

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA.55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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DIVINE ELECTION

The word *election* does not really belong in any translation of the New Testament. It is actually a transliteration, a carrying over of a Greek word into the English. This is sometimes good and even necessary when there is no English word that will express the Greek. But it is wholly unnecessary in the case of the words *elect* and *election* as there are good English words that truly declare the meaning of the Greek originals. The *King James Version* translators clearly acknowledged this when they rendered each one of the twenty-one occurrences of the verb by some form of the word *choose*.

The three Greek words that must be considered in the study of this subject are *eklegomai*, which is the verb; *eklektos*, an adjective derived from the verb and which is usually used as a noun; and *ekloge*, a noun derived from the verb. These three words are found fifty-one times in the New Testament. They are translated by some form of the word *choose* twenty-nine times, a definite indication that the KJV translators well knew what all of them meant. However, if they had translated them faithfully and consistently, what would have happened to their precious doctrine of election? It would have disappeared from the Bible, and this they could not allow.

When the young believer is first confronted with the theological doctrine of election he usually finds it quite disconcerting, especially when he finds it presented by passages of Scripture which he does not want to be guilty of

rejecting. This was my own experience about fifty-seven years ago. At that time I vowed to myself, and declared to the one who was pressing the doctrine upon me, that someday I would go into this matter from beginning to end, find all that the Bible says concerning it, and that this would be what I would then believe. He answered that the Bible was plain and specific, that it declared we were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God," and that we had been "chosen in Him before the creation of the world." I discovered later that he had misquoted the last of these passages for his own purpose.

In due time I set myself to find what was taught in the Calvinistic doctrine of election. This was not too difficult since it was defined and explained in the third chapter of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. I will try to summarize the contents of this chapter and present them as honestly as possible.

It declares that a certain number of individuals are by the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, predestinated unto everlasting life, and others are foreordained to everlasting death. Also, that the particular individuals thus predestinated and foreordained are unchangeably determined; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. Furthermore, it is declared that the decree of God that some men shall be saved does not rest upon any foresight of their faith, and the decree of God that others should be lost does not rest upon any foresight of their unbelief. This, I believe, is an honest and fair summary of the Calvinistic doctrine of election and predestination.

When the time arrived that I had gained a measure of proficiency in handling the Greek language and knew how to use the excellent tools that men of God had provided for the use of all who would dig into God's Word for the truth it contains, I determined to check out the Calvinistic doctrine of election and see if it was in harmony with the Word of God. And on the principle of giving honor to whom honor is due, I would digress here and pay tribute to such men as George Wigram, Robert Young, and James Strong for the wonderful tools they have placed in the hands of all who would dig deeply into the Sacred Scriptures. I make constant use of their concordances, and when, as a result, I find truth, there can be no backing off. I will follow it out to all its conclusions and accept all the consequences that come from following such a course.

I prepared then, and still have before me as I write, a sheet divided into four columns. In the first is listed in order all the fifty-one references where the Greek words are found, the second gives the exact Greek form and parses the word, the third gives the KJV translation of the word, and the fourth gives my own version as to how I think the word should be translated. Thus, along with my Bible, I have before me all the Biblical information that is available to anyone.

The first truth that the careful student will find when he examines the fifty-one passages in their contexts is that in no occurrence are any of these words ever related in any way to the gift of life, to salvation, to justification, to forgiveness, to redemption, to eternal life, or to eternal punishment. In the Bible there is no electing or choosing of anyone in relationship to any of these things. Furthermore, in every passage it will be seen that these words are always related to some position or to some special service that is to be performed by a child of God, and that they never have to do with the salvation of a sinner.

Let no one cite 2 Thess. 2: 13 as a refutation of the above statement. The word *election* does not appear in any form in this passage, as a look at any analytical concordance will show. Another fact that will be found in an examination of all passages is that there is no chronology or time fastened upon any of these passages, except Eph. 1:4, and that divine election or choice is something that always takes place within the lifetime of one who is already related to God. The childish idea that at sometime in the unknown past before any man existed that God made a determination as to who among the members of the human race should be saved is a grotesque idea that does not have one line of support in the Word of God.

It will help if the student will also note that the three Greek words being considered in this study mean exactly what the words *elect* and *election* mean when they are used in connection with our political processes, except that in our elections the choosing or electing is done by the voters, while in the Bible the choice is made by God. Nevertheless, in our elections men are chosen to fill an office and to perform a service. No one is ever elected to citizenship, but only citizens can be elected.

The truth found in Luke 6: 13 is an example of most of the facts already presented. Our Lord, after spending a night in prayer, summoned His disciples at daybreak: "**And of them He chose (*eklegomai*) twelve, whom**

He also named apostles." These men were elected. And this happened, not before the world began, but on the day when He called His disciples together. This action was in harmony with the declarations found in Matt. 20:16 and 22:14: **"For many be called, but few chosen"** (*eklektoi*). There were many that day who were positioned (called) as disciples, but beyond this twelve were chosen for special service. This is what election means.

Thus it was the Apostle (Heb. 3: 1) gave to twelve others a position that was out of Himself, so that they became individually and collectively the out-positioned ones (*ekklesia*) of Jesus Christ. This is the *ekklesia* the Lord had in mind when in speaking to His disciples (Matt. 18:1) told them that if a brother committed a trespass against another, the offended one was to take certain preliminary steps, and if these produced no results, he was to tell it to the *ekklesia* (the apostles) and if the offender would not hear the *ekklesia*, he was no longer to be considered a disciple, but regarded as the gentile and the tax-gatherer (Matt. 18:15-18). Our Lord also made it plain that any two of the twelve apostles would constitute a quorum, that whatever two did would be official and binding upon all disciples and apostles (Matt. 18:18-20).

In Luke 23:35 the word *eklektos* is used of Christ when His tormentors said of Him: **"Let Him save Himself if He be the Christ, the chosen of God."** And while this word was used by His enemies, we can rest assured that He was the chosen (*eklektos*) of God, since this is declared of Him in 1 Peter 2:4, 6.

If John 6:70 and 13:18 are examined it will be found that Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of the Lord, was one of the elect. The verb *eklegomai* is found in both passages.

In 1 Peter 1:2 we read of some who were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God," but the translator had to do a hatchet job on the Greek in order to get this idea into it. This epistle is addressed to the chosen (elect) expatriates of the dispersion in the five places named. Their position was in accord with the foreknowledge of God the Father. All Bible students know that the descendants of Israel were chosen or elected to fill a special place and perform a special service in God's predetermined plan for the government of the world. In 2 Peter 1: 10 these same people are exhorted to make their position and their election sure, something they could do by receiving Jesus as the Christ.

Space will permit me to deal with only one more passage. This is Ephesians 1:4 which in the KJV reads: "**According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.**" It is the crude conclusion of many that 'foundation' is the same as "creation," and that the world here is that world of God made in the beginning as recorded in Gen. 1: 1. Do they not know that the world that then was being overflowed with water perished (2 Pet. 3:6), and another world was founded to take its place? Furthermore, they should know that a new world is coming, the world that will be when God governs the earth and all men upon it. By "world" I mean not the earth, but the order, system, arrangement that will be upon the earth. In Psalm 96:10 it is declared: "**The world also shall be established (founded) that it shall not be moved.**" This establishing or founding of the world, spoken of in Gen. 1:4 is a future event which will take place when God assumes sovereignty. Those who are now believing in Jesus Christ are chosen in advance of God founding His order to fill a special place in that order. We have been chosen to be holy and flawless in His right, for in love He has designated us beforehand for the place of a son, for the great work of extolling the glories of His grace. This choice took place in my lifetime. My real service is yet future.

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