

*The Predestinating Work Of God In Salvation*  
Romans 8:29

Contention Over Election

1. All Christians agree: Election/predestination is a Biblical concept: The words "elect," "election," "predestine," "choose," and "appoint" are used 37x in the NT to describe the salvation of people. Most of these texts are *central* texts on salvation!
2. Christians disagree over one central point: Whether election is conditional, or unconditional:
  - ♦ Conditional election: God's choice of certain individuals is based upon His foreseeing how men & women will respond to the Gospel. It would unjust to determine a person's eternal destiny without considering anything within that person.
  - ♦ Unconditional election: God saves people in accordance w/ His eternal plan. The aim of His plan: to glorify Himself thru saving certain fallen people. His choice was not based on anything that they might do, think, desire -- there was nothing in them to merit His favor.
3. The issue must be determined by Scripture alone. The question is: What saith the Scripture?

What Other NT Texts Say About The Doctrine Of Predestination.

**1. Election in John 6:37-39,44,65.**

- ♦ The Father *has given* to the Son certain persons to be saved. Those who come to Christ already had been given to Him. This *giving* precedes their salvation and is its cause.
- ♦ It is impossible for natural man to come to Christ (6:44). Jesus reaffirmed the Biblical doctrine of total inability. In saying this He also confirmed that election is unconditional.
- ♦ It is impossible for those whom God draws to refuse to come to Christ. The word "*draw*" in John 6:44 is "*helko*" (ἐλκω). It means to drag, draw, haul, compel, or tug. It appears 8x in the NT. It refers to salvation (Jn 6:44; 12:32), drawing a sword (Jn 18:10), drawing in nets full of fish (Jn 21:6,11), physically dragging people away (Acts 16:19; 21:30; James 2:6). In every case the drawing is successful. God always gets His man. This is further verified by the last clause, "*and I will raise him up on the last day*" (The resurrection of the saints at Christ's coming). Those who believe in a conditional election suggest that God works in individuals to "influence" or "persuade" them so they may make a decision to accept or reject Him. Through a "partial enablement" people are influenced so they can make a decision to come or not. We reject this notion: 1st, the text says nothing about people being *enabled* to make a decision for or against Christ. 2nd, nowhere in Scripture is there any idea of a "partial enablement" where a person is free from bondage and death and Satan to make a *free will* decision. 3rd, the text specifically tells us that none refuse His drawing -- the one whom the Father draws *is* raised up on the last day (not "*might be raised up if he is willing to respond.*") The drawing of God is efficacious. It is impossible for those whom God has drawn to be lost.

**2. Election in John 10:14-16,24-30.**

- ♦ Those who believe do so because they are already His (Vs 16). Jesus doesn't say that a person becomes a sheep by believing. Quite the contrary, a person believes because he is already a sheep! A person's identity as a sheep is not dependent on his faith, rather, his faith is a result of his *already* being a sheep. This is the doctrine of unconditional election. One other than myself marked me out so that I would believe.
- ♦ Those who don't believe, do so because they're not His sheep (Vs 26). What they are determines the response they give to Christ. If those who believe in conditional election were correct the verse would read, "You're not of My sheep because you do not believe."

**3. Election in Matthew 11:25-27.**

Here Jesus calls all who are weary and heavy-laden to Himself. But who *knows* himself to be in such a state? And what kind of person sees the sufficiency of the Son? The preceding verses tell us -- only those whom the Father & Son have *willed* to know these things. *If* the saving knowledge of God is hidden to some, & God must reveal it to others, then that knowledge is dependent upon God's will and not that of lost people. Lost people cannot receive the truth *unless God wills it*.

#### 4. Election in Acts 13:48.

- ◆ The Gentile's saving belief was a consequence not a cause of God's appointment. If they were appointed to eternal life because God saw that they would believe (as those who believe in conditional election insist) this passage would be backwards! This text is clear, faith was the result, not the procuring cause, of their election. Election is *unconditional*.
- ◆ A limited number are appointed to life, else "as many as" is a meaningless qualification.
- ◆ All those appointed to life will most certainly believe as the words "as many as" clarify. Did anyone believe who wasn't appointed? Not one. Was anyone appointed who did not believe? None. It is all inclusive. All those whom God appoints to et. life believe.
- ◆ Election is unto life and not just to service as some erroneously contend. (Its unfortunate that any Christian would conceive of a salvation separate from obedience to Christ).

#### 5. Election in Ephesians 1:4,5.

- ◆ The **source** of our election: "*He [the Father] chose us.*" The subject of the verb "*chose*" is God, we are the objects. Thus, it is He who does the choosing, not us.
- ◆ The **time** of our election: "*before the foundation of the world.*" God made His choice of us in eternity. This emphasizes that God's choice is independent of us, and unaffected by anything we might do. God's choice does not wait for a single act in history.
- ◆ The **purposes** of our election: "*That we should be holy and blameless.*" Our becoming holy & blameless can't be the *cause* of our election. If we were chosen *that* we should be holy, we cannot be chosen *because* we were holy. It'd be absurd for Paul to say God chose us in order to be holy, if in fact He looked ahead and chose us because He saw that we were holy (having believed in Christ). The next phrase reinforces this, "*In love He predestined us to adoption as sons.*" The passage is pellucidly clear, we are His sons because He predestined us, not because He saw we would become His sons.
- ◆ The **motive** behind our election: "*In love He predestined us.*" Essentially, election is motivated by God's love for us before time. When we did not know Him, He loved us. And the reason we now know and love Him is because He first loved us (I Jn 4:19).
- ◆ The **basis** of our election: "*According to the kind intention of His will.*" Our election is unconditional. Were God's choice conditioned on something He saw in us, it would be according to *our* will, not His. Paul argues: election is based solely on His good pleasure

#### What Romans 8:29-30 Says About The Doctrine Of Predestination.

1. There is an utter absence of any reference to faith as that which God has foreseen. The reason He doesn't mention foreseen faith as the basis of election is because we are not the electing ones, God is. Election is unconditional.
2. The word *know* means more than mere cognition. It is practically synonymous with the word "love" (Gen 4:1; Ps 1:6; Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2; Mt 7:23; II Tim 2:19). What Rom 8:29 is saying is essentially, "Those whom He foreloved, He predestined...." (CF. Eph 1:4b-5. Jer 31:3).
3. Notice the repetition of the words, "*those whom...these He*," they are all-inclusive. Everyone who is foreknown by God, is predestined, called, justified, and glorified (our state in heaven). Every glorified person was justified, every justified person was called, every called person, predestined, every predestined person, foreknown by God. Every person in heaven was first loved by God in eternity! We're encouraged in our trials knowing that God causes all things to work together for good. Why? Because His saving purposes & love can *never* be thwarted.

#### Application.

1. This doctrine gives us a deeper conviction that salvation is not by works.
2. This doctrine gives us a greater love for & fear of the Lord.
3. This doctrine gives us greater security in the Lord.
4. This doctrine encourages us to holiness.
5. This doctrine encourages us to a greater worship of the Lord.
6. This doctrine encourages us to evangelize.