

DOCTRINE OF ELECTION AND CALLING

May 1989

I. Greek Vocabulary.

A. Words for election include:

1. a verb, ἐκλεγομί, eklegomai: choose, select, elect; occurring 20X in the N.T.
2. a noun, ἐκλογή, ekloge: election, selection, choosing; occurring 7X.
3. an adjective, ἐκλεκτός, eklektos: chosen, elect; occurring 22X.

B. Words for calling include:

1. a verb, καλέω, kaleo: call (Mt.9:13); name (Mt.1:21); invite (Mt.22:3); occurring 148X in the N.T.
2. a noun, κλησίς, klesis: calling, call; occurring 11X.
3. an adjective, κλητός, kletos: called; occurring 10X.

II. Election and calling are two related but separate actions of God (Mt.22:14 "*For many are called, but few are chosen*"; Rom.9:11 "*for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls*"; 2Pet.1:10 "*Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you*").

III. Election and calling follow the principle of grace, not works (Rom.11:5,6 "*In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace*"; 2Tim.1:9 "*who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Jesus Christ from all eternity*").

IV. The "time" of election and calling.

- A. Election took place in eternity past as a part of the "Divine Decrees" (Eph.1:4 "*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*"; cp. 2Tim.1:9 in point III).
- B. Calling takes place in time in connection with gospel hearing (2Thess.2:14 "*And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*").

V. The "who" of election and calling.

- A. God chose us to eternal salvation (Eph.1:5 "*He predestined [synonym for election] us to adoption as sons*"), and He called us (2Pet.1:3 "*of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence*").
- B. Christ has an election from eternity past, which we share via union with Him (Isa.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*"; cp. Mt.12:18; Lk.9:35 "*And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!'*").
- C. Israel has an election that follows the same principles as ours (Rom.9:1-13; 11:1-32; see the Romans series).
- D. The Church has an election (1Pet.2:9 "*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*").
- E. Who the elect are.
 1. They are the few, not the many (God has told us this ahead of time; Mt.7:13,14; 22:14).
 2. They tend not to be from the famous, rich, powerful, and wise of society (1Cor.1:26ff; Jam.2:5).

VI. The "why" of election is foreknowledge.

- A. The overriding reason God chose some and not others, in eternity past, is God's ability to foresee all things of the future, including individual response to the gospel (Omniscience demands that God foreknew everything that would occur from eternity past. However, foreknowledge makes

nothing certain).

- B. Scriptural support (1Pet.1,2 "*who are chosen...*" [d.m.p.adj. ἐκλεκτός, eklektos], "*aliens* [temporary residents in the cosmos] *scattered* [Jewish believers] *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit*"; Rom.8:29 "*For whom He foreknew* [προγινωσκῶ, proginosko: to foreknow, occurring 5X: Acts.26:5; Rom.8:29; 11:2; 1Pet.1:20; 2Pet.3:17], *He also predestined* [προορίζῶ, proorizo: to decide beforehand, occurring 6X: Acts.4:28; Rom.8:29,30; 1Cor.2:7; Eph.1:4,11] *to become conformed to the image of His Son*"; Rom.8:30 "*and whom He predestined, these He also called* [note the logical and chronological sequence of actions]; *and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified*"; Rom.11:2 "*God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew*"; 1Pet.1:20 "*For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you*").
- C. This answer to the problem of election is in harmony with the doctrines of:
1. Volition.
 2. The fairness and impartiality of God.
 3. Unlimited atonement.

VII. Calvinism represents an attack on the true doctrines of election and calling (Gal.5:8 "*This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you*").

- A. Calvinism teaches that there is no apparent or known reason why God chose some (the few) and not others (the many).
- B. We teach that God's sovereign and eternal choice to save some and not the rest was conditioned by foreknowledge.
- C. Calvinism teaches that God was not bound to save anyone and that it is grace that He saved the few.
- D. We teach that the character of God is such that He was bound to provide salvation for all mankind; hence, it was not something He could refuse to do (Jn.3:16; 1Tim.2:4; 2Pet.3:9).
- E. Calvinism, the classical reformed version taught by Calvin, teaches that Christ died only for the elect. This is called the doctrine of limited atonement and is consistent with the other beliefs of this system, including total depravity (or inability); unconditional election (the only bona fide doctrine within TULIP); limited atonement; irresistible grace (see below); and perseverance of the saints, which denies reversionism to the sin unto death for the believer.
- F. We teach that Christ died for all mankind, believer and unbeliever alike (1Jn.2:2).
- G. Calvinism teaches that all who are called will be saved.
- H. We teach that all who were chosen will be called and saved, but that all who are called will not be saved (Rom.11:7; Mt.22:14).
- I. As a corollary to the above, Calvinism teaches that the call to salvation is irresistible.
- J. We teach that negative volition can, and does, resist the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit (Acts.7:51; cp. vv.54,57; see Doctrine of the Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit).

VIII. Things to which we are said to be called.

- A. Saints (Rom.1:7 "*to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints*"; 1Cor.1:2 "*saints by calling*").
- B. Freedom (Gal.5:13 "*For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another*").
- C. Peace (1Cor.7:15 "*but God has called us to peace* [context has to do with being married to a negative spouse]"; Col.3:15 "*And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful*").
- D. Phase 2 sanctification (1Thess.4:7 "*For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification*").
- E. Endurance under suffering (1Pet.2:21 "*For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps*").

F. Spiritual gifts (1Cor.1:1 "*Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ*").

G. Eternal life and Phase 3 glory (Eph.4:4; 2Thess.2:14).

H. The Rapture (Phil.3:14 "*upward call*").

I. Inheritance (Heb.9:15; 1Pet.3:9).

J. Fellowship (1Cor.1:9).

IX. Exhortations related to our election and calling.

A. Remain in the niche in which we were called (1Cor.7:20 "*Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called*"; cp. v.24).

B. Walk worthy of the One who calls us (1Thess.2:9-12; 2Thess.1:11).

C. Exploit the eternal life to which we were called (1Tim.6:12).

D. Phase 2 righteousness (1Pet.1:13-17).

E. Make certain of our calling and election (2Pet.1:10).

X. The parable of calling and election is found in Matthew 22.

A. The king is God the Father, who gives a wedding feast for his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (vv.1,2).

B. The slaves, who are sent out to invite guests, are those who were sent to the Jews in the early Christian era (vv.3,4).

C. Their preoccupation with other things and their mistreatment of the slaves represents negative volition and persecution (vv.5,6; 1Thess.2:16).

D. The king's destruction of them and their city represents the fall of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70AD (v.7).

E. The new guest list represents the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles over the course of the Church Age (the period of Israel's unbelief; vv.8-10).

F. The unprepared guest represents the Millennial unbeliever who enters the Wedding Hall in the Millennial Kingdom, but is removed and cast into hell (vv.11-13).

G. Verse 14 applies the parable to all mankind, and sums up the doctrine.

XI. The security of our election and calling (Rom.11:29 "*for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable*" [literally, the word means "free from regret": the Greek ἀμεταμέλητος, ametameletos. God has no regrets in regard to those He has chosen and called]. See also Rom.8:33-39; v.33 "*Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the One who justifies*").

XII. All whom God chose will be called and saved in the course of time (Jn.17:1-3).

1Thess.5:23,24 "*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He will also bring it to pass*"; cp. 1Cor.1:8,9.

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