

Appendix A – The Doctrine of Election

1A. Election in the Old Testament

1B. Deuteronomy 4:37

1C. God loved and chose Israel; God's love and choosing are here related.

2C. God delivered the Israelites from Egypt because of His love and choice of Israel.

2B. Deuteronomy 7:6-8

1C. God's love for and choosing of Israel bring responsibility. Specifically, Israel is holy and is to be holy, v. 6. Holiness is thus a consequence of election, v. 11.

2C. God chose Israel to be His people, His peculiar treasure, v. 6.

3C. God's choosing of Israel was exclusive; He chose her out of all the nations, v. 6.

4C. God loved Israel. His choice of her was a choice of love, v. 8.

5C. God did not love or choose Israel because of her great numbers; she was a small nation, v. 7.

6C. God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage because of His love for Israel and because of His keeping the oath which He made with the patriarchs, v. 8.

3B. Deuteronomy 10:14-15

1C. Everything belongs to the Lord, the God of Israel, v. 14.

2C. God loved Israel and chose her, v. 15.

3C. God's love was exclusive; He chose Israel out of all the nations, v. 15.

4C. The choosing had effects in Israel's history, vv. 15, 19.

5C. Israel is responsible to God because of His election of her, vv. 12, 16, 19, 20.

4B. Deuteronomy 14:2

1C. Israel is a holy people to the Lord her God. Holiness and election are combined.

2C. God chose Israel to be His people, a peculiar treasure.

3C. God's choice was exclusive; God chose Israel out of all the nations.

5B. Election in Deuteronomy: Some conclusions

1C. The reason for Israel's election. Deut. 7:7 teaches that God did not choose Israel because of her great size; she was a small nation. In chapters 4, 7 and 10 God loved her and chose her. There is thus a close relation between God's loving and choosing the nation. Either God's love is the reason for His election of the nation or we are not told the reason for her election. If we are not told the reason it would be best to leave the reason in God. The idea that God chose Israel because He saw something (present or future) in her does not fit the OT picture which consistently presents her as a stubborn and stiff-necked people. The reason for Israel's election lies in God—either in His love or in something else of which we are not told.

2C. The particularity of God's election of Israel is clearly taught. In Deut. 7:6, 10:15 and 14:2 we learn that God chose Israel out of all the nations. It is not true that God chose everyone in OT times. He chose Israel alone. It is instructive that the OT does not call God "partial" (see 10:17) because He chose one nation and no others.

3C. The results of God's election of Israel are presented in Deuteronomy

1D. Ownership. Deut. 7:6 and 14:2 declare that God chose Israel to be His own people, His peculiar treasure (valued property). He chose her and she belongs to Him.

2D. Redemption from Egypt. God delivered the Jews from Egyptian bondage because of His love and choice of Israel (Deut. 4:37, 7:6).

3D. Holiness. God's choice of Israel brought with it great responsibility for the Jews. Specifically, Israel is holy (Deut. 7:6, 14:2) because the Lord chose her.

Due to His choice she is to be holy, fear and serve the Lord, and love aliens (10:19-20). The Jews are to “circumcise their hearts, therefore (because of God’s love and election) and not be stiff-necked any longer” (Deut. 10:16).

4D. There seems to be an election of at least some individuals taught in the OT. David J. A. Clines writing from an Arminian viewpoint in *Grace Unlimited* admits as much when he says: “...there is a predestination type of idea in God’s selection of Noah and his family to be saved from the flood.” Clines asks the question, “But why does God choose Noah to survive?” He answers, “It is not that Noah is the one righteous man on earth, to whose righteousness God can respond with salvation. For it is significant that God’s favor rests on Noah (6:8) before any word is spoken of Noah’s righteousness (6:9). Here the form predestination takes is unmerited election” (p. 114). Dr. Clines sees many other forms which election takes in the OT including reward for merit in Proverbs. He summarizes his position thus: “Predestination in whatever form usually plays a role subsidiary to that of the full and (to all intents and purposes) undetermined relationship of God and Man” (p. 124).

2A. Election in the Synoptic Gospels

1B. Mark 13:20, 22, 27 (parallels in Matt. 24:22, 24, 31)

This passage speaks of “the elect whom (God) has chosen” (v. 20). The elect seem to be protected from the deception of the false christs and false prophets (v. 22). When the Son of Man comes in the clouds with great power and glory he will send his angels to gather his elect from the ends of the earth (vv. 26-27). The election spoken of here is not a general election of the nation of Israel as in the OT. It is a particular election which does not include all people since: 1) people are deceived, but not the elect, Mk 13:6, 22;

- 2) families are split over Christ, v. 12;
- 3) most people (“all men”) oppose believers, v. 13;
- 4) there will be apostates, Mt 24:10;
- 5) some Jews will persecute the believers, Mk 13:9; and
- 6) the elect are spared as God gathers them, v. 27.

This election would seem to include Gentiles since:

- 1) they are gathered from the four winds, Mk 13:27; and
- 2) the Gospel must first be preached to all the nations, Mk 13:10.

2B. The conclusion to the parable of the wedding banquet is: “For many are invited, but few are chosen” Mt 22:1-14.

3B. Luke 18:7-8

Jesus concluded the parable of the persistent widow by saying, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

4B. Election in the Synoptic Gospels: Some conclusions

The synoptic gospels do not give us a theology of election. Yet there is development from the OT to the gospels. “The election motif is an important element in the theology of Jesus and transforms the corporate identity of Israel’s view to the individual thrust of Jesus’ view” (Grant Osborne, *Exegetical Notes on Calvinist Texts in Grace Unlimited*, p.168).

3A. Election in the Gospel of John

1B. John 6:35-45

Jesus follows the sign of multiplying the loaves and fish (6:1-15) by giving a sermon proclaiming himself to be the Bread of Life (6:25-59). In response to the crowd’s request for another sign (vv. 30-31) Jesus points to himself (vv. 32-33). He says that he is the living bread

who satisfies eternally the spiritual hunger and thirst of those who believe in him. He tells the Jews that they have seen him and do not believe in him (v. 36). In v. 37 Jesus teaches that those the Father gives him will believe in him. Jesus will never drive them away. Jesus has come from heaven to do his Father's will (v. 38). God's will is that Jesus keep safe the people of God; this includes raising them to life on the last day (v. 39). All who see Jesus and believe in him have eternal life and will be raised by Jesus in the future (v. 40). The Jews grumble at Jesus' words (vv. 41-42). Jesus responds by teaching that no one can believe in him unless God the Father draws him to Jesus (v. 44). Jesus quotes Isaiah 54:13 as evidence of people being taught by God. Jesus uses the quotation to speak of the inner, efficacious teaching of the Father (v. 45 is an explanation of v. 44).

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The Father gives people to the Son. They believe in Jesus ("coming" = "believing" in v. 35). Here the Father's giving people to Jesus precedes their believing in Jesus for salvation. We see an individual election here as in the synoptic Gospels. We are not told the basis of this giving. How did these people become the Father's so He could give them to the Son? If we say that God foresaw their faith we involve ourselves in the following difficulty: God foresaw who would believe in Jesus and on this basis made these believers His people; God gave them to Jesus; they believe in Jesus. In so doing we have reversed the order taught in our passage: the Father gives people to Jesus and they believe in him. In John 6 the people seem to come to Jesus because the Father has given them to him. The Father's giving precedes the people's believing. John 6:44 says that only they can come whom the Father draws. The action of the Father is given priority in salvation. To reverse this and make man's faith or unbelief ultimate goes against the grain of the passage.

2B. John 10:26-30

Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (v. 11). Jesus knows his sheep and they know him (vv. 14-15). Jesus dies willingly and raises himself from the dead (vv. 17-18). The Jews offer a dual response to Jesus' words: some are skeptical (v. 20) and others seem favorable (v. 21). In response to a request to tell his hearers if he is the Christ, Jesus says that he has told them and they do not believe. Jesus' miracles bear witness to him (being the Christ), v. 25. Yet many of his hearers do not believe. They do not believe because they are not his sheep (v. 26). In contrast to that unbelieving response Jesus' sheep listen to his voice (believe in him), v. 27. Jesus knows his sheep (surely not simply cognition since he knows all; this must speak of his love for them) and they obey him (v. 27). He gives them eternal life. He and the Father keep them saved (vv. 28-30). Once more Jesus speaks of the Father giving people to Him (v. 29). Jesus' sheep are the people whom the Father has given to him.

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The Father gives the sheep to the Son. The sheep believe in Christ (v. 27) and the others do not (v. 26). "Jesus does not say that his opponents are not among his sheep because they do not believe, but that they do not believe because they are not among his sheep" (D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*, Knox, 190.) One believes because he is one of Jesus' sheep; one does not believe because he is not. "Christ's knowledge of the sheep, his recognition that they are his, is the determinative thing" (Ibid.). It would seem that they become Jesus' sheep because the Father has given them to Jesus.

3B. John 15:14-19

Jesus had just told the analogy of the vine and the branches. In v. 14 He tells his disciples that they are his friends if they obey Him. He no more calls them slaves; He now calls them friends because He has revealed the truth of the Father to them. (A slave would not be privileged to know such information but a friend would). Jesus then informed his eleven disciples (Judas had already gone out to betray him) that they did not choose Him, but that He chose them. He

appointed them to go and bear lasting fruit (v. 16). We thus learn that the fruitful branches spoken of earlier in this chapter are those whom Jesus had chosen. They bear fruit because Jesus had chosen and appointed them. Someone will say that this choosing is a choosing unto discipleship rather than a choosing unto eternal life. I admit that such a choosing is spoken of by Jesus in John 6:70: “Did I not choose you, the twelve and one of you is a devil?” Here in John 15, however, Jesus’ choosing of the eleven is different than his choosing of the twelve in 6:70. In v. 18 Jesus warns the disciples that the world will hate them because it has hated Him first. In the next verse Jesus goes on to say: “If you belonged to the world the world would love (you as) its own. But because you do not belong to the world, but I chose you out of the world, for this reason the world hates you” (v. 19) cf. John 13:18.

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“The disciples cannot even legitimately boast that they are believers on the ground that they, unlike others, wisely made the right choice. On the contrary: Jesus chose them. Merit theology is thus totally savaged. On the other hand, that Jesus chose them does not entail a robot-like stance on the part of the disciples, but increased responsibility— responsibility to produce enduring fruit (15:16), to pray (15:16b), to love each other (15:17). Election entails both privilege and responsibility” (Carson, p. 191).

4B. John 17:2, 6, 9-10, 24; 18:9

Jesus prays in anticipation of the cross and the return to the Father. As the giver of eternal life he gives life to the people God has given to Him (17:2). Jesus reveals the Father to those given to him by the Father (v. 6). They believe the Father’s words spoken by Jesus, the revealer of God (vv. 7-8). They believe in Jesus (v. 8). Jesus prays for those given to him by the Father and not for the rest (the “world”, v. 9). Jesus wants those given him by the Father to be with him in heaven to share his glory (v. 24).

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The Father gave people to the Son (17:2, 24). These people first belonged to the Father. He gave them to Jesus out of the world (17:6). This “giving” does not imply that the people no longer belong to the Father. They still belong to the Father. Now since He gave them to Jesus, they belong to Jesus too (vv. 9-10). Carson draws out an important implication from this passage, “...the giving by the Father of certain men to the Son precedes their reception of eternal life, and governs the purpose of the Son’s mission. There is no way to escape the implicit election” (p. 187). To say that these people were the Father’s (v. 6) because He foresaw their faith changes greatly the sense of the passage. The whole tenor of the passage is that the Father is sovereign in salvation and that the Son is doing the Father’s will by revealing God to His people, giving them eternal life, praying only for them, and asking the Father to take them to heaven.

5B. Election in John: Some conclusions

- 1C. The following Johannine themes have relevance to the doctrine of election: the Father giving people to Jesus, Jesus choosing his disciples out of the world, and the antecedent (to faith) identity of the people of God.
- 2C. As in the synoptic gospels so in John we find the OT corporate conception of election transformed into an individual election.
- 3C. There is advance in John’s thought over that of the synoptics. In the Gospel of John the concept of election is related to salvation (see John 6:37-40; 10:27-29; and 17:2, 6, 9- 10, 24). Jesus gives eternal life to all the Father has given him (17:2). He reveals God’s name to them (17:6). Jesus wants those the Father has given him to be with him in heaven (17:24).
- 4C. John does not tell us the specific basis of this election: the reason why some were chosen. And yet some broad conclusions may be drawn. The fourth Gospel will not

allow us to posit that God has chosen on the basis of foreseen faith. Rather, the basis of election seems to reside in God's action and not in man's.

4A. Election in the Acts of the Apostles

Luke has a strong emphasis on God's sovereignty in both his Gospel and Acts. "What Luke stresses is the supremacy of God over the world, especially in bringing salvation to mankind...The situation is the same with regard to the early church...The early church saw that its own life was similarly under divine control, and ranged it alongside the ministry of Jesus as the sphere of God's activity.

Throughout Acts the notes of divine fore-ordination and necessity are if anything stronger than in the Gospel...The main feature of Luke's teaching about God thus lies in the thought of His plan, announced in the Old Testament and presently being fulfilled in history by His obedient servants" (I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, pp. 104, 106-107). "It is not surprising in view of this strong emphasis on the divine choice that certain statements in Acts focus on predestination" (Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, p.618).

1B. Acts 13:48

As Luke recounts the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in Pisidian Antioch on the first missionary journey he presents a classification or appointment to eternal life in Acts 13:48. This appointment to life precedes faith on the part of the believers. We are not told the basis of this divine appointment. Yet to postulate God foreseeing faith as the basis of election greatly alters the meaning of the passage—i.e. "All those who were ordained to eternal life because God foresaw their faith believed." On the contrary the impression is that for reasons within God Himself He chose Gentiles for eternal life. When Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel many Gentiles believed, specifically all those who had been appointed for eternal life. The teaching of an individual, divine election unto salvation preceding saving faith seems clear.

2B. Acts 18:9-10

In Corinth on his second missionary journey the apostle Paul had reason to be discouraged. Paul had testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. The Jews opposed Paul to the point of being abusive. Paul protested and announced that he was going to the Gentiles (18:5-6). Paul moved next door to the synagogue and had a fruitful ministry (vv. 7-8). The Lord spoke to Paul in a vision one night to strengthen him. He told Paul to keep on preaching the Gospel (v. 9). God promised to be with Paul and to protect him from harm. The reason the Lord gives His presence and protection to the apostle is "because I have many people in this city" (v. 10). Paul obediently stayed on in Corinth for eighteen months ministering the Word of God (v. 11). This passage seems to teach that people in Corinth belonged to God even before they believed the Gospel. F. F. Bruce remarks, "... the Lord had many people in Corinth whom He had marked out for His own" (*The Book of Acts, NICNT ad loc.*).

3B. Election in Acts: Some conclusions

1C. Given the strong emphases on God's sovereignty and the preaching of the Gospel in Acts one might expect to find information pertaining to the doctrine of election.

Although the evidence for election is sparse there are some indications of a divine choice to salvation in Acts.

2C. As in the synoptics and John so in Acts an individual election is taught.

3C. As in John's Gospel this individual election is unto eternal life. "All those ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48).

4C. Once again we are not told the basis of election. And once again we must leave election in the secret counsels of God. We overturn the meaning of Acts 13:48 if we posit an election to salvation based upon foreseen faith. The verse would mean: "All those ordained to eternal life because God foresaw their faith believed." This reverses the sense of the verse where faith is the consequence of election.

5C. Concerning the function of Christian doctrine we note that Paul did not regard God's election of people for salvation as incompatible with his apostolic preaching ministry. God's sovereignty seems to undergird the apostle's efforts. In Acts 18:9-10 God's announcement to Paul of His choice of many people in Corinth served to encourage and strengthen the apostle in his teaching ministry.

5A. Election in the Pauline Epistles

1B. Romans 8:28-30: Some conclusions

1C. God brings about good in all things for those who love Him. The ones who love Him have been called to salvation according to God's purpose (v. 28).

2C. God has a purpose, a plan of salvation, of which calling is a part. This plan stretches from His fore-loving His people to His glorifying them. God undertook salvation for His own: He foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified them. Even the future aspect of salvation (glorification) is put in the past tense because of the certainty of God's plan (v. 29- 30).

3C. God's predestination of a people unto salvation is based upon His loving them beforehand. Thus in Paul we are explicitly given the basis of election: it is God's loving will, His purposed grace (v. 29).

4C. God's predestination of a people has a goal: glorification, ultimate conformity to Christ in holiness (v. 29-30).

5C. God has also ordained the means to the attainment of this ultimate goal of predestination: calling and justification (v. 30).

2B. Romans 9:1-24: Some conclusions

1C. God's electing purpose is free and determinative. He is free in His mercy to show compassion to whom He wills (v. 15). The ultimate cause of mercy is not human desire or effort, but God's freedom in showing mercy (v. 16). God has the prerogative to show mercy and to harden whomever He wishes (v. 18).

2C. God as creator has the rights over His creatures. God has chosen many people for the obtaining of glory. God has passed over others and thereby destined them for wrath (vv. 22- 24).

3C. God calls the elect to Himself in salvation. He uses His means to accomplish His purposes of salvation (v. 24).

3B. Ephesians 1:3-14

1C. God elected people before creation (v. 4).

2C. That was an election unto salvation. He chose us in order that we might be holy (cf. Deuteronomy) and blameless before Him (v. 4). He predestined us to adoption as children to Himself (v. 5).

3C. That was not the corporate election of the nation of Israel as taught in Deuteronomy. It was an election of individual Jews and Gentiles (vv. 12-13) who comprise the Church.

4C. God's love was involved in that election. If the phrase "in love" should begin the idea of v. 5 (so NIV, RSV, NASB) then Paul teaches that God predestinated us in love. That sounds very much like the Deuteronomy passages.

5C. Election was "in Christ." In v. 4 we read that God chose us in him (Christ) before creation. In v. 9 Paul teaches that God made known in time and space His plan of salvation. It was done in accordance with God's good pleasure which He purposed in him (Christ). In v. 11 we learn that we were chosen in him (Christ). What is the meaning of "in Christ" in those instances? One thing seems clear--whatever it means it involves Christ; it does not involve believers; believers are not mentioned. I suggest that it means that God included the person and work of His Son when He planned to

save us. If that is correct then Eph. 1:4, 9 teach that God's eternal election of His people included His planning of the means of their salvation. God chose them and He planned to execute their salvation in the person and work of His Son.

6C. The goal of election is eschatological. It involves the final perfection of believers.

For two reasons I think that v. 4 speaks of eschatological holiness (complete sanctification). First the idea here is paralleled in Colossians 1:22 which in the light of 1:23 means final sanctification and not justification or sanctification proper. Second, there are eschatological references in the two other paragraphs of Eph. 1:3-14. The most natural reference to eschatology in the first paragraph is the final perfection of believers mentioned here. Eph. 1:10 indicates that the goal of election is the bringing together of everything in Christ. Here is a corporate picture of the goal of election.

7C. Paul here teaches the reason for election. Predestination is according to the good pleasure of God's will (v. 5). God purposes in Christ to save people (v. 9). Believers were chosen having been predestinated according to the purpose of God who effects all things according to the purpose of His will (v. 11). Our passage thus emphatically places the basis for election in the sovereign will of God.

8C. God is to be praised for salvation which includes election. His grace and glory are to be praised. His people (both Jew and Gentile) will be to the praise of His glory (v. 3, 6, 12).

4B. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

1C. God chose His people for salvation. They are beloved by the Lord (v. 13).

2C. God ordained the means of His people attaining salvation: through the Holy Spirit's initial sanctification of them and through faith in the truth (the Gospel), v. 13.

3C. God called the Thessalonian believers to Himself through the Gospel unto ultimate glorification (v. 14).

4C. God's election of His people is a reason for them to give continual thanks to Him (v. 13).

5C. God's election of the Thessalonians is compatible with their Christian responsibility (v. 15).

5B. 2 Timothy 1:8-10

1C. God has saved His people not because of their own works but because of His own purpose and grace (v. 9).

2C. God purposed to grant His people that grace in union with Christ before creation (v. 9).

3C. God has now (in the first century) caused that grace to be historically manifested through the appearing of Christ (v. 10).

6B. Romans 11:1-7

1C. The portion of first-century Israel that was saved was a remnant chosen by grace ("according to the election of grace"; Z&G: "according to a free choice of grace—i.e. freely chosen by grace."). God's election unto salvation is based on His grace. His was a gracious election. (v. 5).

2C. First-century Israel could be divided up into "the elect" and "the rest." God chose to save some and did not choose others for salvation; those He hardened (v. 7).

7B. A summary of Paul's doctrine of election

Scholars from various theological backgrounds label the apostle Paul "the theologian of election" and rightly so. This essay will attempt to set forth the main elements in Paul's doctrine of election against the background of the previous biblical revelation.

1C. The previous biblical revelation

- 1D. Old Testament. The roots of Paul's doctrine of election go back to Deuteronomy. Paul bases God's choice of His people in the love of God even as Moses said that God loved Israel and chose her (Deut. 4:37; 7:7; 10:15). Moses taught that God did not choose Israel because of her great numbers. In fact, she was a small nation (Deut. 7:7). Paul says that the ultimate cause for mercy is not human desire or effort, but God's freedom in showing mercy (Rom. 9:16). God has saved His people not because of their efforts, but because of His own purpose and grace which He planned to grant them before creation (2 Tim. 1:9). Moses taught a particularity in God's election of Israel. In Deut. 7:6; 10:15 and 14:2 he writes that God chose Israel out of all the nations. Paul too regards election as particular: there are "the elect" and "the others" (Rom. 11:7); there are vessels of mercy, prepared in advance for glory and vessels of wrath prepared for destruction (Rom. 9:22-23). Moses taught that certain results follow from God's election of Israel. Deut. 7:6 and 14:2 declare that God chose Israel to be His own people, His peculiar treasure. Paul teaches that God predestinated His people unto adoption as children to Himself (Eph. 1:5). Paul says that God fore-loved (foreknew) His own (Rom. 8:29). Those whom God chose for salvation are called "beloved" (2 Thess. 2:13). Another result of Israel's election is her redemption from Egypt. Moses taught that in Deut. 4:37 and 7:6. Paul too combines election and redemption as cause and effect when he writes that God chose people "in Christ" (Eph. 1:4, 11; 2 Tim. 1:9). In Rom. 8:28-30 Paul teaches that those God has foreknown and predestined He has also called and justified. In Rom. 9:24 we learn that God calls the elect to Himself in salvation. In 2 Thess. 2:13 Paul teaches that God chose His people "for salvation." Moses gave a third result of God's election of Israel: holiness. Israel was to be holy because the Lord chose her (Deut. 7:6; 14:2). According to Paul God's election of His people is an election unto eschatological holiness (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29). I thus understand Paul to be greatly influenced (consciously or not) by Moses' presentation in Deuteronomy of the reason for, particularity of, and results of God's election of Israel.
- 2D. The Synoptic Gospels. Paul followed the transformation by the Lord Jesus of the OT concept of election from a corporate to an individual one. Paul still taught a corporate election of Israel (Rom. 11:2, 28). Yet his greater emphasis was on God's election of individuals (who comprise the Church) unto salvation.
- 3D. The Gospel of John. Paul does not employ the distinctive Johannine themes with regard to the doctrine of election. Nevertheless, as in John's Gospel, so Paul teaches an individual election unto salvation.
- 4D. Acts. Acts records how Paul ministered the Gospel of Christ with an awareness of God's sovereignty in salvation (Acts 13:48; 18:9-10). Paul's missionary companion Luke teaches an individual salvation as does the apostle. There is thus great continuity between the previous biblical revelation and Paul's doctrine of election. Even more striking is the development which the doctrine undergoes in the Pauline writings. Paul is indeed the theologian of election; to Paul we now turn our attention.

- 2C. Paul on the time of election. Paul alone gives us the time of God's election. In Eph. 1:4 he says that "God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world." In 2 Tim. 1:9 we learn that God purposed to grant us grace "before the beginning of time" (NIV). Paul thus pushes election into God's planning before creation. I believe Paul's purpose was to show that God graciously chose His people unto salvation even before He created them. Such a teaching excludes any efforts on the part of men. God planned redemption even prior to man's creation. God is the Lord of creation and of salvation.
- 3C. Paul on the basis of election. Paul explicitly gives the basis for God's eternal election. In our study of John and Acts we concluded that although we were not told the ground of election, a doctrine of God foreseeing man's faith did not fit the data. Paul does not contradict the earlier revelation. He tells us negatively that the ultimate cause of mercy is not human desire or effort, but God's freedom in showing mercy (Rom. 9:16). Paul teaches that God did not save us because of our own works, but because of His own purpose and grace. God purposed to grant us that grace before the creation of the world (2 Tim. 1:9).
- Paul also sets forth the positive basis of election: the gracious will of God. He teaches that election is rooted in God's good pleasure. Believers have been predestinated to salvation according to the purpose of God who effects all things according to the purpose of His will (Eph. 1:5, 9, 11). God purposed to grant His people grace before creation (2 Tim. 1:9). God as creator has mercy on whomever He wills (Rom. 9:15, 18). Here we find God's sovereign will and His mercy side by side. That is indeed Paul's thought. The ultimate cause of men and women experiencing God's mercy is not human desire or effort, but God's freedom in showing mercy (Rom 9:16). God's choice of His people for salvation is an election based on His grace (Rom. 11:5). In love He predestined us to the adoption as sons to Himself (Eph. 1:5 NASB, NIV, RSV). In 2 Tim. 1:9 it is God's grace which He purposed to grant to believers before creation. Paul says that those whom God loved beforehand He predestined to be conformed to Christ's image (Rom. 8:28-29).
- 4C. Paul on double predestination. Paul teaches an election of the wicked as well as that of the righteous. That is not his main accent and yet in two passages he teaches it and so must we. In Rom. 9:22-24 God as creator has prepared beforehand vessels of mercy for glorification. Paul's use of the potter image compels me to conclude that the vessels of wrath were people prepared beforehand by God for destruction. In Rom. 11:7 Paul teaches that first-century Israel consisted of "the elect" and "the others." God out of His grace chose many people for eternal life. God out of His justice permitted many others to pay the penalty for their sins. Admittedly there is mystery here; yet Paul sets forth a doctrine of double predestination.
- 5C. Paul on the plan and means of election. Paul puts God's predestination of His people into a larger plan of salvation (Rom. 8:28-30). From fore-loving His own before creation unto glorification in Christ's image the work of salvation is planned and brought about by the Lord. God uses means to accomplish and implement His plan of salvation. He chose His people in Christ—from the beginning He planned to join them to Christ in salvation (Eph. 1:4, 9, 11). God granted us His grace in prospect of union with Christ before creation. In the fullness of time God manifested that grace through the appearing of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:9-10). God used the initial sanctification of the Holy Spirit and faith in the Gospel as His means to bring about His eternal purposes (2 Thess. 2:13). God called to salvation the vessels of mercy which He had prepared beforehand for glory (Rom. 9:23-24). He called, justified and even glorified those whom He fore-loved and predestined to salvation (Rom. 8:28-30). The picture is clear:

God has purposed salvation from beginning to end. He has ordained the means to accomplish redemption through Christ, to bring salvation to His people, and to keep them saved until their glorification.

6C. Paul on the goal of election. Paul alone gives us God's final goal towards which His election of His people moves. That goal is the final confirmation of God's people in holiness so that they may become like the Lord Jesus Christ. In that way believers are made like Christ, their brother (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29).

Another way of looking at the goal is in terms of glory: the end of salvation is the glorification of the believer. That glory is certain in God's plan (Rom. 8:30). The glory which God's people will share is the very glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:14). In Eph. 1 in a context of the work of the triune God in salvation Paul teaches that the ultimate goal is "to bring all things together in Christ" (v. 10). The goal with reference to God himself is his glory, the praising of his grace (Eph 1:6, 12, 14).

7C. Paul on believers' response to election. What should our response be to Paul's doctrine of election? God is to be praised for His gracious and sovereign choosing of a people for Himself (Eph. 1:3, 6, 12). Christians are to continually thank God that He has elected many to salvation (2 Thess. 2:13). We are to be emboldened to preach the Gospel expecting results (1 Thess. 1:4-5). We ought to grow in perseverance and service to God (2 Tim 2:10).

6A. Implications and Applications of the Doctrine of Election

1B. We are to give all the glory for our salvation to God alone; we are to praise him for his grace (Eph 1:3; 2 Tim 1:9), mercy (Rom 9:16), sovereignty (Eph 1:5; Rom 9:22-24), and wisdom (Eph 1:9; Rom 11:33-36). We are to thank God that he has chosen other believers for salvation (2 Th 2:13). We are to be awestruck in contemplation of God's choosing us before creation (Eph 1:4). We are to exult in God's sovereign grace given to us and in his comprehensive plan of salvation.

2B. God wants us to have a deep sense of security; he has not decided to keep us in line by threatening to take our salvation away (Rom 8:28-39). Instead he has assured us of our safety in Christ. We ought to have great confidence in God and walk humbly before him.

3B. We ought never to despair since things are never out from under God's control. Romans 9 and 11 were written to comfort Roman Jewish-Christians who feared that God's promises to Israel had failed. They had not; God had done exactly as he had purposed. The Roman believers were to bow before God and not question him; they were to believe that he was working out his will. We are to do the same. We are to be confident that everything that God brings into our lives (allows to come into our lives) is under his control and for our ultimate good (Rom 8).

4B. We are to share God's love and forgiveness with others. An unloving, unforgiving Christian is a contradiction in terms. Such a person has failed to understand (sovereign) grace, to appreciate God's forgiveness (Eph 1:4-5; 4:32-5:1-2).

5B. Election is part of the foundation of the Christian life (Eph 1 in the context of the letter, especially 4:1). We and our churches will not be better off by neglecting any biblical doctrine. Obviously God's sovereign election is not incompatible with the responsibility of the people of God. There is mystery here and we must affirm both sides of it (see also 2 Th 2:15). We ought to grow in perseverance (2 Tim 2:10). The doctrine of election should stimulate us to vigorous service for Christ. It should cause us to expect results in evangelism (Acts 13:48; 18:9-10; 1 Th 1:4-5).

6B. We are to be encouraged that God's plan has a goal that includes us (Rom 8:30; Eph 1:4, 10). By God's sovereign grace we will overcome, we will some day be glorified, completely

sanctified, and perfectly conformed to the image of Christ along with all true believers (Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:4).

NOTE: The following abbreviations are used in this section:

***BDB** is the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon.

***QAL** is the name given to a particular Hebrew verb stem.

***BAG** is the Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-(Danker) Greek and English lexicon.

7A. Excursus on Foreknowledge

What does the NT mean when it speaks of foreknowledge in the context of the doctrine of election? In order to find out we will undertake a word study on the NT words *proginoskw* (foreknow) and *prognosij* (foreknowledge). We will consider these two words as part of a larger semantic field of the words meaning “know.” We will survey the OT and NT meanings of “know” as well as “foreknow” and “foreknowledge” in the apocrypha before studying foreknowledge in the NT.

1B. “To know” (*yada*) in the OT

Using BDB we will survey the various ways that *yada* is used in the OT in the QAL stem.

- 1C. “Know, learn to know” (BDB 393): “good and evil” (Gen. 3:22), “anything” (1 Sam. 20:39) etc.
- 2C. “Know a person, be acquainted with:” Laban (Gen. 29:5), Joseph (Ex. 1:8). “Esp. of knowing God” (Ex. 5:2, 1 Sam. 2:12). “Of God’s knowing persons, etc.” (Hos. 5:3, Job 11:11). “Of Israel as chosen people” (Am. 3:2, Hos 13:5).
- 3C. “Know a person carnally” (Gen. 4:1, 17, 25).
- 4C. “Know how to do a thing, be able to do it,” (Am. 3:10, Jer. 1:6). . . “be skilful” in hunting (Gen. 25:27), as a player on a lyre (1 Sam. 16:16).
- 5C. “Have knowledge, be wise” (Ec. 9:11); esp. “have knowledge of God and duty, or in practical affairs” (Is. 1:3, Pro. 17:27).
- 6C. We thus find a wide range of meaning for *yada* in the OT. Its range of meaning includes: cognition, personal knowledge, sharing sexual relations, being skillful and being wise.

2B. “Foreknow” (*proginoskow*) and “foreknowledge” (*prognosij*) in the apocrypha.

The noun is used twice in Judith; the verb three times in Wisdom (the student is directed to the accompanying photocopy of the passages). Three different meanings are evident.

- 1C. In Wisdom 6:13 the verb is used to indicate the personal knowledge of the woman wisdom (a personification of wisdom).
- 2C. The verb in Wisdom 8:8; 18:6 and the noun in Judith 11:19 signify prescience (the knowing of information beforehand).
- 3C. The noun is used in Judith 9:6 to signify God’s intention.
- 4C. The occurrences are too scarce to be a sure guide. They do indicate a range of meaning for “foreknowledge” and “foreknow” which includes prescience, personal knowledge, and God’s plan.

3B. “To know” (*ginoskw*) in the NT.

Using BAG we will survey the various ways *ginoskw* is used in the NT. All quotations are from BAG 160-161.

- 1C. “Know, come to know”: with accusative of the thing; with personal object.
- 2C. “Learn (of), ascertain, find out”: our situation (Col. 4:8).
- 3C. “Understand, comprehend”: the parables (Mk. 4:13).
- 4C. “Perceive, notice, realize”: their wickedness (Mt. 22:18).
- 5C. “*Euphem.* of sex relations”: Mt. 1:25.
- 6C. “Have come to know, know”: with accusative of the thing; of the person.

7C. “Acknowledge, recognize” as that which one is or claims to be” *ti/na* Mt. 7:23. Of God as subject “recognize someone as belonging to him, choose,” almost=“elect” (Am. 3:2; Hos 12:1) 1 Cor 8:3; Gal. 4:9. In these pass. the g. of God directed toward man is conceived of as the basis of and condition for man’s coming to know God.

8C. We discover a wide range of meaning for *ginoskw* in the NT.

4B. “Foreknow” and “foreknowledge” in the NT.

We will investigate the NT uses of *proginosko* and *prognosis* paying careful attention to the syntagmatic relation of these words to other words. I have divided up the uses into categories according to two chief criteria: 1) the subject of “foreknow”, the knower, and 2) the object of “foreknow”, the known. I am regarding “the foreknowledge of x” as semantically equivalent to “x foreknows.”

1C. With human subjects

1D. Acts 26:5

1E. Greek: *proginoskontes me anouthen*

2E. NASB: “they have known about me for a long time previously”

3E. NIV: “they have known me for a long time”

4E. RSV: “they have known for a long time . . . that I have lived”

5E. Z&G: “usually ‘know beforehand,’ here ‘know for some time past;’ English idiom demanding ‘they have known me.’”

6E. BAG: “Know from time past.”

7E. RAP: The Jews having known Paul and his way of life for a long time previously.

2D. 2 Peter 3:17

1E. Greek: *hymeis oun, agapetoι, proginoskontes*

2E. NASB: “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, . . .

3E. NIV: “Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, . . . “

4E. RSV: “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, . . . “

5E. BAG: “Know beforehand in advance, have foreknowledge (of) *ti* something. ‘Since you know this (i.e. what the context makes clear) in advance’ 2 Pt. 3:17.”

6E. RAP: Believers knowing facts beforehand.

3D. Summary of foreknowledge with human subjects.

1E. To know someone’s previous way of life.

2E. To know facts beforehand.

2C. With God as subject and Christ’s person or work as object

1D. Acts 2:23

1E. Greek: *touton te horismene boule kai prognosei tou theou ekdoton*

2E. NASB: “This man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God,”

3E. NIV: “This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge,”

4E. RSV: “this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God,”

5E. BAG: “Of God’s omniscient wisdom and intention with *boule* Ac. 2:23.”

6E. RAP: The crucifixion of Christ was in accordance with God’s plan and foreknowledge. This is semantically equivalent to “God planned and foreknew the crucifixion.” We do not doubt that God knew all about the cross of Christ ahead of time. However, it seems trivial for

“foreknowledge” to mean only precognition in this context. Why say that God knew about the cross ahead of time after just saying that He planned it? I agree with BAG that there is an element of divine intention here as well as divine omniscience. The parallel with *boule* suggests this.

2D. 1 Peter 1:20

1E. Greek: (*Xristou*) *prognosmenou men pro kataboles kosmou*

2E. NASB: “For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world,

3E. NIV: “He was chosen before the creation of the world,”

4E. RSV: “He was destined before the foundation of the world”

5E. BAG: “Choose beforehand tina someone.” Passive of Christ 1 Pt. 1:20.

6E. RAP: This is a divine passive; God is the implied subject. While it is certainly true that God knew all about Jesus and his saving work before creation, I do not think that is what this passage is saying. To say that would be trivial. Peter gives a contrast between God’s pre-creation planning of salvation and his working out of that plan in history. Specifically Christ was chosen before creation and has been revealed in NT times.

3C. With God as subject and the people of God as object

1D. 1 Peter 1:1-2

1E. Greek: *eklektois...kata prognosin theou patros*

2E. NASB: “who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God”

3E. NIV: “who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God”

4E. RSV: “chosen and destined by God the Father”

5E. BAG: “according to the predestination of God the Father.”

6E. RAP: The context speaks of the work of the Father, Spirit, and Son in salvation. The ordering is not theological, but soteriological. The Father foreknows; the Spirit sets apart in initial salvation; this setting apart leads to evangelical obedience (one of the ways Peter speaks of saving faith since the Gospel is a command to be obeyed) and the application of Christ’s redemptive work. The election in v. 1 is linked via the prepositions in v. 2 to the respective salvific works of the members of the trinity. The work of God is emphasized--even faith is a result of the Spirit’s work.

I take “chosen . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” to be semantically equivalent to “chosen . . . according as God the Father foreknew them.” It is thus the people of God who are foreknown, set apart, and who obey the Gospel and are saved. It is not their response to the Gospel which is foreknown--it is they who are foreknown. The OT background is found in Amos 3:2 and Hosea 13:5: of all the nations in the world God “knew” Israel alone--He loved and chose her, He claimed her by covenant as His own. I thus understand foreknowledge here to speak of the Father’s prior purposed love for His people. If one would hold that foreknowledge here is foreseen faith then he changes the thrust of a passage which emphasizes the works of the trinity by making salvation ultimately dependent upon man’s response. That interpretation is ruled out since according to this text faith follows the setting apart by the Spirit.

2D. Romans 11:2

- 1E. Greek: *ouk aposato ho theos ton laon autou hon proegno*
- 2E. NASB: “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.”
- 3E. NIV: “God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.”
- 4E. RSV: “God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.”
- 5E. BAG: “Choose beforehand *tina* someone *ton laon autou* Ro. 11:2.”
- 6E. RAP: Paul is writing of the spiritual apostasy of national Israel (10:1-4). He grieves that “not all the Israelites accepted the good news” (10:16). Paul then cites passages from the Psalms (Psalm 19), the Law (Deut. 32), and the prophets (Isa. 65) to show Israel’s culpability and unbelief compared to the Gentiles’ faith. In v. 21 he quotes Isaiah when he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.” In 11:1 “people” means the nation of Israel. Paul contends that God has not rejected His people. Paul uses himself as an example that God has not cast Israel away--he is an Israelite and is saved. In v. 2 he says “God did not reject his people whom he foreknew.” Here is a NT national counterpart to God’s “knowing” Israel in Amos 3:2 and Hosea 13:5. In OT times God “knew” (loved and chose) Israel alone of all the nations. In Romans 11 Paul looks back on that and says that God “foreknew” Israel; He loved and chose her in OT times and the results of that continue into NT times. Paul adduces an example from OT history as proof of his contention that God has not rejected Israel. In vv. 2-4 Paul cites the words of God to Elijah who had thought that he alone was loyal to God. God said that He had reserved 7,000 Israelites who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Did God reserve them because of their loyalty or did He preserve them with the result that they were loyal? In Romans 11 the latter seems to be the case since the next verses read, “So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace” (vv. 5-6). As in Elijah’s time so in Paul’s God chose a remnant of national Israel to be His people. Paul is showing that God’s action in the first century is consistent with His past dealings with Israel. I thus understand “foreknew” in v. 2 to speak of God’s gracious choice of Israel in OT times to be His people. From the OT perspective this was a “knowing”; from that of the NT looking back on the OT it was a “fore-knowing.”

3D. Romans 8:29

- 1E. Greek: *hoti hous proegno*
- 2E. NASB: “For whom He foreknew
- 3E. NIV: “For those God foreknew
- 4E. RSV: “For those whom he foreknew”
- 5E. BAG: “Choose beforehand *tina* someone Ro. 8:29”
- 6E. RAP: The emphasis in Rom. 8:28-30 is on the working of God. He works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose (v. 28). The implication is that they have loved Him because He has called them to Himself in salvation according to His purpose. We could not say that they have been called by God to salvation because they have loved Him for that would be merit theology. Rom. 8:29 explains v. 28 “because those God foreknew He also predestined...” Thus v. 29 gives the cause of God working all things for

the good of those who love Him— because He has done the greater “good” for them—He has planned and worked their salvation from beginning to end.

The other four aorist verbs (He “predestined, called, justified, and glorified”) speak of God’s saving acts on behalf of His people. I suggest that “foreknew” does the same. It speaks of God loving His people beforehand. The object of *proegno* is the same as the object of the other four verbs--it is the people of God. The text does not say that God knew beforehand the faith or response of believers. It says that He knew them beforehand. I suggest that Amos 3:2 and Hosea 13:5 constitute the OT background for the use of “foreknow” in this passage. God “foreknew” His people; He set His love on them before He predestined them for salvation.

5B. Conclusion concerning “foreknowledge” and election.

I basically agree with BDB and BAG in their treatments of *yada* and *ginosko* with God as subject and the people of God as object. There is no mere cognition here; God “knows” His people means He claims them as His own.

BDB puts God knowing Israel under the category of “knowing persons.” This is correct. BDB is also correct when it specifies “of Israel as chosen people.” When God “knew” Israel alone of all the nations (Amos 3:2; Hosea 13:5) he set His love upon her in a way that marked her off as His own. Election is implicit, but God entering into personal relationship with Israel is basic. BAG correctly says of God knowing His people in the NT: “recognize someone as belonging to Him, choose, almost = elect.” BAG is further right when it lists Amos 3:2 and Hosea 13:5 as the OT antecedents for the uses of *ginosko* in 1 Cor 8:3 and Gal. 4:9. BAG correctly prevents a misunderstanding of “recognize as that which one claims to be” (which could imply that God recognizes those who will respond to His grace) when it says, “In these pass. the g. of God directed toward man is conceived of as the basis of and condition for man’s coming to know God.” There are three NT passages which use “foreknow/foreknowledge” with God as subject and the people of God as object. In Rom. 11: 2 we have a NT use of “foreknowledge” which corresponds to the OT concept of God “knowing” Israel alone. God entered into a relationship (established a covenant) with Israel alone. In OT terms: He “knew” her alone. In NT terms: He “foreknew” her alone. In 1 Pet. 1:1-2 and Rom. 8:29 this OT corporate concept is individualized into God entering into relationship with His people before He elected them for salvation. “Foreknow” in these passages thus speaks of God’s loving His people and claiming them as His own.