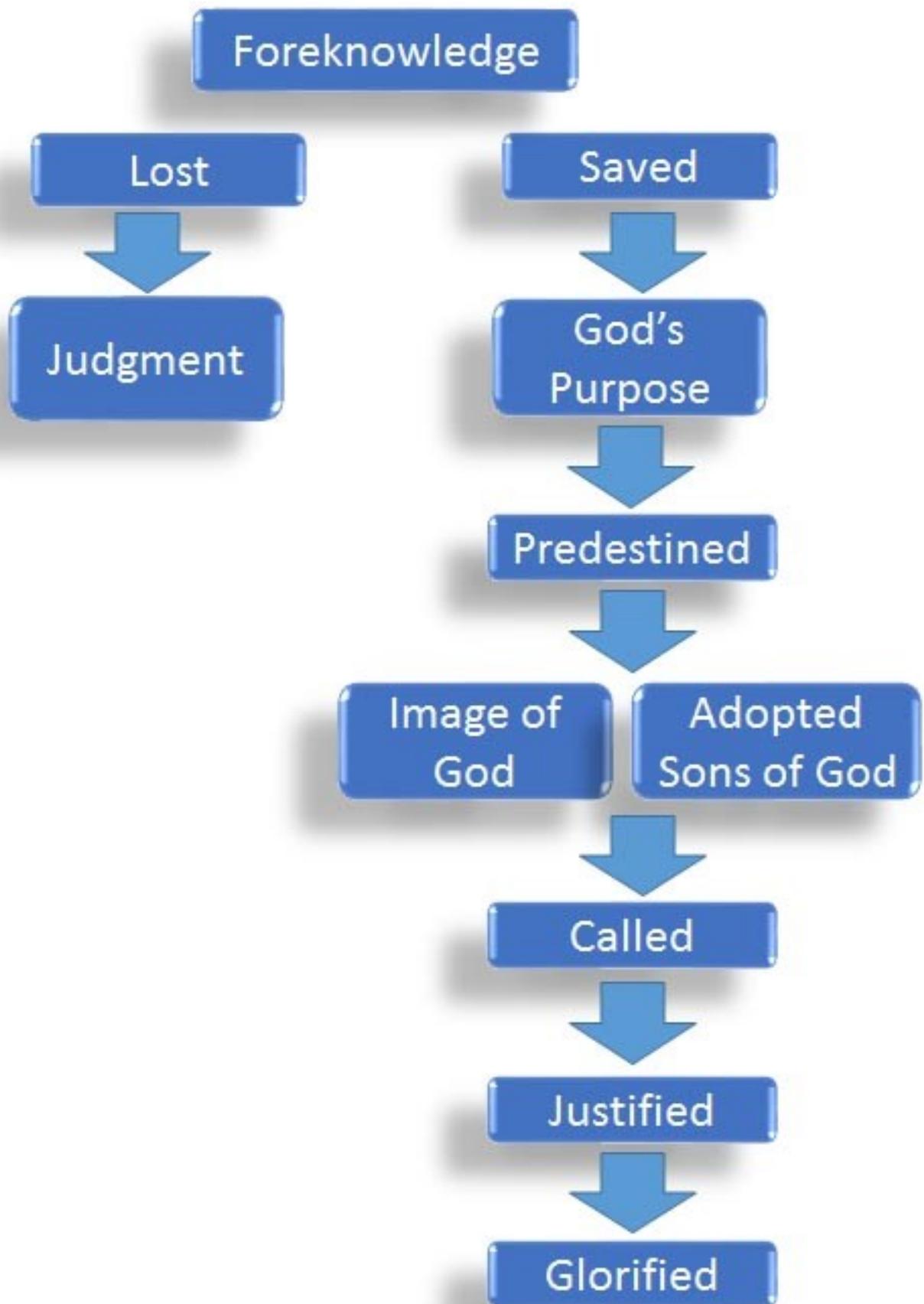
- *Rom 8:28²⁸ And we know that ^[a]God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*

• None can bring any charge against them

- *Rom 8:33³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;*

• Nothing can separate them from the love of God in Jesus Christ the Lord

- *Rom 8:39³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*



14. God's Election to Salvation of Believers and the Believing Community.

On Predestination

By John Wesley

Sermon 58

(text from the 1872 edition - Thomas Jackson, editor)

Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son: -- Whom he did predestinate, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Romans 8:29, 30

1. Our beloved brother Paul," says St. Peter, "according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:15, 16)

2. It is not improbable, that among those things spoken by St. Paul, which are hard to be understood, the Apostle Peter might place what he speaks on this subject in the eighth and ninth chapters of his epistle to the Romans. And it is certain not only the unlearned, but many of the most learned men in the world, and not the "unstable" only, but many who seemed to be well established in the truths of the gospel, have for several centuries, "wrested" these passages "to their own destruction."

3. "Hard to be understood" we may well allow them to be, when we consider how men of the strongest understanding, improved by all the advantages of education, have continually differed in judgment concerning them. And this very consideration, that there is so wide a difference upon the head between men of the greatest learning, sense, and piety, one might imagine would make all who now speak upon the subject exceedingly wary and self-diffident. But I know not how it is, that just the reverse is observed in every part of the Christian world. No writers upon earth appear more positive than those who write on this difficult subject. Nay, the same men, who, writing upon any other subject, are remarkably modest and humble, on this alone lay aside all self-distrust,

And speak ex cathedra infallible.

This is peculiarly observable of almost all those who assert the absolute decrees. But surely it is possible to avoid this: Whatever we propose, may be proposed with modesty, and with deference to those wise and good men who are of a contrary opinion; and the rather, because so much has been said already, on every part of the question, so many volumes have been written, that it is scarcely possible to say anything which has not been said before. All I would offer at present, not to the lovers of contention, but to men of piety and candour, are a few short hints, which perhaps may cast some light on the text above recited.

4. The more frequently and carefully I have considered it, the more I have been inclined to think that the apostle is not here (as many have supposed) describing a chain of causes and effects; (this does not seem to have entered into his heart;) but simply showing the method in which God works; the order in which the several branches of salvation constantly follow each other. And this, I apprehend, will be clear to any serious and impartial inquirer, surveying the work of God either forward or backward; either from the beginning to the end, or from the end to the beginning.

5. And, First, let us look forward on the whole work of God in the salvation of man; considering it from the beginning, the first point, till it terminates in glory. The first point is, the foreknowledge of God. God foreknew those in every nation, those who would believe, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things. But, in order to throw light upon this dark question, it should be well observed, that when we speak of God's foreknowledge, we do not speak according to the nature of things, but after the manner of men. For, if we speak properly, there is no such thing as either foreknowledge or afterknowledge in God. All time, or rather all eternity, (for the children of men,) being present to him at once, he does not know one thing in one point of view from everlasting to everlasting. As all time, with everything that exists therein, is present with him at once, so he sees at once, whatever was is, or will be, to the end of time. But observe: We must not think they are because he knows them. No: he knows them because they are. Just as I (if one may be allowed to compare the things of men with the deep things of God) now know the sun shines: Yet the sun does not shine because I know it, but I know it because he shines. My knowledge supposes the sun to shine; but does not in anywise cause it. In like manner, God knows that man sins; for he knows all things: Yet we do not sin because he knows it, but he knows it because we sin; and his knowledge supposes our sin, but does not in anywise cause it. In a word, God, looking on all ages, from the creation to the consummation, as a moment, and seeing at once whatever is in the hearts of all the children of men, knows every one that does or does not believe, in every age or nation. Yet what he knows, whether faith or unbelief, is in nowise caused by his knowledge. Men are as free in believing or not believing as if he did not know it at all.

6. Indeed, if man were not free, he could not be accountable either for his thoughts, word, or actions. If he were not free, he would not be capable either of reward or punishment; he would be incapable either of virtue or vice, of being either morally good or bad. If he had no more freedom than the sun, the moon, or the stars, he would be no more accountable than them. On supposition that he had no more freedom than them, the stones of the earth would be as capable of reward, and as liable to punishment, as man: One would be as accountable as the other. Yea, and it would be as absurd to ascribe either virtue or vice to him as to ascribe it to the stock of a tree.

7. But to proceed: "Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." This is the Second step: (To speak after the manner of men: For in fact, there is nothing before or after in God:) In other words, God decrees, from everlasting to everlasting, that all who believe in the Son of his love, shall be conformed to his image; shall be saved from all inward and outward sin, into all inward and outward holiness. Accordingly, it is a plain undeniable fact all who truly believe in the name of the Son of God do now "receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls;" and this in virtue of the unchangeable, irreversible, irresistible decree of God, -- "He that believeth shall be saved;" "he that believeth not, shall be damned."

8. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." This is the Third step: (Still remembering that we speak after the manner of men:) To express it a little more largely: According to his fixed decree, that believers shall be saved, those whom he foreknows as such, he calls both outwardly and inwardly, -- outwardly by the word of his grace, and inwardly by his Spirit. This inward application of his word to the heart, seems to be what some term "effectual calling:" And it implies, the calling them children of God; the accepting them "in the Beloved;" the justifying them "freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."

9. "Whom he called, them he justified." This is the Fourth step. It is generally allowed that the word "justified" here is taken in a peculiar sense; that it means he made them just or righteous. He executed his decree, "conforming them to the image of his Son;" or, as we usually speak, sanctified them.

10. It remains, "whom he justified, them he also glorified." This is the Last step. Having made them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," he gives them "the kingdom which was prepared for them before the world began." This is the order wherein, "according to the counsel of his will," the plan he has laid down from eternity, he saves those whom he foreknew; the true believers in every place and generation.

11. The same great work of salvation by faith, according to the foreknowledge and decree of God, may appear in a still clearer light, if we view it backward, from the end to the beginning. Suppose then you stood with the "great multitude which no man can number, out of every nation, and tongue, and kindred, and people," who "give praise unto Him that stretch upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever;" you would not find one among them all that were entered into glory, who was not a witness of that great truth, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" "not one of all that innumerable company who was not sanctified before he was glorified. By holiness he was prepared for glory; according to the invariable will of the Lord, that the crown, purchased by the blood of his son, should be given to none but those who are renewed by his Spirit. He is become "the author of eternal salvation" only "to them that obey him;" "that obey him inwardly and outwardly; that are holy in heart, and holy in all manner of conversation."

12. And could you take view of all those upon earth who are now sanctified, you would find no one of these had been sanctified till after he was called. He was first called, not only with an outward call, by the word and the messengers of God, but likewise with an inward call, by his Spirit applying his word, enabling him to believe in the only-begotten Son of God, and bearing testimony with his spirit that he was a child of God. And it was by this very means they were all sanctified. It was by a sense of the love of God shed abroad in his heart, that everyone of them was enabled to love God. Loving God, he loved his neighbor as himself, and had power to walk in all his commandments blameless. This is a rule which admits of no exception. God calls a sinner his own, that is, justifies him, before he sanctifies. And by this very thing, the consciousness of his favour, he works in him that grateful, filial affection, from which spring every good temper, and word, and work.

13. And who are they that are thus called of God, but those whom he had before predestinated, or decreed, to "conform to the image of his Son?" This decree (still speaking after the manner of men) precedes every man's calling: Every believer was predestinated before he was called. For God calls none, but "according to the counsel of his will," according to this Orothesis, or plan of acting, which he had laid down before the foundation of the world.

14. Once more: As all that are called were predestinated, so all whom God has predestinated he foreknew. He knew, he saw them as believers, and as such predestinated them to salvation, according to his eternal decree, "He that believeth shall be saved." Thus we see the whole process of the work of God, from the end to the beginning. Who are glorified? None but those who were first sanctified. Who are sanctified? None but those who were first justified. Who are justified? None but those who were first predestinated? Who are predestinated? None but those whom God foreknew as believers. Thus the purpose and word of God stand unshaken as the pillars of heaven: -- "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." And thus God is clear from the blood of all men; since whoever perishes, perishes by his own act and deed. "They will not come unto me," says the Savior of men; and "there is no salvation in any other." They "will not believe;" and there is no other way either to present or eternal salvation. Therefore, their blood is upon their own head; and God is still "justified in his saying" that he "willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of his truth."

15. The sum of all is this: the almighty, all-wise God sees and knows, from everlasting to everlasting, all that is, that was, and that is to come, through one eternal now. With him nothing is either past or future, but all things equally present. He has, therefore, if we speak according to the truth of things, no foreknowledge, no afterknowledge. This would be ill consistent with the Apostle's words, "With him is no variableness or shadow of turning;" and with the account he gives of himself by the Prophet, "I the Lord change not." Yet when he speaks to us, knowing whereof we are made, knowing the scantiness of our understanding, he lets himself down to our capacity, and speaks of himself after the manner of men. Thus, in condescension to our weakness, he speaks of his own purpose, counsel, plan, foreknowledge. Not that God has any need of counsel, of purpose, or of planning his work beforehand. Far be it from us to impute these to the Most High; to measure him by ourselves! It is merely in compassion to us that he speaks thus of himself, as foreknowing the things in heaven or earth, and as predestinating or fore-ordaining them. But can we possibly imagine that these expressions are to be taken literally? To one who was so gross in his conceptions might he not say, "Thinkest thou I am such an one as thyself?" Not so: As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than thy ways. I know, decree, work, in such a manner as it is not possible for thee to conceive: But to give thee some faint, glimmering knowledge of my ways, I use the language of men, and suit myself to thy apprehensions in this thy infant state of existence.

16. What is it, then, that we learn from this whole account? It is this, and no more: -- (1) God knows all believers; (2) wills that they should be saved from sin; (3) to that end, justifies them, (4) sanctifies and (5) takes them to glory.

O that men would praise the Lord for this his goodness; and that they would be content with this plain account of it, and not endeavour to wade into those mysteries which are too deep for angels to fathom!

Elect and Called

Are these two words used interchangeable in the Bible? Pretty much, the answer is yes. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew-Aramaic and the New Testament in Greek and each language had a word for basically the same thing. In Greek the word is "eklektos" and in Hebrew it is "bachar." Both mean choose, chosen, selected, elect.

In the New Testament, the word "eklektos" shows up eight times and here are two examples. Luke 18:7 says; ⁷ *now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, ^[a] and will He delay long over them?* Romans 8:33 says; ³³ *Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;*

Yet the same "eklektos" is translated as "chosen" in 1 Peter 2:9; ⁹ *But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

In the Old Testament, "bachar" is sometimes translated as chosen and sometimes elect. The choice between these two words varies by translation. In the New King James version, Isaiah 42:1 says; *"My Elect One in whom My soul delights!"* but the New American Standard Bible says in the same passage; *"Behold, My Servant, whom I ^[a] uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the ^[b] nations. ."*

The way you can investigate word origins for yourself is to use a good Concordance including the corresponding Strong's numbers.

Strong's is a system giving every single word in the original languages of the Bible a number. That number tells you the root word, what it means, and how many times it is translated by each meaning.

For instance, when I look up "elect" in the Concordance it tells me all locations of that word in the Bible. It also tells me that "elect" is Strong's number "1588" When I go to "1588" in the Strong's listing, I see that it is the Greek word "eklektos." From there I continue with the meaning of the word which I can compare to the meaning of any other word I have looked up.

It is to our great benefit that there is more than one translation of the Bible and that there are so many study helps so readily available. Remember, no matter which one you "eklektos", be sure you "bachar" to read God's Word every day.

Elect and Chosen

The believer is also designated as **elect and chosen**. Jesus said to His disciples: “¹⁶ *You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.*” (John 15:16) The apostles did not originate the choice; Jesus did. He chose them out of the world of lost, guilty sinners (John 15:19 ¹⁹ *If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.*) This choice was made in eternity. Note Paul’s words, “⁴ *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before ^[a]Him. In love*”

The purpose of God’s choice was our perfect standing. Negatively, we are without blame; our sins have been forgiven and the guilt of our sin has been pardoned. Positively, we are holy in position because we are completely covered by Christ’s righteousness.

As God’s elect, no one can condemn us, because our position is secure (*Romans 8:33-34* ³³ *Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was ^[a]raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*) **Our election is according to God’s foreknowledge** (*1 Peter 1:2* ² *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, ^[a]to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace ^[b]be yours in the fullest measure*)



- How are Christians elected by God?
- God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4-5).
- We were not elected as individuals regardless of our faith, but as a group of people who chose to come to God through faith in Christ and in obedience to His gospel.
- If not, how can we be held responsible for making our call and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10)?

Question: "What does the Bible say about love?"

Answer: The Bible has a great deal to say about love. In fact, the Bible says that “love is of God” and “God is love” (1 John 4:7–8); in other words, love is a fundamental characteristic of who God is. Everything God does is impelled and influenced by His love.

The Bible uses several different words for “love” in the Hebrew and Greek, interchanging them depending on context. Some of these words mean “affectionate love”; others indicate “friendship”; and still others, “erotic, sexual love.” There is also a distinct word for the type of love that God displays. In the Greek, this word is *agape*, and it refers to a benevolent and charitable love that seeks the best for the loved one.

The Bible gives many examples of love: the caring provision of Boaz for Ruth; the deep friendship of David and Jonathan; the poetic, passionate love of Solomon and the Shulamite; the enduring commitment of Hosea to Gomer; the fatherly love of Paul for Timothy and John for the church; and, of course, the sacrificial, saving love of Christ for the elect.

Agape, the benevolent, selfless love that God shows, is mentioned often in the New Testament, including in the “love chapter,” 1 Corinthians 13. There, love’s characteristics are listed: love is patient and kind; love doesn’t envy, boast, or dishonor others; love is not proud or self-seeking; love is not easily angered, doesn’t keep a record of wrongs, and doesn’t delight in evil; rather, love rejoices with the truth; love always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres; love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4–8). Of the greatest of God’s gifts, faith, hope, and love, “the greatest . . . is love” (verse 13).

The Bible says that God was motivated by love to save the world (John 3:16). God’s love is best seen in the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf (1 John 4:9). And God’s love does not require us to be “worthy” to receive it; His love is truly benevolent and gracious: “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

The Bible says that, since true love is part of God’s nature, God is the source of love. He is the initiator of a loving relationship with us. Any love we have for God is simply a response to His sacrificial love for us: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10). Our human understanding of love is flawed, weak, and incomplete, but the more we look at Jesus, the better we understand true love.

The Bible says that God’s love for us in Christ has resulted in our being brought into His family: “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1). Just as the father in the parable showed love to his prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), so our Heavenly Father receives us with joy when we come to Him in faith. He makes us “accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6, NKJV).

The Bible says that we are to love others the way that God loves us. We are to love the family of God (1 Peter 2:17). We are to love our enemies—that is, we are to actively seek what is best for them (Matthew 5:44). Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25). As we show benevolent, selfless love, we reflect God’s love to a lost and dying world. “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

The Bible says that our love for God is related to our obedience of Him: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3; cf. John 14:15). We serve God out of love for Him. And God’s love for us enables us to obey Him freely, without the burden of guilt or the fear of punishment.

First John 4:18 says that “perfect love drives out fear” (this is again the word *agape*). The dismissal of the fear of condemnation is one of the main functions of God’s love. The person without Christ is under judgment and has plenty to fear (John 3:18), but once a person is in Christ, the fear of judgment is gone. Part of understanding the love of God is knowing that God’s judgment fell on Jesus at the cross so we can be spared. Jesus described Himself as the Savior: “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:17). The very next verse reminds us that the only person who must fear judgment is the one who rejects Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that nothing can separate the believer from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:38–39). God’s love does not wax and wane; it is not a fickle, emotional sensation. God’s love for sinners is why Christ died on the cross. God’s love for those who trust in Christ is why He holds them in His hand and promises never to let them go (John 10:29).

Election is the act of God whereby in eternity past He chose those who will be saved. Election is *unconditional*, because it does not depend on anything outside of God, such as good works or foreseen faith ([Romans 9:16](#)). This doctrine is repeatedly taught in the Bible, and is also demanded by our knowledge of God. To begin with, let's look at the biblical evidence.

The Bible says prior to salvation, all people are dead in sin--*spiritually dead* ([Ephesians 2:1-3](#)). In this state of death, the sinner is utterly unable to respond to any spiritual stimulus and therefore unable to love God, obey Him, or please Him in any way. Scripture says the mind of every unbeliever "is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for *it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God*" ([Romans 8:7-8](#), emphasis added). That describes a state of total hopelessness: spiritual death.

The effect of all this is that no sinner can ever make the first move in the salvation process. This is what Jesus meant in [John 6:44](#), when He said, "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him."

This is also why the Bible repeatedly stresses that salvation is *wholly God's work*. Consider these passages:

In [Acts 13:48](#) we read, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." [Acts 16:14](#) tells us that Lydia was saved when, "... the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul."

[Romans 8:29-30](#) states, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

[Ephesians 1:4-5,11](#) reads, "Just 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 to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will ... also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will."

[Ephesians 2:8](#) says even our faith is a gift from God.

In [2 Thessalonians 2:13](#), the apostle Paul tells his readers, "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation."

[Second Timothy 1:9](#) informs us that God "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."

Occasionally someone will suggest that God's election is based on His foreknowledge of certain events. This argument suggests that God simply looks into the future to see who will believe, and He chooses those whom He sees choosing Him. Notice that [1 Peter 1:2](#) says the elect are chosen "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," and [Romans 8:29](#) says, "whom He foreknew, He also predestined." And if divine foreknowledge simply means God's knowledge of what will happen in advance, then these arguments may appear to have some weight behind them.

But that is not the biblical meaning of "foreknowledge." When the Bible speaks of God's foreknowledge, it refers to God's establishment of a love relationship with that person. The word *know*, in both the Old and New Testament, refers to much more than mere cognitive knowledge of a person. Such passages as [Hosea 13:4-5](#); [Amos 3:2 \(KJV\)](#); and [Romans 11:2](#) clearly indicate this. For example, [1 Peter 1:20](#) says Christ was "foreknown before the foundation of the world." Surely this means more than that God the Father looked into the future to behold Christ! It means He had an eternal, loving relationship with Him. The same is true of the elect, whom we are told God "foreknew" ([Romans 8:29](#)). That means He knew them--he *loved* them--before the foundation of the world.

If God's choice of the elect is unconditional, does this rule out human responsibility? Paul asks and answers that very question in [Romans 9:19-20](#). He says God's choice of the elect is an act of mercy. Left to themselves, even the elect would persist in sin and be lost, because they are taken from the same fallen lump of clay as the rest of humanity. God alone is responsible for their salvation, but that does not eradicate the responsibility of those who persist in sin and are lost--because they do it willfully, and not under compulsion. They are responsible for their sin, not God.

The Bible affirms human responsibility right alongside the doctrine of divine sovereignty. Moreover, the offer of mercy in the gospel is extended to all alike. [Isaiah 55:1](#) and [Revelation 22:17](#) call "whosoever will" to be saved. [Isaiah 45:22](#) and [Acts 17:30](#) command all men to turn to God, repent and be saved. [First Timothy 2:4](#) and [2 Peter 3:9](#) tell us that God is not willing that any should perish, but desires that all should be saved. Finally, the Lord Jesus said that, "the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out" ([John 6:37](#)).

In summary, we can say that God has had a special love relationship with the elect from all eternity, and on the basis of that love relationship chosen them for salvation. The ultimate question of why God chose some for salvation and left others in their sinful state is one that we, with our finite knowledge, cannot answer. We do know that God's attributes always are in perfect harmony with each other, so that God's sovereignty will always operate in perfect harmony with His goodness, love, wisdom, and justice.

John Wesley's problems with Calvin's "double-predestination" can be summarized in a three-fold manner:

1. It is a rejection of free will. Thus, our seeming choices are not choices at all; it is simply smoke and mirrors.
2. It raises serious questions about the justice of God, who holds persons accountable for something they cannot choose in the first place. It is tantamount to a parent insisting her child spill his juice on the carpet and then punishing him for it.
3. It undermines the motivation for Christian discipleship and mission. Why go into the world and preach the gospel if it has already been determined who is saved and who is condemned? The Calvinist response that we should preach the gospel because Christ commands it, still does not deal with the truth that those chosen for life will accept it, whether we preach or not, and those assigned to perdition will reject the message, whether we proclaim it or not; the decrees of God, after all, will not be falsified.

Wesley quotes *2 Peter 3:9*: "*The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" For Wesley, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination is contrary to the testimony of Scripture that God offers the invitation to all and that all are able to accept it.

Marriage is used as a metaphor for our relationship to God many times in the Bible. Let's look at the picture God wants His people to see about their relationship to Him, and His relationship to them.

(1) Marriage is the foundation of our understanding of the unity and love within the Triune Godhead.

*John 17:20-26 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.** May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, **that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.** "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, **the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.** "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known **in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.**"*

Rev. 1:20 & 25-32 also speaks of God revealing His eternal power and Godhead through creation. That necessarily includes marriage, one man for one woman, instituted by God but corrupted by man. Man did not want to retain the knowledge of God, being filled with sin and fornication. Men became covenant breakers rather than keeping their vows to God and to each other.

*Rom. 1:20 & 25-32 **For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead;** so that they are without excuse: ... Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even **their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:** And likewise also **the men, leaving the natural use of the woman,** burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,** God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; **Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication,** wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, **covenantbreakers,** without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

(2) Marriage is a lesser picture of the individual Christian's relationship to Jesus Christ.

*Gen. 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and **they will become one flesh.***

*John 3:29-30 **The bride belongs to the bridegroom.** The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less.*

(3) Marriage, the love of a husband for his wife, is an example of Christ's love for the Church as a whole.

*Eph. 5:22 **Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.***

*Eph. 5:24 Now **as the church submits to Christ,** so also **wives should submit to their husbands in everything.***

*Eph. 5:25-33 **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church** and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and **to present her to himself as a radiant church,** without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. **In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies.** He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but **he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.** "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and **the two will become one flesh.**" This is a profound mystery— but **I am talking about Christ and the church.** However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves*

(4) The Church is the bride of Christ.

*Rev. 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For **the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.***

*Rev. 21:9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you **the bride, the wife of the Lamb.**"*

*Rev. 22:17 **The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"** And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

(5) Marriage is a picture of Israel's relationship to God.

*Hos. 1:2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "**Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD.**"*

(6) A woman's relationship to her husband is a picture of how the Church is related to Christ.

*2 Cor. 11:2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. **I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.***

*Eph. 5:23 For **the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.***

Divorce and adultery, related to marriage, are also metaphorically used in these ways.

(1) Men in Israel were cautioned against marrying foreign women because as a nation they were set apart as God's holy people:

*Gen. 24:3-4 I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that **you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.**"*

*Ezra 9:2 They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, **and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them.** And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness."*

*Ezra 10:2 Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, said to Ezra, "**We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the peoples around us.** But in spite of this, there is still hope for Israel.*

*Ezra 10:10-11 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "**You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women, adding to Israel's guilt. Now make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives.**"*

*Neh. 13:26 **Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned?** Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but **even he was led into sin by foreign women.***

*Neh. 13:27 **Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?"***

(2) Adulterous wives are likened to Israel going after other gods.

Eze. 16:32 "You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!

Hos. 1:2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD."

Mal. 2:11 Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god.

(3) An adulterous wife can return to the Lord because the Lord is always ready to love those who repent and return.

Hos. 3:1 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."

(4) Married spouses were not to leave their spouse; unmarried husbands and wives were to remain devoted to the Lord only.

1 Cor. 7:10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband.

1 Cor. 7:27 Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife.

Marriage vows.

Is there a similar mandate for Christians in the body of Christ to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, their professed Lord? Yes. The word "believe" in 1 John 5:5 and many other verses, is the Greek verb *pisteuo* derived from the noun *pistis* meaning "faith, assurance, belief". But a verb is an action word. The usage of the word *pisteou* means "commit unto, commit to (one's) trust, be committed unto, be put in trust with, be committed to one's trust." It's defined by Strong as being in the "aorist tense, active voice, imperative mood". This word is used 375 times in the KJV. So the word often translated as "believe" not only means to believe once but, in the most important verses, to commit to believing, to continue to believe. The word is translated "believing", "is believing", "those believing" and many other ways in one of the most literal English translations from the Greek, namely Young's Literal Translation. The YLT is a more literal translation than even the KJV, NASB, RSV, and other "literal" translations, and does a better job of giving the true sense of the original teachings of the Apostles on the subject of salvation. Compare this translation with your favorite one and you will begin to see that belief is more than a one time event in a person's lifetime. Look at the verses listed below to see that to "believe" is to make a commitment, continuously believe, and keep that commitment of belief. A person must not only believe once but continue to believe on through to the end. Belief is a commitment to believe, not just a one time acknowledgment of belief. In fact the one who overcomes the world is one who "is believing" that Jesus is the Son of God. *1 John 5:5 who is he who is overcoming the world, if not he who is believing that Jesus is the Son of God? (YLT)* Notice that almost all the verses used in the presentation of the Gospel today are often not presented in the continuing tense in our English translations!

Mark 9:23 And Jesus said to him, 'If thou art able to believe! all things are possible to the one that is believing;'

John 1:12 but as many as did receive him to them he gave authority to become sons of God—to those believing in his name

John 3:15 that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-during,

John 3:16 for God did so love the world, that His Son—the only begotten—He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-during.

John 3:18 he who is believing in him is not judged, but he who is not believing hath been judged already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36 he who is believing in the Son, hath life age-during; and he who is not believing the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God doth remain upon him.'

John 5:24 'Verily, verily, I say to you—He who is hearing my word, and is believing Him who sent me, hath life age-during, and to judgment he doth not come, but hath passed out of the death to the life.

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of the life; he who is coming unto me may not hunger, and he who is believing in me may not thirst—at any time;

John 6:40 and this is the will of Him who sent me, that every one who is beholding the Son, and is believing in him, may have life age-during, and I will raise him up in the last day.'

John 6:47 'Verily, verily, I say to you, He who **is believing** in me, hath life age-during;
John 6:64 but there are certain of you who do not believe;' for Jesus had known from the beginning who they are who **are not believing**, and who is he who will deliver him up,
John 7:38 he who **is believing** in me, according as the Writing said, Rivers out of his belly shall flow of living water;'
John 7:39 and this he said of the Spirit, which **those believing** in him were about to receive; for not yet was the Holy Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
John 11:25 Jesus said to her, 'I am the rising again, and the life; he who **is believing** in me, even if he may die, shall live;
John 11:26 and every one who **is living and believing** in me shall not die—to the age;
John 12:44 And Jesus cried and said, 'He who **is believing** in me, doth not believe in me, but in Him who sent me;
John 12:46 I a light to the world have come, that every one who **is believing** in me—in the darkness may not remain;
John 14:12 'Verily, verily, I say to you, he who **is believing** in me, the works that I do—that one also shall do, and greater than these he shall do, because I go on to my Father;
John 20:27 then he saith to Thomas, 'Bring thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring thy hand, and put it to my side, and become not unbelieving, but **believing**.'
John 20:31 and these have been written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that **believing** ye may have life in his name.'
Acts 2:44 and all **those believing** were at the same place, and had all things common,
Acts 10:43 to this one do all the prophets testify, that through his name every one that **is believing** in him doth receive remission of sins.'
Acts 13:39 and from all things from which ye were not able in the law of Moses to be declared righteous, in this one every one who **is believing** is declared righteous;
Acts 22:19 and I said, Lord, they—they know that I was imprisoning and was scourging in every synagogue **those believing** on thee;
Rom. 1:16 for I am not ashamed of the good news of the Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to every one who **is believing**, both to Jew first, and to Greek.
Rom. 3:22 and the righteousness of God is through the faith of Jesus Christ to all, and upon all **those believing**, —for there is no difference,
Rom. 4:5 and to him who is not working, and **is believing** upon Him who is declaring righteous the impious, his faith is reckoned—to righteousness:
Rom. 4:11 and a sign he did receive of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith in the uncircumcision, for his being father of all **those believing** through uncircumcision, for the righteousness also being reckoned to them,
Rom. 4:24 but also on ours, to whom it is about to be reckoned—to us **believing** on Him who did raise up Jesus our Lord out of the dead,
Rom. 9:33 according as it hath been written, 'Lo, I place in Sion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; and every one who **is believing** thereon shall not be ashamed.'
Rom. 10:4 For Christ is an end of law for righteousness to every one who **is believing**,
Rom. 10:11 for the Writing saith, 'Every one who **is believing** on him shall not be ashamed,'
Rom. 15:13 and the God of the hope shall fill you with all joy and peace in the **believing**, for your abounding in the hope in power of the Holy Spirit.
1 Cor. 1:21 for, seeing in the wisdom of God the world through the wisdom knew not God, it did please God through the foolishness of the preaching to save **those believing**.
Gal. 3:22 but the Writing did shut up the whole under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ may be given to **those believing**.
Eph. 1:19 and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us who **are believing**, according to the working of the power of His might,
1 Thes. 1:7 so that ye became patterns to all **those believing** in Macedonia and Achaia,
1 Tim. 4:3 forbidding to marry—to abstain from meats that God created to be received with thanksgiving by **those believing** and acknowledging the truth,
1 Tim. 4:10 for for this we both labour and are reproached, because we hope on the living God, who is Saviour of all men—especially of **those believing**.
1 Tim. 4:12 let no one despise thy youth, but a pattern become thou of **those believing** in word, in behaviour, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity;
Heb. 10:39 and we are not of those drawing back to destruction, but of **those believing** to a preserving of soul.
1 Pet. 1:8 whom, not having seen, ye love, in whom, now not seeing and **believing**, ye are glad with joy unspeakable and glorified,

*1 Pet. 2:6 Wherefore, also, it is contained in the Writing: 'Lo, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, choice, precious, and he who **is believing** on him may not be put to shame;'*

*1 Pet. 2:7 to you, then, who are **believing** is the preciousness; and to the unbelieving, a stone that the builders disapproved of, this one did become for the head of a corner,*

*1 John 5:1 Every one who **is believing** that Jesus is the Christ, of God he hath been begotten, and every one who is loving Him who did beget, doth love also him who is begotten of Him:*

*1 John 5:5 who is he who is overcoming the world, if not he who **is believing** that Jesus is the Son of God?*

*1 John 5:10 He who **is believing** in the Son of God, hath the testimony in himself; he who **is not believing** God, a liar hath made Him, because he hath not believed in the testimony that God hath testified concerning His Son;*

*1 John 5:13 These things I did write to you who **are believing** in the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that life ye have age-during, and that ye may believe in the name of the Son of God.*

This is why marriage is such an appropriate illustration of a commitment of faith in the grace of Jesus Christ. When a person is married he/she falls in love with his/her spouse. They decide to put their trust in each other and commit their life to each other for as long as they both shall live. They then make a vow, in front of witnesses, to do just that.

This is what we do when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We see how much Jesus loved us (1 John 4:10), how much we need Him because of our sin (Rom. 6:23), and we place our trust in Him (John 14:1). We place love and hope in Jesus Christ (John 14:23, John 21:15) and decide to commit our lives to Him (Ps. 37:5, 1 Pet. 4:19). We then make a commitment, a confession of our faith (Rom. 10:9,10), to make Him our husband, our Lord (Acts 16:31, Rom. 10:9), and to commit to being His bride (John 3:29) for the rest of our lives (Jude 1:21).

But there are also those who fall out of love with their wives or husbands. They go chasing after other men or women, after idols of wealth, youth, sexuality, and other things. They break their commitment to their husband or wife and seek a divorce. A Christian spouse does not want to give a divorce but if the husband or wife is bound and determined to leave and live a life of adultery the spouse cannot force him or her to remain. This causes all kinds of heartache on both sides, but it ruins the life of the one who went into adultery, unless he/she return to her husband or his wife.

And so it is with some people who call themselves Christians (followers of Christ). Their love grows cold (Matt. 24:12) because they have their eyes on the world (1 John 2:15), the flesh (John 6:63, 1 Cor. 15:50) and the devil (1 John 3:8,10). The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life (1 John 2:16) begin to take priority in their lives. They sink into idolatry (Col. 3:5) and adultery (Mark 10:11,12; Rom. 2:22). They consciously or unconsciously break their vow, their commitment to Jesus Christ and sometimes even seek an open divorce (Heb. 10:39; 2 Tim. 2:18; Rev. 2:13). Jesus Christ is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9), but He will not force His will upon those who have made a marriage vow to Him (Heb. 10:38; Matt. 22:1-14). If a people are determined to go their own way, continually denying the commitment they made (Titus 1:16, Jude 1:4), defiling the marriage bed (Heb. 12:15), and grieving the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30) they begin to shrink back (Heb. 10:39). If they continue in unrepentance (Rom. 2:5) their faith can eventually be shipwrecked (1 Tim. 1:19) or destroyed (2 Tim. 2:18). Jesus said there would be those who believe for awhile but fall away (Luke 8:13). Were these people ever truly saved? From God's perspective, no. From a human perspective those who are saved are those who continue to believe, who grow to maturity, who produce fruit. The Lord continues to convict through His Holy Spirit in their lives (John 16:8; 1 Thes. 1:5), waiting with open arms to receive them (2 Cor. 6:17). But they must repent (Rev. 2:5,22) and turn from their wicked ways, for the vows can always be renewed as long as the Lord tarries (Eph. 4:22-30). By renewing the vows (in our metaphor) I do not mean being born again all over again. I mean making the same vow and keeping it, to no longer walk in the old man, the flesh, but to walk in the Spirit. Remember that salvation is not just one date on the calendar, but is something that is also a daily cross (Luke 9:23), worked out in our lives over our lifetime (Phil. 2:12). Salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ alone is something we must lay hold of by faith (1 Tim. 6:12), a continued faith day by day (Heb. 10:23; Rev. 2:25, 14:12).

A vow is not a one way proposition--God has promised salvation as we hold on to our faith in Him (1 Tim. 6:12, Heb. 4:14, 10:23). This is why a vow is a dangerous thing (Duet. 23:21). God will keep track of vows made to Him (Ecc. 5:4, 5), and the most serious vow is when a person confesses (Rom. 10:10) that he believes and will keep believing in the Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 1:21, 1 Tim. 3:9) till the end (Heb. 3:14). This vow of faith will either bring salvation through God's gift of His Son on the Cross, the last and only sacrifice needed to pay the penalty of our sins--or it will bring ultimate judgment if we reject the Lord in unbelief.

*Rev. 21:8 But the **fearful**, and **unbelieving**, and the abominable, and murderers, and **whore-mongers**, and sorcerers, and **idolaters**, and all **liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (KJV)*

*Rev. 21:8 But the **cowardly**, the **unbelieving**, the vile, the murderers, the **sexually immoral**, those who practice magic arts, the **idolaters** and all **liars**--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (NIV)*

Belief is more than just acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Who He said He is. Even the demons believe and tremble (Jam. 2:19). Remember that demons Jesus encountered and cast out acknowledged Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Matt. 8:29, Mark 3:11, Luke 4:41). Does acknowledgment that Jesus Christ is the Son of God then constitute a saving faith? Not by itself, for the demons knew He was the Son of God but He was clearly not their chosen Lord. Belief is certainly confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10:9-10) implying that you (1) believe Jesus Christ to be (2) Lord and that He (3) rose from the dead, therefore is God. But belief is also a decision of the will, through the conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8), to follow Christ to death on the cross (Col. 3:5, Gal. 2:20, 5:24) once for all (Rom. 6:10) and daily (Luke 9:23). Belief is a promise not to run after another Jesus, a different gospel, a different Spirit (2 Cor. 11:4) only to end up believing in vain because we are not holding to the word of the Gospel as revealed to us by the Word (1 Cor. 15:2). Belief is a commitment (1 Pet. 4:18,19; 1 John 5:5; Ps. 37:5,6). Belief is obedience to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:26; John 14:23,24, 15:9) proof of our love for Him. Belief in Jesus Christ will bring forth much fruit in our lives (John 15:5, 8), and will change us ethically (Rom. 12:2).

Remember, there will be those who cry "Lord, Lord" in the day of judgment (Matt. 7:22, 23). They are the ones who claim a belief in God but have wandered into the far off land called "self"--into idolatry and adultery without repentance. There were those who made a commitment of belief, a vow of faith, to the Lord in the Scriptures, such as Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:13), Solomon (Neh. 13:26), Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:5), and others--who did not carry through on that commitment to final salvation. They were carried away from it by their own sinful desires for power, lust and greed. If they broke their vows-- Solomon having penned Scriptures and Judas being one of the original twelve disciples--so can "believers" today.

Marriage defiled!

That is exactly what many who call themselves followers of Christ are doing in our time! It is what is happening in "churches" around the world. Many people are saying "Lord, Lord" with hands upraised in apparent worship. They start out by preparing a great wedding with flowers and gifts. They recite their vows publicly. They herald their decision to be married to their Lord with trumpets and music. They prepare feasts and dance in celebration. But some months or years later they lose their first love (Rev. 2:4). They begin to look at other gods ... gods of lust, self, money, power, fame, even though they have been warned by their Husband not to follow other gods.

*Col. 3:5 **Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: **sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.***