

The Election of God

U.S. citizens recently, in a very nasty election process, elected a new President. Of course, not everyone can even run for the office of President. According to the U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 1, in order for a person to qualify for this office, he must: (1) Be a natural born citizen of the U.S., (2) Be at least 35 years of age, and (3) Have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years. Also from a practical perspective (especially in modern times), it greatly helps if the candidate either has a lot of money, or access to a lot of money!

I am not minimizing the office of the Presidency, nor criticizing the Constitutional requirements for campaigning for that office. But I do state that the national election for the Presidency pails into insignificance when compared with **the election of God!** And, fortunately, God's election is has nothing to do with one's status as a citizen of a particular nation, or how long one has resided in a nation!

Yes, those who belong to God are **God's elect!** This is indicated in Rom. 8:33, wherein the inspired apostle asked, "*who shall bring a charge against God's elect.*" The saints at Colosse were described as "*the elect of God,*" Col. 3:12. In Tit. 1:1 Paul alluded to "*the faith of God's elect.*" Christians, in I Peter 2:9, are described as "*a chosen generation...*" God's people in 2 Pet. 1:10 are encouraged to "*make your calling and election sure.*" Other scriptures could be cited, but these are sufficient to prove that God views certain people as His "*elect,*" or as His "*chosen*" ones.

"*Elect*" is translated from *eklektos* (Greek) which signifies picked out, chosen" (**Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words**, by W.E. Vine. In Luke 23:35 Jesus was described as "*the Christ the chosen of God.*" In I Tim. 5:21 mention is made of "*the elect angels.*" In Rev. 17:14 those who are "*with*" Christ are "*called, chosen, and faithful.*" Under the Law of Moses, the Israelite people were described as those whom "*God has chosen,*" Deut. 14:2.

In view of these facts, it is not a question of whether or not certain people are the "*elect*" or the "*chosen*" of God. And, for that matter, it is also a fact that God, even "*before the foundation of the world,*" "*chose*" or "*predestinated*" certain people "*to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself...*" Eph. 1:5. Hence, the real question of God's "*election*" is this: is it conditional or unconditional? In other words, are there **conditions** which must be met in order for one to be a part of God's "*elect*" or "*chosen*" people?

Please observe: **if** being a part of God's predestined "*elect*" or "*chosen*" is unconditional, **then**: (1) Everyone on earth will be saved, or (2) God is a respecter of persons! However, option One is negated, for Jesus in describing the "*way which leads to life*" said "*there are few who find it,*" whereas "*many*" will follow the "*way that leads to destruction,*" Matt. 7:13-14. And option Two is negated, for the apostle Peter said "*God shows no partiality,*" Acts 10:34. cf. Rom. 2:11.

Looking more closely at the text, Eph. 1:4-5, we note that those “*predestinated*” to the “*adoption as sons by Jesus Christ*” (v. 5) are those whom God “*chose...in Him*” (v. 4), or “*in*” Christ. So we now rephrase the question: “Is being ‘*in*’ Christ conditional or unconditional?” With this in mind, we note Gal. 3:27 wherein the apostle Paul wrote, saying, “*for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*” Plainly put, baptism is the divinely appointed process whereby one enters “*into Christ*,” and one can not be “*in*” Christ unless he has entered “*into Christ.*” Indeed, as noted in Eph. 1:3, “*every spiritual blessing*” is “*in Christ*,” but we have to be “*in Christ*” to receive those blessings, including that of being God’s “*elect*” or “*chosen*” ones.

By examining parallel scriptures, we also observe that the saints at Thessalonica were those whom God “*chose for salvation*,” but the process involved “*sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth*,” 2 Thess. 2:13. And then in the very next verse we observe that these saints had been “*called*” by the “*gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*,” 2 Thess. 2:14. Interestingly, the word “*church*” is translated from *ekklesia* (Greek), which is a combination of two words: *ek*, meaning “out of,” and *klesis*, meaning “to call” (Vine). Literally, the Lord’s “*church*” denotes “the called out,” those called out of the world, and into Christ, and such people are “*called*” by the “*gospel.*” Hence, the “*chosen*” or the “*elect*” in Thessalonica were the ones whom God “*called*” by the gospel.

Examining the issue even further, we note that the epistle of I Peter was addressed to God’s “*elect*,” I Peter 1:2. But looking further, we discover that these same persons were described as “*obedient children*” (v. 14), whom God had “*called*” (v. 15), who had been “*redeemed..with the precious blood of Christ*” (vs. 18-19), who had “*purified*” their “*souls in obeying the truth*” (v. 22), having been “*born again*” by that “*incorruptible*” seed, which is “*the word of God which lives and abides forever*” (v. 22-23).

Those who are a part of God’s “*elect*” are responsible people who have exercised their power of choice in obeying the gospel of God’s dear Son, having heard the word which produces faith (Rom. 10:17), believed the gospel (Mark 16:16), confessed their faith in Jesus as “*the Son of God*” (Acts 8:37), and having been baptized “*into Christ*” (Gal. 3:27), and that “*for the remission of sins*,” Acts 2:38. If they continue faithful unto God, thereby making their “*calling and election sure*” (2 Peter 2:10), they have the divine assurance of one day being able to receive that heavenly “*inheritance*” which is “*incorruptible and undefiled*,” and which does not “*fade away*,” I Peter 1:4. It is far better to be **God’s** “*elect*” people, than to be elected President of the United States!
—Bobby Witherington
