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Who Gets Elected? - By the Spirit, that is!

Ephesians 1:4: (NASB) *Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love.*

It's election time in America! This coming Tuesday many will stream to cast their ballots for whatever candidate they believe will do the best job in public office. This exercise gives a voice to the common man. Well, what about the election to the office of "sons of God?" Who "votes" for that? Has God, as some Christians believe, had that all in hand in a predestined fashion for all of the ages of time, or is there some level of choice involved in the matter, as other Christians believe? Stay with us as we look into the election process for the highest office ever available to sinful man!

What are the two opposing viewpoints on this?

Calvinism and Arminianism represent the two extreme points of view.

Calvinism: (Source: Wikipedia) Calvinism stresses the total depravity or total inability of humanity's ethical nature against a backdrop of the sovereign grace of God in salvation. It teaches that fallen people are morally and spiritually unable to follow God or escape their condemnation before him. It is seen as the work of God (divine intervention) in which God changes their unwilling hearts from rebellion to willing obedience.

In this view, all people are entirely at the mercy of God, who would be just in condemning all people for their sins, but who has chosen to be merciful to some. Thus, one person is saved while another is condemned, not because of a foreseen willingness, faith, or any other virtue in the first person, but because God sovereignly chose to have mercy on him.

In other words, you are not saved unless God chose you before you were born to be saved.

 Calvin Radio, Best Calvinist Answer, *Alpha and Omega Ministries*

- ... Paul in Ephesians said that God predestined us in adoption of sons through Jesus Christ according to His will and to the praise of His glorious grace.

This deals with today's theme scripture, Ephesians 1:4 as well as verse 5.

Romans 8:29-30: Here we also see a predestination - a decision made before creation.

1 Peter 1:1-2: God knew ahead of time, but how does free will fit into this? A Calvinist would say that it doesn't.

Arminianism: (Source: Wikipedia) Jacobus Arminius was a Dutch pastor and theologian in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. He was taught by Theodore Beza, Calvin's hand-picked successor, but after examination of the Scriptures, he rejected his teacher's theology that it is God who unconditionally elects some for salvation. Instead Arminius proposed that the election of God was of believers, thereby making it conditional on faith. Arminius's views were challenged by the Dutch Calvinists, especially Franciscus Gomarus, but Arminius died before a national synod could occur.

In other words, salvation is conditional and includes choice.

 God rejects Calvinism, a testimony from an Ex-Calvinist at a Southern Baptist Convention


- If I were to walk away from this conference, I'm not sure I would walk away with the understanding that there is a definitive line to say, Jesus Christ truly does love every single person and gave his life, because I would walk away understanding you were very strong in limited atonement. If I was perhaps 2.3 Calvinism, that would be okay, we just need to get along and we can agree to disagree. As a former Calvinist, the Lord made very clear to me that He has no association with that type of thinking.

Let's look at a few Scriptures that indicate there is a choice: 1 Timothy 2:3-4: Calvinism would say that most men are doomed.

Matthew 16:24: This shows a personal choice is available to decide to follow after Jesus.

Matthew 11:28: (NASB) The Biblical teaching of election - predestination - is controversial and there are verses that seem to indicate things both ways. How do we harmonize all of these?

What are these approaches based upon?

 Calvinism vs. Arminianism, five points of Calvinism, *marshillchurch.org*

- "Total depravity" - We are all sinners by nature and choice; as a result we don't have free will and cannot choose God.
- "Unconditional election" - God chooses to love and save some people, regardless of their works, not because they were going to be good or choose Him, because all people are bad and no one seeks Him.
- "Limited atonement" - Jesus went to the cross and died not for everyone, but for the elect.



"Irresistible grace" - If God wants to love you, God wants to save you, God wants you to meet Jesus, you can fight and argue, but eventually He will change your heart and you will meet Jesus.

"Perseverance of the saints" - Everyone who does meet Jesus perseveres and is with him in the end. They may sin, they may stray, but they always repent and come back.



Calvinism vs. Arminianism, five points of Arminianism, marshillchurch.org

- "Free will" - We have the ability to choose or not choose God.
- "Condition election" - It is conditional upon God seeing who will choose Him. Those people that choose Him are those that God, likewise, chose.
- "Universal atonement" - Jesus Christ died in the place of every sinner to forgive all of their sins so that anyone and everyone can be saved.
- "Resistible grace" - God could desire for you to be saved, but you could ultimately resist Him and choose not to be a Christian.
- "Perseverance of some saints" - Some people who become Christians can later choose not to be Christians.

Let's start with the depraved condition of mankind. Both sides are actually very similar on this point. To grasp the who and the how of "election" we need to know where we are starting from:

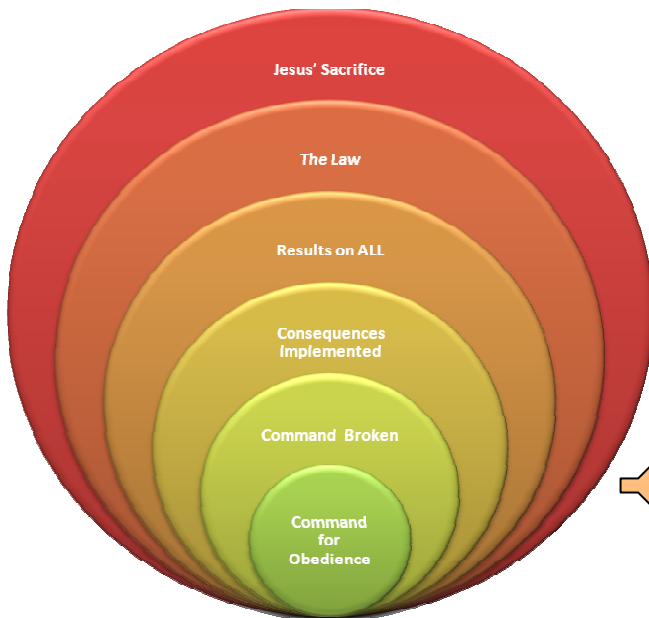
The command for obedience was given: [Genesis 2:17](#)

The command was broken: [Genesis 3:6](#)

The consequences were then implemented: [Genesis 3:23](#) [Genesis 5:5](#): The history of mankind took a dramatic turn at this point because of their choice. Sin happened.

The results fell upon ALL: [Romans 6:23](#): As a result of Adam's sin, the penalty fell on the rest of us. The payment - the consequence - for sin is death.

The Old Testament Law was brought into play as a means to label sin and could not lift any man out of sin: [Romans 5:12-14](#): [Romans 3:20](#): Even before the written Law was introduced through Moses, death still reigned. It didn't matter if the Law was there or not - sin still reigned. What the Law did was to clearly label sin.



Are we predestined by God or is it a choice?
 Were you personally set up by God before the foundation of the world to fail? Or were you set up to succeed - not because you deserve it - but because you were chosen?

Finally, righteousness found its voice in Jesus and his sacrifice and opened a door to sinful man: [Romans 3:21-25](#): We all need the gift of God's grace, but who receives it? If it is a gift, how do you earn God's favor in a sinful state? Can one seek it out?

The path of sin is traced right up to justification in Christ - but WHO does WHAT at this point? What role does God play and what role, if any, do we play?

What does the sovereignty of God really mean??



Mind Tension, unconditional election, [John Piper Interview with Rick Warren](#)

- Do you embrace the doctrine of unconditional election? In other words, God can and does choose who will be saved before the foundation of the world?

- Yes, my qualifier on that is that I say if I find a "whosoever will may come" verse, I believe them both. My faith does not demand that I correlate every verse...I am able to hold tensions in my mind rather than having to explain them.

So Rick Warren embraces both views simultaneously.

The "sovereignty of God" is a teaching of Calvinism, but is not a scriptural phrase, per se. "Sovereignty" means "supreme excellence or supreme power especially over a body politic." We



definitely believe in the sovereignty of God, but we don't extend it to only a pre-determined, pre-stated will of God. God IS sovereign, but does that mean he disallows all choice?

A few scriptures that help define God's sovereignty: Psalms 91:1-7: We get a sense of God's great power. **God compared (by way of experience) to the "sovereignty" of a world ruler:** Daniel 3:26: The sovereignty of man is faulty. We believe the sovereignty of God is so great that He can allow free choice and His perfect will will still be done. **God acknowledged by demons:** Mark 5:5-8 **God's own description of himself through the words of a prophet:** Isaiah 55:8-11

God's sovereignty:

- Does this authority take away the possibility for choice in the created?
- Does this authority cancel any variation in the accomplishing of His plan?
- Does this authority reduce the past, present and future to the mere playing out of a pre-determined script?

So, what does election really mean? Is it from God entirely or do we play a part?

The Doctrine of Election Defined, John Piper

- *Election means God chooses before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4) who will be rescued from sin through faith and thus undeservingly be saved, and who will NOT be rescued from continuing in their rebellion, and therefore who will deservingly perish.*

Debate - Election - Arminian view, Christian Answers

2 Thessalonians 2:13: (KJV) *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Chosen you - but how? Through sanctification of the spirit and BELIEF of the truth.*

He is saying belief is the key part. God has chosen you, but you must play your part and believe. What exactly was predestined?

Definition of Predestine: 1) to predetermine, decide beforehand 2) in the New Testament of God decreeing from eternity 3) to foreordain, appoint beforehand

1 Corinthians 2:6-8: God preset or predestined particular wisdom for revealing at a specific time. Wisdom is not a person. The rulers of the age didn't understand it because if they had, Jesus would never have been crucified. Ephesians 1:9-11: That wisdom would reveal his "kind intention" for His creation. ...¹⁰*with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth...* This "intention" is to be revealed at the "fullness of times" and it is for ALL CREATION. ...In Him ¹¹*also we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined <4309>** according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, "We also" - not individuals, but a collective class - an "administration" to proclaim reconciliation. An administration is a group of individuals who govern. It talks about the governing power at the "fullness of times." What is that? 2 Corinthians 5:18-19: If it was predetermined before the foundation of the earth that the vast majority of humanity perishes, then why does this scripture say, "through us - those who are given God's grace - God is reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them"? The only individual predestined was Jesus. This seems to refer to a group - a class of individuals - that will be an administration to reconcile the world.*

So Election/Predestination is to the sons of God inclusive, revealed way back in the Old Testament.

This is the most often repeated promise in the entire Bible: Genesis 22:17-18 Let's see if a predestined class and not specific individuals "fits" with other texts that show a predestination: Romans 8:28-30: Again this is a group - a class that was predestined and is spoken of here as already complete, for that was what was predestined - the complete true church. Ephesians 1:4-7: God's grace is free and unmerited, but this again talks collectively and not individually. Both Jews and Gentiles are included as a complete class and not as individuals.

Does man have any choice?

2 Thessalonians 2:13: Chosen you *brethren* - plural. Faith must be your *chosen* way. You have to chose to follow through.



Revelation 17:14: (NASB) *These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.*

Called: **Up to God**

Chosen: **Up to God**

Faithful: **Up to YOU - our responsibility is to be thou faithful unto death.**

Matthew 22:13-14: *Many called but few chosen - according to Calvinism, God would NOT call many - He would only call those who were "predestined."*

 **Who are the Elect, whosoever will, Adrian Rogers**

- *The elect are the "whosoever wills" - you want to be saved, come to Jesus. He is reaching out his outstretched hands to you and saying, "Come!"*

Just a few of the MANY texts that talk about our free moral agency: Psalms 119:30 Psalms 119:173 Joshua 24:15: We have a personal choice as to whether we serve the Lord.

How do God's sovereignty, election and choice all work together?

Did God call specific INDIVIDUALS from before the foundation of the world? **NO!** **Examples of those "called from their mother's womb:"** Jeremiah 1:5: God chose Jeremiah in the womb. Isaiah 49:1: God chose Isaiah in the womb, not from before the foundation of the world. Galatians 1:15-16: God chose the Apostle Paul in the womb. So we see that there were a few chosen in the womb to do a specific work at a specific time.

 **Calvinism or Arminianism - Wide vs. Narrow Bridge, Dr. Michael Brown**

- *Some have said the Arminians preach a wide bridge to salvation for all men, but it only goes half way across the river. Calvinists preach a more narrow bridge - Jesus died to save the elect and it goes across the whole river.*


Let's use the picture of two bridges - the first: Matthew 7:13-14: This bridge spans the whole river - it is the bridge of Jesus' sacrifice. It is narrow and difficult and leads to heaven, but you still have to get up and walk across it, along with all of your sinful baggage. The "narrow way" is not a "highway." **There is a second bridge that doesn't lead to heaven:** 1 Timothy 2:3-4 Isaiah 35:8-10: This second bridge also spans the whole river, but it is wider and easier and leads to paradise restored on earth. You still have to walk across it - only now Satan is not hindering man's progress. This way also includes accountability.

The picture of a bridge fits in two different parts. For the Christian now, your job is to walk that narrow way, walk over that bridge of Jesus' sacrifice, and that reward is heaven.

What do you do after that? You are part of the "administration" talked about in Ephesians 1 to reconcile the world. You are being fashioned for that particular job.

Your reward is different and higher because you walk a harder way.

But justice (and love!) still prevails for the rest of mankind.

 **Calvin Radio --God would have no choice, Alpha and Omega Ministries**

- *If there was universal salvation, then God's grace would not be seen because there is nothing to contrast it with. Not all of the attributes of God would be demonstrated - his wrath and justice as well as his grace and his love. Under universalism or if God saves no one, God would have no choice, no freedom of action.*

However, we do not believe that man gets a "free ride" in any way. Consequences exist for sin.

Isaiah 55:6-9: Verses 6-7 tell us that the wicked and unrighteous can call upon Him and return to God. He isn't going to say "you're not a predetermined one."

God calls out a people for his name, not at the exclusion of the world, but because of the world! He abundantly pardons. The sovereignty of God allows our choice to work within His perfect will. Let us choose to be scriptural in our approach to the will of God.

**So...who gets elected by the spirit?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**