

FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FAITH

THROUGH THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE 2000

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We Are Chosen But Free

Article 5: God's Purpose of Grace¹ - "Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22, 31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45, 65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6, 12, 17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7, 26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10, 19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5, 13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

Words to Define

Sovereignty of God – God's ultimate plan will never be thwarted by man.

Steve Gaines has said, "Some people believe that the sovereignty of God means that everything that happens is the will of God. That is not what I believe the Bible says that the sovereignty of God is. I think that it is **God is sovereign over everything that happens in that He can take everything that happens and accomplish His ultimate will.**"²

Predestination – a divine act of God whereby He promises redemption or adoption as absolutely certain for the true believer. The purpose of predestination is clearly stated in **Romans 8:29**.

Herschel Hobbs has explained, "'Unfortunately many tend to interpret the English word predestination rather than the Greek word *proorisas*.' The basic verb is *horizo*, which means among other things 'to set a boundary'. From it comes our English word 'horizon,' which is the limit or boundary of your vision from where you stand. The prefix *pro* means 'beforehand'. So it means 'to set a boundary beforehand.' **Hobbs likens it to building a fence around a piece of land. 'The fence is Christ.'** In **Ephesians 1:3-13** Paul uses 'in Christ' and its equivalent eleven times."³

Election – simply means "to choose"; election in the Bible refers to a divine act of God, whereby He chooses as He wills to achieve the accomplishment of His plan. There are four "elections" referenced in Scripture:

¹ From the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#iv>.

² Steve Gaines, "God's Sovereign Plan," audio message from Ephesians 1.

³ As quoted in Frank S. Page, *Trouble with the Tulip* (Riverside Group Publishing, Canton, Georgia, 2006), 59

1. **The Election of a Nation** - God chose the nation of Israel to be the people through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed (Deut 7:6–8; Acts 3:25). He did not choose Israel to the neglect of all the other nations in the world; on the contrary, he did so to bless (or bring the means of redemption) to them all (Gen 12:3).
2. **The Election of Messengers** - God chose and appointed messengers (prophets in the Old Testament and apostles in the New Testament) to deliver his revealed truth to the entire world (John 15:16; Acts 10:41).
3. **The Election of Hearers** - God chose to invite people of all tribes, nations, and tongues into a covenant with him through faith. This gospel invitation was first sent to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Matt 22:9–10; Mark 16:15; Rom 1:16; 10:11–13). God sends his message of redemption to “both evil and good” people alike (Matt 22:10), as his mission is “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). This truth demonstrates that “God doesn’t show favoritism” (Acts 10:34), and his message is for all sinners who need a Savior (Rev 22:17).
4. **The Election of Believers** God chooses to grant entrance into His kingdom to **whosoever comes clothed in the righteousness of his Son through faith** (Matt 22:14; John 3:16).⁴

Verses to Remember

*Matthew 23:37 - “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ... How often **I wanted** to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **but you were not willing!**”*

*1 Timothy 2:4 - “**[God] desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

*John 3:16-17 - “**For God so loved the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”*

*Matthew 18:14 - “Even so it is **not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.**”*

*2 Corinthians 5:14-15 - “... **He [Christ] died for all**, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”*

*1 John 2:2 - “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also **for the whole world.**”*

*2 Peter 3:9 – “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**”*

Practical Applications

- 1) Let your loyalty be to the Bible, not to any particular system of theology. Any system of theology that minimizes or disregards God’s sovereignty or man’s responsibility when it comes to one’s salvation is not complete.
- 2) Worship our great God Who did not leave you in your sin. He sought you, sent Jesus to die for your sins, drew you by His love, and promises that Your eternal destiny can be secure in Christ!
- 3) Enjoy the security of your salvation in Christ (not yourself)! You are not holding on to Him. He is holding onto you! You are secure in His grip!

For Further Study

“Chosen But Free” by Norman Geisler (3rd edition) Bethany House Publishers

“Calvinism: A Biblical and Theological Critique” by David Allen and Steve Lemke, B&H Publishers

⁴ David Allen and Steve Lemke, *Calvinism: A Biblical and Theological Critique*. B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition, 70-73.