

The Baptist Faith and Message **Article 5- God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Have you ever thought of the question, why did Jesus die? What was his purpose for dying? Well the Bible teaches that God did have a purpose and affirms the purpose of salvation. The Lord's purpose was to glorify Himself by saving sinners.

You'll notice that the BFM has this article in two paragraphs. The first paragraph has to do with election; the second paragraph has to do with perseverance. If God is going to save sinners he's got to start the work – that's election. and if God is going to save sinners he's got to finish the work – that's perseverance. He began the work by choosing those who would be saved – that's election; and he finishes the work by preserving those he has chosen – that's perseverance.

I. The MEANING of Election

Election is the gracious purpose of God

1586. ἐκλέγομαι **eklegô**; from 1537 and 3004 ; to select :-- choose(4), chose(7), chosen(8), made a choice(1), picking out(1), select(1).

1588. ἐκλεκτός, ἢ, ὄν **eklektos**; from 1586 ; select, by impl. favorite :-- choice(2), choice man(1), chosen(10), Chosen One(1), elect(8)

1589. ἐκλογή, ἡς **eklogê**; from 1586 ; a (divine) selection :-- choice(4), choosing(1), chosen(1), those chosen(m)(1).

4309. προορίζω **proorizô**; from 4253 and 3724 ; to predetermine, foreordain :-- predestined(6).

4401. προχειροτονέω **procheirotoneô**; from 4253 and 5500 ; to appoint beforehand :-- chosen beforehand(1).

Contrast with:

1951. ἐπιλέγω **epilegô**; from 1909 and 3004 ; to call or name, to choose :-- called(1), chose(1).

But Paul chose Silas and departed, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. Acts 15:40

Scripture employs a rich vocabulary to express several aspects of God's sovereign election, choice, and predestination. There are five types of election described in Scripture, so it will be important for us to identify exactly which type of election this article is referring to.

A. Elect ANGELS (1 Tim 5:21)

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.

B. Elect SERVICE (1 Samuel 16:7-12)

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “The LORD has not chosen this one either.” 9 Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “The LORD has not chosen this one either.” 10 Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.” 11 And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are these all the children?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep.” Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” 12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is he.”

C. Elect DESCENDANTS (Deut 4:37)

Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power.

D. Elect MESSIAH (Isaiah 42:1)

Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

E. Elect SAINTS (Eph 1:3-5)

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 Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.

This article is referring to elect saints. In the NT, election’s most common reference is to the election of saints to salvation. In the study guide on page 78 you will find a layman’s definition for this type of salvation. It is: “God’s gracious action in choosing people to follow Him and obey His commands.” A more theological definition of election would be:

ELECTION

The unchangeable purpose of God whereby, before the foundation of the world, out of the whole human race, which had fallen by its own fault out of its original integrity into sin and ruin, He has, according to the most free good pleasure of His will, out of mere grace, chosen in Christ to salvation a certain number of specific men, neither better nor more worthy than others, but with them involved in a common misery.

II. God’s ACTIVITY In Election

...according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners.

What does election tell us about our salvation?

It tells us that Salvation was planned from the foundation of the world. God’s love for you was not an ad hoc plan. His salvation of you was not a plan b or plan c. It was not something that he made up on the fly. It is something that he planned in His will to do before the world was even created. That’s how long he has known that you were going to exist, that’s how long he has had gracious and merciful affections towards you from before the beginning of the world.

Election, likewise, is a plan that saves sinners. The purpose is to bring sinners to salvation. It tells us that God took the initiative in our salvation. This is manifest in His choosing of us. Before we even knew who God was He was already working for our good. Before we even existed God was working toward our good.

Election tells us that God has loved us for eternity. that is a source of comfort in Romans 8. Paul says in Romans 8:28

Paul is talking here about his plan to save sinners.

²⁸And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 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; ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. **Romans 8:28-30**

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

2 Thess 2:13

III. Election does Not Necessitate FATALISM

It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end.

Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?' **Ezekiel 33:11**

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **John 3:18**

What is election not saying?

Fatalism. The Bible does not affirm that Humans are not responsible, and humans are not free. Eze 33:11. John 3:18. The bible affirms real choices, and as you make real choices you will be held responsible and reap the consequences of those choices.

Nor does it entail stifled evangelism. You might hear people say that “well, if its all about who God chooses, why do we need to evangelize.” The truth of the matter is that we don’t know who God has elected. We can see signs in people today, but we don’t know.

Salvation does not come without means. God doesn’t just know in his heart who is going to be saved and then they are magically saved. Salvation comes through the clear declaration of the gospel . The gospel must be preached. No one can come to Christ without hearing the gospel, it’s impossible. They must have knowledge of the truth of who Jesus is.

We’re called to share the gospel with everyone on the planet. And so election does not stifle evangelism.

“I am not sure that in heaven we shall be able to know where the free agency of man and the sovereignty of God meet, but both are great truths.” Charles Spurgeon

IV. God’s INTENT In Election

It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable.

⁶For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD

brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. **Deut 7:6-8**

Israel was chosen and as such were considered God's special treasured possession. Election lets us know of God's love for us.

God's ultimate purpose in election is that He would be GLORIFIED

See Ephesians 1

V. Our RESPONSE To Election

It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. **Eph 2:8-9**

What then shall we say in response to this?

If God has done all of that from eternity for you, the trials and difficult circumstances you face in these few years on this earth are not going to derail God's plans for you. They will not thwart God's purposes for you. He has been working for way longer than you can even fathom. So you can have confidence and comfort that he is going to work for you and for your good.

What should it inspire – comfort, praise (Eph 1:5), holiness – a new life and right life (Col 3 therefore as God's chosen people, clothe yourselves). Evangelism. A 2 Tim 2:10. Paul was willing to put up with whatever.

VI. The PERMANENCE Of Salvation

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.

If God is going to begin the process, he's got to close the deal. Perseverance is also part of God's work of Grace. To see the contrast between these Truths notice John 10:22-30

²²At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; ²³it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. ²⁶"But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹"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. ³⁰"I and the Father are one." **John 10:22-30**

VII. The PRESERVATION In Salvation

Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **1 Peter 1:3-5**

What about those who seem to have fallen away? The NT does not say that all who claim to be Christians are Christians. Many will say, “Lord Lord.” It does say all who truly believe will be saved. They went out from us because they were never really part of us. (1 John)

If you say “I can’t lose my salvation so I can do whatever I want” you need to check your heart. Because one who would have such a thought are not truly born again. Parable of the sower – Luke 8

BAPTIST VOICES FROM HISTORY

J.P. Boyce (1827-1888)

Q. What name is given to those whom God effectually calls to salvation?

A. They are called the elect or the chosen ones of God.

Q. Why are they so called?

A. Because God, before the foundation of the world, chose them unto salvation through Christ Jesus

Q. Did god make this choice because He foresaw that these persons would be pious and good people?

A. He did not, for the goodness and piety of any are due to the influences of the Spirit.

Q. Was it, then, because He foresaw that they would believe?

A. On the contrary, it is through His choice that they are led to believe.

Q. What, then was the ground of that choice?

A. His own sovereign will.

Q. How may we know if we be of the Elect of God?

A. Only by perceiving that the Holy Spirit has led us to repentance and faith and loving obedience to God.

John Broadus 1827-1895

Of Election: “It is a body of truth that compels men to think, -in itself a great advantage. The objections to it are believed to grow out of either misapprehension, or misapplication through wrong inferences. Men assume predestination and election, and then deny human freedom and responsibility; or they assume freedom and accountability, and then deny predestination and election, - in either case because they cannot fully reconcile these two sides of theological truth.”

Basil Manly, Sr. 1798-1868

“Let us not, then, give up either the doctrine of human activity and responsibility, or that of the divine sovereignty and efficiency. Why should they be thought inconsistent? Or why should those who cling to one be disposed to doubt, or disbelieve, or explain away, the other? If you cannot see the consistency of both, that does not prove them inconsistent.”