

## The Eternal Decree of Election

Romans 9:11 (*For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;*) This is a direct quote of Genesis 25:22-23. It is impossible to deny the doctrine of election without disregarding a massive portion of the Bible. Ephesians chapters one and two firmly and clearly set the decree of election as the beginning of salvation by grace through faith according to the eternal decree of election.<sup>1</sup>

It is also clear that God did not use His divine foreknowledge of all things in making this election of some to glory. The Bible is equally clear that there is nothing that can set aside the election of God and that the only way for man to be saved is by faith in Jesus Christ. Likewise, the Bible without debate states that faith is the gift of God and man can never in any way whatsoever earn his salvation.

Two things need to be understood concerning this doctrine of election. First, a decree is a legal proclamation or document under the seal of a sovereign with the power to enforce the decree. Such a decree carrying the seal of this sovereign cannot be repealed or changed without injury to the sovereign who made the decree. In the ancient world sovereigns were considered to be deity and to have the need to change a decree or repeal a decree would indicate the sovereign made an error and thus deny their deity. The king in the book of Esther for example is tricked into making a bad decision and issuing a decree based on false information. However, he cannot change it and remain a worthy sovereign. His answer to this problem is to issue a second decree that will nullify the first decree without him appearing to have made an error in the first decree.

From the Bible then it is clear that God before He created anything made a decree that elected some people to eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. God only made one decree, the decree to eternal life in Christ. Some teach what is known as double predestination whereby God made a second decree that condemned all mankind not included in the first decree to condemnation. This cannot be true for several reasons. First and foremost is that it would make God the author of sin, which the Bible says He is not. Next, it would give the created a reason for his behavior and a valid excuse that he is the way he is because God made him this way. Obviously this is not true because the Bible says that God created all things good and this includes man. Last, there is no need for a second decree of reprobation or eternal

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:1-12).

condemnation. Since only the elect in Christ can be saved, all the rest will be condemned by their own actions (sin). After the fall of Adam the first man, all humankind are conceived and born in sin, condemned by a just God. The effect is as sure as if such a second decree was made but in fact, no second decree exists.

This is predestination and this is all that is included in predestination that cannot be set aside or changed in any way whatsoever. All other things pertain to how God orders the events of history to accomplish His purpose in election to His glory and should be labeled more properly foreordination.

This sets before us the scene of all mankind standing before God condemned to eternal destruction because of sin. From this mass of sinful flesh God chose the elect by name making the same sure by setting His seal (the Holy Spirit) on them and bringing their salvation to be made manifest in time or history by giving to these elect alone the gift of faith whereby they can profess belief in Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

John in his Gospel says that man can know that he is the son of God and believes in Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> This should bring great comfort and peace to the believer then in that they can know they are saved and because of the eternal election, nothing can change this position of salvation they have in Jesus Christ. Paul asks the rhetorical question in Romans, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" with the obvious answer being nothing whatsoever can remove us from the hand of Christ. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says that there is nothing that can remove us from the hand of God and that God has given the elect to Him and He has not and will not lose any of them.

The assurance of salvation available to the elect through faith and standing firmly planted in the very word of God will weather all tests of time and circumstance until the day the elect stand before the Lord to receive of Him according to their works, that is their reward, not their salvation that is sure in the election. Our salvation begins in God, is sustained by God, and will be made manifest in the last day by God. Our only duty in life is to glorify God and we glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

The simplicity of this divine truth appears to remove it from the grasp of most, but man's inability does not diminish the great salvation we have in Christ by election of God in any way whatsoever.

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<sup>2</sup> 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:8-10).

<sup>3</sup> John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.