

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION

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(Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the NASB.)

Down through the centuries, Christians have experienced a great deal of difficulty with the Biblical teaching surrounding *predestination* and *election*. The average Christian is so confused in this realm that he arrives at the erroneous conclusion that the whole doctrine cannot really be understood or explained. The truth, however, is that no part of the Scriptures can be placed in such a category. God's Word has been given to open up and reveal God's plans and purposes to man, not leave them concealed or unknown.

Doctrine surrounding predestination and election forms a part of this revealed Word. And doctrine surrounding predestination and election, contrary to common thought within Christendom, can be easily understood and explained if one first understands a few basics relative to the gospel.

What is the Gospel?

The first chapter of 1 Peter ends with the words, "Now this is the word which by the gospel [good news] was preached to you" (v. 25b). In this respect, Peter's opening remarks in the epistle encompass a presentation of the gospel, a presentation of good news.

The gospel is first proclaimed to unredeemed man alone. It is good news that *life* is available for the one who is "dead in trespasses and sins" (NKJV). The message is "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31; cf. John 5:24). And once an individual believes, he, through the new birth, passes "out of death into life" (Eph. 2:1).

Then, carrying matters surrounding the gospel one step further, Peter, in his presentation, sets forth two aspects of the gospel, the good news. One aspect relates to *the unredeemed* and the other to *the redeemed*.

In Scripture, there is first a proclamation of good news to the unsaved; then Scripture continues with a proclamation of good news to the saved. *Both together* cover the complete panorama of the gospel message.

The gospel proclaimed to the unsaved is called “the gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24b, NKJV); and the gospel proclaimed to the saved is called “the gospel of God’s glory” (1 Tim. 1:11), “the word of the kingdom” (Matt. 13:19), or the “preaching of the kingdom” (Acts 20:25b, NKJV). Then, both together are called “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27, NKJV).

Christians though, generally, do not see or understand this about the gospel. When they speak of the gospel, they have only the first aspect of the good news in mind. But this carries matters no further than where Scripture begins. This does not carry matters into the realm where Scripture places the emphasis — on the latter (the proclamation of the gospel to the saved), not the former (the proclamation of the gospel to the unsaved).

This emphasis on the latter can be easily seen in Peter’s first epistle, where he begins to deal with *a hope* and *an inheritance* almost at the very beginning of the epistle. And this can have nothing to do with the simple gospel of the grace of God.

“Hope” relates to *the inheritance*, and such an inheritance can come into view *only after* the individual has become a child of the Owner — “... if children, heirs also ...” (Rom. 8:17). *Only after* an individual has been born from above, possessing spiritual life, is he in a position to receive the “imperishable and undefiled” inheritance, reserved for him in heaven, of which Peter speaks (v. 4).

Thus, within a Biblical perspective, the inheritance comes in view only after a person has been saved, born from above. Note how Paul puts these two aspects of the gospel together within another frame of reference in Titus 3:5-7:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit;

Whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior;

That having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (NKJV).

Blessings leading into the thought of becoming “heirs according to the hope of eternal life,” having to do with our present justification by His grace, is the gospel of God’s grace to the unsaved. Titus 3:5-7 begins with the gospel of grace and carries one from that point through the whole panorama of the gospel — *saved for a purpose, with that purpose revealed*. Once a person has been saved, he becomes an heir “according to the hope of eternal life.” This is *the revealed purpose* for a Christian’s salvation, and it should be *the goal* behind all discipleship.

Note again the expression, “the hope of eternal life,” in Titus 3:7. *Eternal life* becomes the possession of every individual at the time of the birth from above. It is the present possession of every Christian, and Scripture clearly reveals that God would have every Christian to understand that he has received this life (1 John 5:11-13).

But, on the other hand, Scripture also clearly calls attention to a hope which has to do with *an inheritance and eternal life*; and, as previously seen, this has to do with the saved, not with the unsaved. And relative to this whole matter, Scripture exhorts the saved to “fight the good fight of faith,” and, in this manner, “take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called” (1 Tim. 6:12).

The question would naturally arise, Why should a Christian be exhorted to take hold of eternal life, when God clearly reveals that the same Christian has already received this life? And the answer can be found in the meaning of the Greek word for “eternal.”

The Greek word translated “eternal” in these passages (the Greek word invariably translated eternal in the N.T.) is the adjective *aionios*. The noun is *aion* and has two meanings:

“eternal” and “ a long period of time,” depending on the context. And the adjective carries exactly the same meaning, which any good Greek lexicon will attest to. Thus, the adjective, as the noun, can be translated as “eternal” or “age-lasting [a long period of time].”

In 1 John 5:11-13, *aionios* should be translated, “eternal.” But is this also the case in Mark 10:17?

“Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal [aionios] life?”

Eternal life, as in 1 John 5:11,12, cannot be in view, because eternal life is not inherited. Eternal life is a free gift, received through the gospel of God’s grace. In Mark10:17, “age-lasting” life is in view; and the context shows that the age in view is the coming age, the Messianic Era.

Thus, the purpose for the Christian’s presently possessed eternal salvation, has to do with an inheritance, reserved in heaven and “ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5), namely during the Messianic Era.

In the preceding respect, the gospel, the good news, covers the whole panorama of *aionios* salvation — from that which a Christian presently possesses (eternal salvation, having to do with his spirit) to an inheritance reserved in heaven, to be revealed during the coming Messianic Era (age-lasting salvation, having to do with his soul, his life). The keyword that covers this whole panorama of the gospel, the whole panorama of the good news, is the word *salvation*.

And, as seen, *salvation* is far more than mere eternal salvation. The Bible also speaks of a present, on-going salvation (1 Cor. 1:18), as the Christian progresses in his spiritual life from immaturity to maturity. Then, there is also a future salvation (Hebr. 1:14), which has to do with the inheritance. A realization of this future salvation is dependent on whether or not a Christian has successfully run his spiritual course, which will allow him to successfully reach the end (goal) of his faith, the salvation of his soul (1 Peter 1:9).

Once an individual has an understanding of how Scripture

deals with the gospel — with its dual aspect, *beginning with the unsaved and continuing with the saved* — he is then in a position to turn to the matter of how Scripture deals with *predestination and election*.

What is Predestination?

Predestination has to do with *that which has been predetermined by God*.

Though many Christians believe that everything which happens has been predetermined by God, they almost invariably, though erroneously, connect predestination with eternal salvation. The main reason for this erroneous connection is the limited view which most Christians have concerning the gospel. As previously shown, most Christians invariably see only the gospel of God's grace, having to do with eternal salvation; and they seek to fit things such as predestination into this limited scope of the gospel.

Proorizoo is the word in the Greek New Testament which is translated "predestination" in the English text. And this word means "to determine" or "to decree beforehand."

But note the textual and contextual use of *proorizoo* in the New Testament. The word appears, for example, in Eph. 1:11:

"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will."

Note that predestination here is connected with an inheritance, which, as previously shown, has to do with the gospel of God's glory, not with the gospel of God's grace. Ephesians chapter one shows that we were predestined "in Him." The expression "in Him" is a dispensational matter and has to do with all those who have been baptized "by one Spirit ... into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13) to become part of the "one new man" in Christ (Eph. 2:13-15).

In this respect, an inheritance is in view for every Christian; and a Christian's hope is to attain to this inheritance, which is

conditional: "... if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end" (Hebr. 3:6, NKJV).

There is nothing in Eph. 1:11 that connects predestination with eternal salvation.

Nor does such a connection exist elsewhere in Scripture. Connecting predestination with eternal salvation could never be the case simply because eternal salvation is not a dispensational matter. Eternal salvation is one of *the great constants* of Scripture, remaining the same throughout the dispensations. Whether in Gen. 3, Ex. 12, Acts 16, or anyplace else in Scripture where the matter is dealt with, eternal salvation is always seen to be the same — *via death and shed blood*: "When I see the blood [necessitating death], I will pass over you."

There is no place in Scripture where eternal salvation is presented as decreed beforehand for any individual. Rather, from a Biblical perspective, predestination comes in view only after the person has been saved, born from above. And teachings surrounding predestination always relate to saved individuals within the dispensation to which the Scripture dealing with the subject belongs.

(This fully agrees with the meaning of the verb *proorizoo*. This word is formed from two words: the preposition *pro*, which means "before"; and the verb *horizoo*, from which the English word "horizon" is derived. "Horizon" means "a boundary, a limit." And through the use of *proorizoo*, we are told that God has determined something which lies at the horizon — at the boundary, the limit, the end of the spiritual race of every Christian.)

Note Eph. 1:5 relative to *proorizoo*:

"He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will."

God did not predestine us to eternal salvation, but "to adoption as sons." "Adoption as sons" has nothing to do with "becoming children of God" (John 1: 12). Once a person has

been born from above, he or she is a “child of God” (1 John 5:11-13).

Now what’s the difference between a child and a son? Take a look at Matt. 5:9 along the lines my Dutch Bible (NBSG translation), which would read in English:

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God”
(also ref. KJV).

A person doesn’t become a Christian by being a peacemaker. So, what sense does it make to be a peacemaker and be called a child of God, when he is already a child of God? The truth of the matter is that the Greek text of Matt. 5:9 doesn’t read “children of God”; rather it reads “sons of God” (ref. NASB, NIV, NKJV). But, again, what sense does it make to be called “sons of God,” when we are already sons of God (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:5-7; Hebr. 12:5-8)?

The explanation of Matt. 5:9 can only have to do with the “adoption of sons.” But, if adoption has to do with positioning one as a son, how can those who are already sons be adopted? That wouldn’t make sense either.

There is only one explanation: The adoption as sons has to do with *placing a son in a firstborn status*, bringing that son into a position where he can receive an inheritance connected with either *earthly* or *heavenly* promises. Sons who are not adopted (Christians not adopted at a future date) will still be sons, but they will be sons separated from the double inheritance belonging only to *firstborn sons*. That is to say, these Christians will not be placed in a *firstborn status* through adoption; and, because of this — because they will not have become *firstborn sons through adoption* — they will be in no position to receive the double portion of the inheritance belonging to the firstborn.

Note 1 Cor. 2:7 relative to *proorizoo*:

“But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory.”

Predestination in this verse is connected with both “a mys-

tery” and “glory.” The mysteries in the New Testament all pertain to some facet of the Word of the Kingdom. Note, for example, the mystery of which Paul spoke in Eph. 3:6: “That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, of the same body ...” (NKJV). *Heirship with its glory* is in view: i.e., the adoption as sons, when God will bring “many sons to glory” (Hebr. 2:10). Again, eternal salvation is not in view.

Note Rom. 8:29, 30 relative to *proorizoo*:

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.

And whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

These two verses outline the whole process, from predestination to glorification. It is God’s complete counsel on behalf of the believer. However it is *a work by God alone* that has been described in this passage. It says nothing about any type work by man.

Then, connected with predestination and election, there is the matter of *God’s foreknowledge*. And similar to predestination and election, God’s foreknowledge has been viewed by most Christians over the years from a wrong perspective as well.

Foreknowledge, as predestination and election, *always* has to do with the Word of the Kingdom. God possesses a foreknowledge concerning whether or not a Christian will qualify for a future position in the kingdom. “The Lord knows the way of the righteous” (Ps. 1:6), the Lord can state “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:23), and “The Lord knows those who are His” (2 Tim. 2:19). Note that none of these verses has anything to do with eternal salvation (e.g., the context of the latter verse has to do with straying concerning the truth [v. 18]).

Also note 1 Peter 1:20 where foreknowledge is used relative to Christ, with respect to a time in the past, but relative to His coming glory.

God, in Rom. 8:28, foreknew all in the sense of Matt. 7:23. And, because of this, everything which follows, viewed from God’s perspective, is a fixed matter.

But, viewed from another perspective, because Christians have a responsibility as well, everything stands or falls on whether or not we faithfully keep His works “until the end” (Rev.2:26).

Man has *not* been “called” by God unto eternal salvation. Rather, he has been called *to something beyond eternal salvation*: “...you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9). Our “calling” has to do with *an inheritance*, and ultimately obtaining this inheritance is *a conditional matter* (1 Cor. 9:27; 10:1-11; Hebr. 4:11). For Israel in the type (past), inheritance was *a conditional matter*; and for the Christian in the antitype (future), *exactly the same is true*.

The next step in God’s counsel in Rom. 8:28, 29 is “justification.” This cannot be the justification we received when we were redeemed, because the “justification” referred to in Rom. 8:28, 29 follows one’s “calling.”

In this respect, there are *two justifications* presented in Scripture. The first justification, by faith, takes place at the moment of the birth from above. The second justification, by works, takes place before the judgment seat of Christ.

The first justification, based on the finished work of Christ at Calvary, is a justification pertaining to *eternal life*. The second justification, based on the works of the Christian (works emanating out of faithfulness), is a justification pertaining to *life for the age* (Messianic Era), a justification having to do with reward (cf. James 2:14-26).

The former *cannot be conditional*, for it is dependent on the finished work of Christ at Calvary. The latter though *can only be conditional*, for it is dependent on the faithfulness of the believer.

Every Christian who has made his “call and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10, NKJV) will realize this future justification. And this future justification will lead to “glorification.” God’s purpose for the present dispensation is to bring “many sons to glory” (Hebr. 2:10).

However, a Christian will be glorified only in connection with realizing the rights of the firstborn. Thus, predestination has *an ultimate purpose*. And that ultimate purpose is *glorification*,

being conformed to the image of the Son, and exercising the rights of the firstborn. In this respect, everything surrounding predestination in Scripture is related to the gospel of God's glory for redeemed man, not to the gospel of God's grace for unredeemed man.

What is Election?

"Election" has to do with *making a choice*, with *choosing*. To elect someone is to choose that person. The common use of this word points to someone who makes a choice, someone who chooses. In this respect, in Luke 14:7, in a parable, we see that the Lord Jesus had noticed how His guests had been choosing for themselves places of honor at the table. We also see, in Luke 10:42, that the Lord praises Mary for choosing "the good part."

In the New Testament this choosing is often seen with a purpose in view. In John 15:16-19 the Lord chose twelve disciples for the purpose of bearing fruit. And in Acts 15:22 the apostles and the Church in Jerusalem chose two men for a special task in Antioch.

Contrary to that which has been taught over the years in Calvinism, election is not related to the gospel of grace; rather, it is related to the gospel of glory. This can easily be seen from how the following seven different Greek words are used in the New Testament, connected directly or indirectly with election:

- 1) *Eklegomai*
- 2) *Eklektos*
- 3) *Eklogeē*
- 4) *Kaleō*
- 5) *Proetoimazō*
- 6) *Procheirizomai*
- 7) *Tassō*

The remainder of this article will be taken up with comments and examples from Scripture concerning the meaning and use of each of these seven words:

1) *Eklegomai*, which means “to select, to choose”

The word *eklegomai*, for example, appears in John 15:16:

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit ...”

The choosing in this verse is not a choosing unto eternal salvation, but a choosing unto fruit-bearing. Fruit-bearing is always related to something beyond the salvation of the spirit, namely the salvation of the soul. And the Bible presents the “salvation of the soul” as *the goal of our faith* (1 Peter 1:9), which is the realization of “an inheritance ... reserved in heaven,” spoken of in prior verses (vv. 4, 5).

Note 1 Cor. 1:27-29 relative to *eklegomai*:

“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong;

*And the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are,
That no man should boast before God.”*

Contrary to popular belief, these verses have nothing to do with the gospel of grace. The whole passage (1 Cor. 1:18-31) deals with a choosing in relation to redeemed man, not with a choosing in relation to unredeemed man.

Verse 18 points to redeemed man who is in the process of either “perishing” or “being saved.”

“For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but unto us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

God, through redeemed man presently being saved (delivered), is bringing to naught the wisdom of this world; and this worldly wisdom will be destroyed at a future date when this salvation is realized (v. 19).

This present bringing to naught and future destruction of worldly wisdom has nothing to do with the gospel of grace. Relative to the gospel of grace, God “desires all men to be saved”

(1 Tim. 2:4), with no distinction made relative to the wise or the foolish. Irrespective of any category — wise, foolish, or any other category that man might imagine — an unsaved person is “dead in trespasses and sins” (NKJV); and he is dealt with relative to his present status *alone* (*spiritually dead*), with respect to one thing *alone* — *life*, a passing “out of death into life” (cf. John 5:24; Eph.2:1).

Wisdom or foolishness, from a Scriptural standpoint, enters into the matter only after the person becomes a Christian and has to do with how that person (one who possesses spiritual life) conducts his life in view of a future salvation now set before him (Matt. 19:16-30; 25:1-13).

Thus, beyond question, this passage (1 Cor. 1:27-29) deals with “election” in relation to the gospel of glory, not in relation to the gospel of grace.

Note Eph. 1:4 relative to *eklegomai*:

“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”

God chose us “in Him.” When we are “in Him,” then we are also chosen. Thus, in this respect, we should not ask, “Are you chosen?” Rather, we should ask, “Are you in Him?” “In Him,” a positional standing occupied by the saved alone, is an expression commonly used in Scripture; and everyone who is “in Him” has also been *chosen*. This shows that “election” points to something beyond the gospel of grace, namely to the gospel of glory.

(The thought of being “in Christ” has to do with a work of the Spirit, among the saved, peculiar to the present dispensation. This work of the Spirit occurs at the time of the birth from above but is separate from this new birth.)

The Spirit’s work relative to salvation by grace is the same throughout all dispensations, though the thought of saved people being “in Christ” is not the same throughout the different dispensations.

The Spirit's work relative to salvation by grace, in any dispensation, is that of breathing life into the one having no life, effecting the birth from above. Only then — when the person has been born from above, possesses spiritual life — does being *chosen* “in Him” come into view, which is a Divine work peculiar to the present dispensation.)

The words “holy” and “blameless,” as in Eph. 1:4 (where they are used in connection with being *chosen* “in Him”), also appear in Eph. 5:27:

“That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.”

Most Bible students today, because of that which they have been taught in the past, believe that every Christian is included in the statement in Eph. 5:27. Using this verse (among others), they hold to the thought that every Christian will stand holy and blameless before the Lord, on the basis of the finished work of Christ at Calvary. But such a thought would form a contradiction pertaining to the Biblical teaching surrounding “election,” for election is connected with the gospel of glory, not with the gospel of grace.

The parallel verse to Eph. 5:27 is Col. 1:22, where the words “holy” and “blameless” also appear:

“Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”

Viewing this verse apart from its context, one is left with the thought that being holy and blameless occurs solely on the basis of the gospel of grace alone; but the next verse shows that it has to be related to the gospel of glory, not to the gospel of grace:

“If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard ...” (v. 23).

The expressions, “the faith” and “the hope of the gospel,” in the preceding verse are expressions used in Scripture relative to the gospel of glory (as previously shown); and this, as well, shows that “election” has to be related to the gospel of glory, not to the gospel of grace.

Note James 2:5 relative to *eklegomai*:

“... did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?”

This verse clearly shows the existing relationship between the “choice of God” and the “inheritance of the kingdom.” And this verse should be understood in connection with 1 Cor. 1:27-29. The “poor” and the “weak” are seen as being in a good position to realize the salvation of their souls, because God chose them “to be rich in faith,” instead of being “rich in the world” (the latter being associated with the man of flesh and presenting a barrier concerning entrance into the kingdom of God [Matt. 19:24]).

2) *Eklektos*, which means “chosen, select”

Derived from *eklegomai*, *eklektos* is often used for people who are chosen by God to fulfill a certain purpose or task.

Note Matt. 22:14 relative to *eklektos*:

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

In the Greek text, the literal rendering should be:

*“For many are called [from *legoo*], but few are called-out [from *eklegoo*].”*

The “called” are *all of the saved of the present dispensation, forming Christ’s body*; then, the “called-out” are *those Christians removed from Christ’s body, ultimately forming the bride*.

This can clearly be seen from the type. The bride (Eve) was taken from the body of the first man, the first Adam. In the antitype, the bride (comprised of Christians) will be taken from the body (called out) of the second Man, the last Adam.

Likewise, in Philip. 3:11, all of the saved, the “called,” will have a part in the resurrection (*anastasis*), or in the removal of Christians from the earth who are alive at that time; but only the “called-out” will have a part in the out-resurrection (*exanastasis*), which is a further selection from among all those who have been raised from the dead, or removed alive from the earth.

Thus, Matt. 22:14 deals with “election” relative to the salvation of the soul, not relative to the birth from above and the salvation of the spirit.

Note Matt. 24:22 relative to *eklektos*:

“... but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.”

This verse refers to Israel during the coming Tribulation. God called Israel for a definite purpose, and this purpose must be realized: “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [without a change of mind]” (Rom. 11:29, KJV).

Note Rom. 8:33 relative to *eklektos*:

“Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies.”

It is evident from the context that the “elect” in this verse refers to *redeemed individuals* (“If God is for us, who is against us?” [v. 31]). The context (vv. 29-39) deals with the gospel of glory. It deals with the privilege of becoming conformed to the image of the Son, being glorified, and receiving freely all things from God.

Justification, in this verse, is the same future justification James refers to (James 2:21, 25). The elect are those whom Christ will “freely give ... all things” (v. 32), for Christ is Heir of all things (Hebr. 1:2). This is the future blessing presently open to all Christians, as the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29). Suffering (v. 35) which precedes this blessing (1 Peter 5:10), will never separate us from Christ. And this suffering is to be regarded by the Christian as *nothing compared to the future salvation* (deliverance, with respect to glory) to which we have been elected (cf. Heb. 12:1, 2; I Peter 2:21).

Note Col. 3:12 relative to *eklektos*:

“And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

Colossians 3:12 deals with redeemed individuals, “holy and beloved,” who have been “chosen,” i.e., they have been placed in a position to realize a future salvation; and, with a view to this future salvation, each Christian is “being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him” (Col.3:10).

There is no such thing as an unredeemed individual being chosen by God in the preceding respect (relating chosen to eternal salvation). This is simply not the way in which the matter is dealt with in Scripture.

Note 2 Tim. 2:10 relative to *eklektos*:

“For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ, and with it eternal glory.”

The “chosen” in this verse have to do solely with the redeemed, for a person has to be “in Christ” in order to be chosen (Eph. 1:4). Once a person is “in Christ,” he is in a position to come into possession of the future salvation set before him, the salvation of his soul. This is the previously discussed salvation with *aionios* [age-lasting] glory (1 Tim. 1:11).

Thus, again, “election” is seen relating to the gospel of glory, not to the gospel of grace.

Note 1 Peter 1:1, 2; 2:4, 6, 9 relative to *eklektos*:

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who ... are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ...”

“But choice and precious in the sight of God ... a choice stone ... a chosen race ... a holy nation ...”

Peter’s first epistle has to do with an inheritance, the salvation of one’s soul, and participation in the coming glory of Christ (1:3-9; 3:14; 4:12,13). This epistle has nothing to do

with an election from perdition pertaining to the lake of fire, for there is no such thing as God electing the unsaved as it pertains to their eternal destiny — whether to salvation or to damnation.

Note I Peter 2:4, 6, 9 in the preceding respect, which follows the exhortation to “long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (v. 2).

The word “holy” in verse nine does not have to do with a quality of life. Rather, it has to do with being “set apart” for a specific purpose. And this purpose has to do with a calling or choice *from* the present world *into* a rule from the heavens.

3) *Eklogēe*, which means “[the] election, choice, selection”

Note Rom. 9:11 relative to *eklogēe*:

“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.”

Romans 9:11 refers to the purpose of God. The older of the two (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob), not on the basis of some doctrine of reprobation, but on the basis of the spiritual attitude which the brothers had relative to the rights of the firstborn (v. 12).

God’s purpose will ultimately be fulfilled through the seed of Abraham, as a nation (Ex. 4:22, 23), exercising the rights of the firstborn.

Note Rom. 11:5, 7, 28 relative to *eklogēe*:

*“... a remnant according to God’s gracious choice.
What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;
... but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.”*

Romans eleven deals with the partial rejection of Israel, the purpose of Israel’s rejection, and the duration of Israel’s rejec-

tion. This purpose has to do with God's removal of "a people for his name" (Acts 15:14b) during the present day (present dispensation), for a purpose involving the government of the earth, which has to do with the gospel of glory.

"Hardening" for Israel, had to do with a failure of the Israelites to enter the rest in the land and the inheritance that lay before them (Hebr. 3, 4). Israel did not attain to the realization of the nation's rights as a firstborn son of God. And Christians in the antitype are chosen, not unto eternal salvation, but to attain to the heavenly inheritance that Israel rejected and forfeited (with those Christians who are adopted, viewed together, as God's firstborn son).

Note 1 Thess. 1:4 relative to *eklogēe*:

"Knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you."

This verse continues the thought from verse 3, "the labor of love and the steadfastness of hope."

Hope is necessary "to obtain the inheritance reserved in heaven" (1Peter1:3,4). "His choice" therefore can only point to the gospel of glory.

Note 2 Peter 1:10 relative to *eklogēe*:

"Therefore brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble."

One's calling and choosing is to be made certain, and both are with a view to "entrance into the eternal [*aionios* (age-lasting)] kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (v. 11).

These two verses clearly show that the calling and the choosing have to do with the salvation of the soul, and not to a calling or choosing with respect to the gospel of grace.

These verses have nothing to do with an election in which individuals will ultimately believe on Christ with respect to eternal salvation, for there is no such thing. Nor do these verses have to do with individuals making certain that they have placed their faith in Christ, relative to eternal salvation.

Rather, this calling and choosing has to do with saved individuals making certain that they attain to *the purpose for which they have been eternally saved*. And Scripture relates this to *the coming kingdom*, not to eternal salvation.

4) *Kaleoo*, which means “to call”

Note 1 Peter 5:10 relative to *kaleoo*:

“... the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ ...”

In the epistles, particularly in Paul’s epistles, the word *kaleoo* has a definite relationship to God’s call relating to the Christian’s future salvation.

This is simply a continuation in thought of that found in the gospels: “the called” (*kletoi*) distinguished from “the chosen” (*ekkletoi*).

The *kletoi* (the called) are invited to the gospel feast and the *ekkletoi* (the called out) are the select company who not only heard but accepted the call (Matt. 22:14).

Thus, calling has to do with the saved (not with the unsaved), and this calling is with a view “to His eternal [*aionios*, age-lasting] glory in Christ,” the gospel of glory.

5) *Proetoimazoo*, which means “to prepare beforehand”

Note Rom. 9:23 and Eph. 2:10 relative to *proetoimazoo*:

“And, He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.”

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

The only two times that this verb (“prepared beforehand”) is used in the New Testament, it is used of God foreordaining for good, referring to glory (Rom. 9:23) and to good works (Eph. 2:10).

Both glory and good works have to do with something beyond the salvation of the spirit. Namely, they have to do with the gospel of glory and the salvation of the soul.

6) *Procheirizomai*, which means "to hand forth, to cause to be at hand" (in the NT figuratively: "to appoint, to choose, to destine")

Note Acts 26:16-18 relative to *procheirizomai*:

"... to appoint you a minister and a witness ... to open their eyes... that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those ..."

Paul was appointed by the God of his fathers to deliver a dual message to the Gentiles:

- 1) *The gospel of grace.*
- 2) *The gospel of glory.*

In these verses, "appointed" refers to Paul's ministry, not to those to whom he ministered "being appointed to eternal life." *The ultimate goal of Paul's ministry* was not that the Gentiles might be eternally saved but that the Gentiles might realize an inheritance, which lay beyond their eternal salvation.

That is, the Gentiles were *saved for a purpose*. And *the ultimate goal of Paul's ministry* lay in that purpose. For Paul to have stopped with the message of salvation by grace, proclaimed to the unsaved, would have been for him to stop at the beginning. It would have been for him to stop far short of *the ultimate goal of his ministry, that to which he had been called*.

7) *Tassoo*, which means "to place, to set, to appoint, to arrange, to order" (in the NT figuratively: "to set in a certain order, to constitute, to arrange")

Note Acts 13:48 relative to *tassoo*:

"... and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed."

Eternal life in Scripture, where *aionios* is used, as previously shown, has two meanings:

- 1) "Everlasting life" relative to *the gospel of grace*.
- 2) "Age-lasting life" relative to *the gospel of glory*.

In order to properly understand Acts 13:48, a person must, as with any Scripture, *always check the context.*

Note Acts 13:46 in this respect:

"... It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we are turning to the Gentiles."

Paul and Barnabas were talking to the Jews. The thought is the same as can be seen in Rom. 1:16, where Paul was sent to preach the gospel of God's glory to the Jew first. Therefore, "life for the age" has to be the subject being dealt with in Acts 13:46. The argument is strengthened because "eternal life" here is connected with "worthiness."

"Worthiness" is a word related to the gospel of glory, not to the gospel of grace (cf. Eph. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:12; Rev. 3:4). Thus, contextually, the expression, "appointed to eternal life" (v. 48), can only be seen as having to do with the gospel of glory, not with the gospel of grace. Acts 13:46 had to do with a continuing reoffer of the kingdom of the heavens to the Jews (something seen throughout the Book of Acts, brought to a conclusion in Acts 28:28).

"Believe" in v. 48 places one in a position to realize "life for the age," which the Jews in verse 46 considered themselves unworthy of attaining.

But how does one view the word "believed" in v. 48 — As having received eternal salvation, or as a beginning of the spiritual race, which has to do with "the faith"? The Gentiles in v. 48 could only, of necessity, have *first* been confronted with the gospel of God's grace. But the word "appointed" moves beyond the gospel of grace. This word in the Greek text is a perfect passive participle, showing that the same thing which had been ordered for the rejecting Jews had been ordered for these believing Gentiles as well, and it remained that way. Their faith (first resulting in their salvation, and here continuing) put them in a position where they could be appointed in this respect.

These Gentiles showed by their faith that they had received the offer of the kingdom, in contrast to the unbelieving Jews in v. 46. The Jews had spurned the good news about the kingdom, but the Gentiles received it joyfully. The Gentiles “believed,” with the aorist stating the fact.

The Jews had regarded themselves unworthy of life for the age; but the Gentiles were in line to realize life for the age because they, unlike the Jews, believed. “Believe” in v. 48 has to do with the same thing as in v. 46, understanding that these Gentiles would have had to first avail themselves of the blood of the Paschal Lamb, through believing, to find themselves in this position (a continuing faith — believing in the sense seen in Rom. 1:16 [cf. v. 17]).

Conclusion

Predestination and election do not refer to some fatalistic element in the way God would predestine some to eternal life and others to eternal damnation. With some basic knowledge of the “gospel of grace” and “the gospel of glory,” and with a few simple observations (as shown in this study) one can easily see that “election” and “predestination” — without exception — have to do with the gospel of glory, not with the gospel of grace.

After an unredeemed person has been saved, God has called (or elected or predestined) that redeemed person “with a holy calling” (2 Tim. 1:9), in order that he might “obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus,” and with it “eternal [*aionios*, age-lasting] glory” (2 Tim. 2:10).

This is the way Scripture approaches the matter. And a knowledge of that which Scripture has to say about the matter should serve the Christian well — not as something which will cause Christians problems within man’s theologies — but as a God-given challenge to reach “the end [goal] of our faith” (1 Peter 1:9).