

# The Circuit Rider

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## Election

(Part II)

“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” (Rom. 11:5-6)

The doctrine of election is one that frequently prompts arguments among theologians. Because of those arguments, the doctrine of election is often resented and ignored. Many people see it as a doctrine that only divides Christians instead of a doctrine that ought to provoke holiness. Although the arguments about election are not edifying, the scriptural doctrine of election is edifying to the truly redeemed. To reject the doctrine of election is to reject the inspiration of scripture. Because this doctrine encounters such strong opposition, it's needful for us to examine it to some degree, even in the briefness of this study. It's impossible to rightly divide the word of truth and deny the doctrine of election. However, it is a subject that must be handled with care when dealing with the matter of free will. God did not make us robots, but we learn from scripture that when man exercises his free will, he will do like Adam and choose to sin. Unless God overpowers man in his depravity, then man will never come to God. To deny the truth of election is to do an injustice to God's Word and to the church of Jesus Christ. SALVATION IS OF THE LORD and sinful man has absolutely nothing to do with his redemption. God is calling out a people unto Himself and those whom He calls are His elect!

The purpose of this doctrine is to show Christians how great is the grace that has saved us and cause us to respond in praise unto the Lord our God. Understanding the doctrine of election should be a motivating factor in God's people living holy lives and loving others (Col. 3:12-14). Unfortunately, the doctrinal truth of election is often

misunderstood and misapplied by even well meaning believers. Perhaps, one of the main reasons why the doctrine of election is neglected is because it involves deep theology that deals with the inmost secrets of God. It's strong meat that is nourishing to those who are willing to digest it. But, it's indigestible to those whose spiritual systems are out of order and how sad it is that so many within the institutionalized church suffer from spiritual indigestion. To truly believe and apply God's Word will not make us proud and mean, but humble and loving. To accept the doctrine of election will cause you to rejoice in God's grace, praise Him for it, and "be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). Don't be like most people who reject the biblical doctrine of election simply because they cannot understand it. Only God can fully comprehend this lovely doctrine. What He expects of us is to accept it by faith and rejoice in His electing of a people unto Himself.

## THE MEANING OF ELECTION

From the Hebrew, BACHIYR, and the Greek, EKLOGE, comes the meaning of election. These words express the idea of picking out or selecting from a number of alternatives. The concept is expressed in the use of such words as "elect" or "chosen." Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God chose people not because they were worthy, but because of His grace. Two good examples are seen in Samson (Judges 13-16) as a judge in the Old Testament and Paul (Acts 8-9) as an apostle in the New Testament. Neither of these men seem to be a likely person to serve God, but both prove that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). God does not choose based upon man's goodness, but His sovereign grace! A concise definition of election is simply God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life, not because of foreseen merit in them, but of His mere mercy in Christ, in consequence of which choice they are called, justified, and glorified. To elect means to select or choose and Scripture teaches that before God began His creation, He choose individuals from the human race that would be His own (Rom. 8:28-39, Eph. 1:3-14, II Thess. 2:13-14, II Tim. 1:9). God owes sinners no mercy whatsoever, but only condemnation. Therefore, it is truly amazing that He would choose to save any of us.

The doctrine of election is also known as the doctrine of effectual calling. This means those whom God "did predestinate" unto life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call (Rom. 8:30) by the power of His "word" (Rom. 10:17) and the "Holy Spirit" (Jh. 16:8) unto salvation by the renewing of their wills. This effectual call is of God's free and special "grace" alone and not from anything at all foreseen in man who without God is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Hearing with the outward ear and responding to the gospel externally is not the same as hearing with the internal ear of the soul and believing with the "heart" (Rom. 10:9-10). For that reason, Jesus said, "for many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). God's effectual calling is the result of His divine "election" (I Pet. 2:9). To be "called" (KALEO) by the Holy Spirit is to be issued God's divine call to embrace salvation by God-given "faith" (Eph. 2:8-9). As we'll discover from this study, the subjects of

predestination and election go hand in hand. The nouns, elect and election, and the verbs, choose or chosen, all carry the same theological meaning. The words (elect, election, chosen, foreknow, and foreknowledge) all apply to the doctrine of effectual calling.

God's choice of sinners for salvation and service is always on the basis of His grace. His gracious election is free and unconditional because it is not based upon the merit of man. God owes man nothing but judgment, but as a wonder of His grace, He chooses to bless those whom He has elected (Rom. 9:6-15). From this passage, the doctrine of election is illustrated from a set of twins born in the Old Testament. Before Jacob and Esau were yet born (Gen. 25:23, Mal. 1:2-3), God had determined which one would rule over the other. The Lord is not obligated to explain to us His reasons for doing what He does, all that we can do is accept it by faith. If you're saved, then it's because God's grace and mercy has chosen you and as a result you are not to question His election, but "bring forth fruit" that will glorify Him (Jh. 15:16). God's choosing of His elect was from "the beginning" and based on His sovereign "foreknowledge" (II Thess 2:13, I Pet. 1:2). This "foreknowledge" does not merely mean that God knew in advance, but that He ordained in advance. The rejecting of Christ by the Jews was no surprise to God and neither was the salvation of the Gentiles (Acts 13:48). All who have been "given" to Christ by the Father are eternally secure (Jh. 6:37-40).

The very idea of election implies that "many" will hear the gospel, but not believe because they will not be "chosen" (Matt. 13:20-21, 22:14). Once again, we must leave the depth of this choosing concept to the mind of God alone. The fact is that not all will be saved, not even all who hear the message of salvation. Christ's death on the cross was sufficient for all, but only efficient for those who believe. Out of all the nations, God chose Israel, but out of this nation, there was only a "remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5-8). God's choosing of Israel did not guarantee the salvation of the nation. Neither did the choosing of "Judas" (Matt. 27:5) as an apostle guarantee his salvation (Jh. 17:12). Sometimes, God's choosing is to privilege and responsibility and at other times to salvation. When God sent Paul to Corinth to preach, He did so because He had "much people in this city" (Acts 18:10). This did not mean that everyone in Corinth would believe, but God had an elect that would believe. In order to reach that elect crowd, God chose a weak human vessel to deliver the message of grace (I Cor. 1:27-28). The mystery of election is that God does not choose all, by He chooses some and to be chosen should cause us to treasure His grace.

## CLOSING

The fact that God elects some to salvation is not an indication of injustice where the lost are concerned, but an indication of grace where the saved are concerned. Those who are damned receive justice. Those who are saved receive mercy. No one ever receives injustice! The elect are true believers in Jesus Christ and true believers are the elect. In other words, belief is the result of election and election is not the result of faith.

Election is not on the ground of foreseen faith or obedience, but for reasons known only to God, arising from His sovereign pleasure. It's an act of Holy God and not the result of a choice made by sinful man. It's by the "good pleasure" (Phil 2:13) of God's grace and according to His will and eternal "purpose" (II Tim. 1:9).

## A MINISTRY UPDATE

It's hard to believe that winter is past and spring has now sprung! Since my retirement from the pastorate in the summer of 2008, time has gone by faster than ever for me. This means I'm staying busy and that's the way I want it. For health and strength to face each new day, I "praise the Lord." The radio ministry continues to go well over WTRU and it's good to hear of how people are being blessed with "The Circuit Rider". The purpose of this little quarterly paper is to give a brief insight into some Biblical truth and stimulate some food for thought.

In this edition of "The Circuit Rider", you will find the second of a three-part article on the Biblical Doctrine of Election. Since it is such a deep doctrine, I've "chosen" to hit the highlights in three different editions. The last part will be coming out this summer. Even at that, I've only touched the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the study of this subject. May the Lord open hearts and eyes to His divine Truth so that the redeemed can rejoice in salvation by grace through faith. All we can say when we look at this mighty truth is "hallelujah, what a Savior!"

The response to my latest book, "*Shepherding God's Sheep and Herding Goats-My Life as a Pastor*", has been a blessing. It was basically written to encourage those in Christian ministry and from the reports that I've received God has used it to do just that. Anyone who would like to have a copy may receive one by asking for it. I wrote my first book back in 1997 on "*Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage-What Does the Bible Really Teach?*" After years of struggling with this subject as a pastor, I did a study of God's Word that I found very liberating. The result was the publishing of this book. Once again, anyone who could benefit from such study may ask for the book without charge. All I ask, is that if you disagree with my views, please love me anyway as a brother in Christ.

As always, I want to "thank" everyone who supports this little ministry. We do not exist to make money. COGM is just that, a ministry! The only business that we're about is God's business. Your prayers and financial support keeps the Word of God going forth over the radio and the printed page. You are not taken for granted, but appreciated from the bottom of my heart. With the love of Christ, I love all of my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Because of His Sovereign Grace .....BWM

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