

## A Brief Study on the Doctrine of Election – FC XI

- ✦ **Election is God's choosing of the Christian, personally and individually, in Christ, from the foundation of the world.** This is an act of love, an act of God's grace.
  - Paul and Barnabas in Antioch - "For so the Lord has commanded us: I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth." Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. **(Act 13:47-48 NKJ)**
- ✦ Pastoral – Election is a doctrine of consolation – a personal expression of God's love and grace – should give confidence and hope.
  - Ephesians 1:3-7 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, <sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace... **(Eph 1:3-7 NKJ)**
- ✦ This doctrine, as all true doctrine, is to be derived only from God's revealed will – Scripture
  - Paul to Timothy - you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, (2Ti 3:15-16 NKJ)

### **WE BELIEVE TEACH AND CONFESS:**

- ✦ Election is a doctrine of consolation
- ✦ Distinguish between foreknowledge and eternal election
- ✦ Foreknowledge is that God knows all things before they happen –
  - **Daniel 2:28** "But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:"
- ✦ Foreknowledge extends over the godly and the wicked – but IS NOT THE CAUSE OF EVIL. – Men are themselves responsible for their damnation.
- ✦ Election extends over only the godly – and is causal – a cause of their salvation. Upon this predestination our salvation is firmly founded:

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- "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. (**Joh 10:28 NKJ**)
  - And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on t his rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. (**Mat 16:18 NKJ**)
- ✦ This predestination is not to be sought in the “secret counsel” of God – His hidden will – but rather in the Word – His revealed will.
- ✦ The Word leads us to Christ – the Book of Life - in whom all are written and predestined that are to be saved for eternity:
- 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, <sup>4</sup> **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,** <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace...
- ✦ Christ calls to Himself all sinners and promises them rest – He wills that all men should come to Him and be saved – He offers His Word, and wishes them to hear it. He promises to those that hear the power and working of the Holy Spirit, and divine assistance for perseverance (that we remain steadfast in faith), and eternal salvation.
- ✦ We should not use reason, nor the Law of God to judge this doctrine – which leads either to a lascivious life (once saved always saved – if God has elected me I can not fall, no matter what I do) or to utter despair (hopelessness – if I am not elected to eternal life, nothing can help).
- ✦ The right understanding of predestination must be learned from the Gospel – the Gospel of Christ – which clearly testifies that all men sin, all are in unbelief, that He might have mercy on all – desiring not one to perish, but to come to repentance and faith in Christ:
- Romans 11:32: **For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.** <sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out! <sup>34</sup> "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" <sup>35</sup> "Or who has first given to

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Him And it shall be repaid to him?" <sup>36</sup> For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

- "Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "*and* not that he should turn from his ways and live? (Eze 18:23 NKJ)
- "Say to them: `As I live,' says the Lord GOD, `I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?' (Eze 33:11 NKJ)
- <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2Pe 3:9 NKJ)
- <sup>2</sup> And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (1Jo 2:2 NKJ)

✦ St. Paul (Romans) directs men to:

- repentance,
- to knowledge of their sins,
- to faith in Christ,
- to divine obedience,
- before he speaks of the mystery of eternal election of God
- to Paul this doctrine is useful and gives consolation.

✦ That “many are called, but few are chosen” does not mean that God does not desire all men to be saved.

- "For many are called, but few *are* chosen." (Mat 22:14 NKJ)

✦ The reason men are not saved is:

- They do not hear God’s Word, but despise it
- They willfully stop their ears and harden their hearts
- Thus they foreclose the ordinary way the to the Holy Spirit, so that He cannot perform His work in them.
- If they have heard the Word, they make light of it and do not heed it
- Their wickedness is the cause of their damnation
  
- But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction.<sup>2</sup> And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.(2Pe 2:1-2 NKJ)
- "Therefore the wisdom of God also said, `I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and persecute,'(Luk 11:49 NKJ)

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- "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered." (**Luk 11:52 NKJ**)
- <sup>25</sup> See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven, (**Heb 12:25 NKJ**)
  
- ✦ **So the Christian should occupy himself in meditation on this doctrine as it has been revealed in God's Word:**
  - <sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Rom 8:28-30 NKJ)
  
- ✦ Other thoughts (not from Scripture) and reason is to be entirely banished:
  - – they do not proceed from God but from the Evil One
  - – who desires to weaken us and remove us from God's glorious consolation
  - – that we know the entirely out of grace, not by our works or merit, we have been elected in Christ to eternal life,
  - and that no one can pluck us out of His hand,
  - this He has certified with an oath and sealed it with the Holy Sacraments
  - which we can call to mind in tribulation or doubt to quench the fiery darts of the Evil One
  
- ✦ The Christian should use the greatest diligence to live according to God's will, and to "make our calling sure", and not recede even a little from the revealed Word, which will not fail us.
  - Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; <sup>11</sup> for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (**2Pe 1:10-11 NKJ**)
  
- ✦ **This explanation of election gives all glory to God – that out of pure mercy alone, without any merit on our part, He saves us according to the purpose of His will – this prevents licentious living and despair.**

**WE REJECT: "dreadful and erroneous doctrines by which the comfort of the Gospel and the Sacraments is taken from Christians, and so should not be tolerated in the Church of God:**

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- **When any teach the doctrine of election in a way that prevents troubled Christians from finding comfort in it, but rather are led to despondency or despair, or the impenitent are strengthened in their wantonness –**
  - **<sup>4</sup> For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.** <sup>5</sup> Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 15:4-6 NKJ)
  
- **That God is unwilling that all men repent and believe the Gospel**
  
- **That God is unwilling that all men be saved, but some are ordained to condemnation.**
  
- **That not only the mercy of God and the holy merit of Christ, but also something in us causes God's election**

### GREEK WORDS

(Rom 8:28-30 NKJ)

28 οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν (purpose) κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

<sup>29</sup> ὅτι οὓς προέγνω (foreknew), καὶ προώρισεν (predestined) συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνας τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.

<sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

<sup>30</sup> οὓς δὲ προώρισεν (predestined), τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν· καὶ οὓς ἐκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν· οὓς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασεν.

<sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

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