

**Digging Deep: Exploring the Joy of Systematic Theology**  
**Class 24: The Doctrine of Salvation, part 3**  
***Election and Predestination***

*"... this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*  
**John 17. 3**

**I. A Brief Recap**



*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

**Romans 8. 28-30**

You are perplexed by the doctrine of God's sovereignty and election. I wonder why anyone believing in a God should be perplexed by these. For if there be a God, a King, eternal, immortal, and invisible, He cannot but be sovereign – and He cannot but do according to His own will and choose according to His own purpose. You may dislike these doctrines, but you can only get rid of them by denying altogether the existence of an infinitely wise, glorious, and powerful Being. God would not be God were He not thus absolutely sovereign in His present doings and His eternal pre-arrangements ... God chooses us, not because He foresees that we would choose Him, or that we would believe, but for the very opposite reason. He chooses us just because He foresees that we would neither choose Him nor believe of ourselves at all. Election proceeds not upon foreseen faith in us, but upon foreseen unbelief.

*Horatio Bonar*

## II. "Election" (or "Elect" or "Chosen") in the Bible

This great subject is not ... a mere thorny & noisy disputation, nor speculation which wearies the minds of men without any profit; but a solid discussion eminently adapted to the service of the godly, because it builds us up in sound faith, trains us to humility & lifts us up into an admiration of the unbounded goodness of God toward us, while it elevates to praise this goodness in our highest strains.

*John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion*

This is not a cold, barren, speculative theory, not an unnatural system of strange doctrines as many people are inclined to believe, but a most warm & living, a most vital & important account of God's relations with His people. It is a system of towering but practical truths which are designed & adapted, under the influence of the Spirit, to mold the affections of the heart & give right direction to conduct.

*Loraine Boettner, The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*

*And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the **elect** those days will be cut short. <sup>23</sup> Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. <sup>24</sup> For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the **elect** ... <sup>31</sup> And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his **elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

**Matthew 24. 22-24, 31**

*And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved.  
But for the sake of the **elect**, whom he chose, he shortened the days.*

**Mark 13.20**

*And will not God give justice to his **elect**, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?*

**Luke 18.7**

*Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the **elect**, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

**2 Timothy 2.10**

*And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord,  
and as many as were **appointed** to eternal life believed.*

**Acts 13.48**

*For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But **God chose** what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; **God chose** what is weak in the world to shame the strong; **God chose** what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.*

**1 Corinthians 1. 26-29**

*Put on then, as **God's chosen ones**, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness ...*

**Colossians 3.12**

*For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has **chosen** you ...*

**1 Thessalonians 1.4**

*... we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because **God chose you** as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**2 Thessalonians 2. 13-14**

*Listen, my beloved brothers, has not **God chosen** those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?*

**James 2.5**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>even as **he chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love **he predestined us** for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of **his will**, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

**Ephesians 1. 3-6**

*Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, <sup>9</sup>who **saved us** and **called us** to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of **his own purpose and grace**, which he gave us in Christ Jesus **before the ages began**...*

**2 Timothy 1. 8-9**

### III. What Does Election Tell Us About God?

1. **God is the author of all history.** There are no “accidents”. Nothing will ever take place that hasn’t been planned in eternity past by an all-powerful & mercifully good Father (Romans 8.28).
2. **God loves to show grace to sinners.** Though we have rebelled against him, God sent his only Son to die in the place of sinners to rescue them from sin & death (Rom. 5. 8). Christ, who was not guilty, laid down his life for the guilty (1 Pet. 3. 18). He bore the wrath we deserve. Wow!

*... who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of **his own purpose & grace**, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began ...*

**2 Timothy 1.9**

*he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **to the praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to **the riches of his grace** ... In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be **to the praise of his glory**.*

**Ephesians 1. 5-7, 11-12**

3. **God uses means to achieve his ends.** He uses weak clay pots & sends them to the ends of the earth to preach the good news of Christ (Rom. 10. 14–15).

*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”*

**Romans 10. 12-15**

4. **God’s glory is ultimate, not ours.** The Westminster Shorter Catechism states our chief end is this - to glorify God and enjoy him forever. God made us for his glory (Isa. 42:8). Every pursuit in life is to be done with an eye to the spread of his fame. Even His choice of us is an opportunity for God to make much of Himself.

*... but when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”*

**Romans 9. 10-13**

#### **IV. What Does Election Mean For Us?**

1. **Predestination means our salvation is as secure & settled as the God who selected us.**

*For there is not a more effectual means of building up faith than the giving our open ears to the election of God, which the Holy Spirit seals upon our heart while we hear, showing us that it stands in the eternal and immutable goodwill of God toward us; and that, therefore, it cannot be moved or altered by any storms of the world, by any assaults of Satan, by any changes, by any fluctuations or weaknesses of the flesh. For our salvation is then sure to us, when we find the cause of it in the breast of God.*

John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion

*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”*

**John 10. 27-30**

2. **Predestination means our salvation is eternally grounded in a sovereign, good God; therefore, our sufferings, sorrows, persecutions, and defeats are not an accident.**

*“All the hounds of affliction are muzzled till God sets them free.”*

Charles Spurgeon

*God causes all things to work together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose.*

**Romans 8. 28**

3. **Predestination should humble us & make us thankful & patient, not bitter, fearful, or self-righteous.**

*So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*

**2 Timothy 2. 22-26**