

Understanding Election

Supernatural Salvation is clinched in mutual acceptance. God the Father accepts the sinner and the sinner receives the Savior as he rejects his sin and in faith receives the Savior, Jn. 1:12. In a person's coming to know Christ as Savior there is a mutual acceptance of man accepting Christ and the Father accepting the sinner for redemption. We will look at some verses that reveal this wonderful and mysterious truth in this article. This is a very important issue to consider and not very many Christians seem to know or understand that God's Word declares this as the path to a supernatural new spiritual birth, God's provision for mankind. A great fallacy among many Christians is that all one has to do is say the "sinners prayer" and you are in God's Kingdom. It goes a lot deeper than that as one will come to realize and as one thinks about what God's Word has to say. Becoming a child of God is not like purchasing a ticket to the ball game, show your stub and you get in.

God does everything with reason and purpose. Sometimes the flippant thoughts of man are cheap shots at the Almighty's ways which are as the Scripture says are "past finding out..." Romans 11:33. To over simplify the great miracle and supernatural salvation that God offers to erring humanity does our God great injustice. The advancing believer in God's Kingdom will search the mind and heart of God in the Scripture, I Cor. 1:20 and 21. Who hath known the mind of the Lord and who has been His counselor, Ro. 11:34. Truth and revelation do not come easy. As Jesus walked the Emmaus Road after the resurrection he expounded to the two that were going to Emmaus all the things concerning Himself that were found in the Law and Prophets. Imagine the depths of that discourse which we do not have particularly. We can find more about what the Law and Prophets have declared if we study them however. Jesus said in another place to "search the scriptures" that is where the core values of "eternal life" are found, Jn. 5:39.

Election or God's Choice of some sinners for salvation in eternity past is primarily based on God's foreknowledge. The Bible declares this in I Peter 1:2. This verse is an interesting verse. It reads like this, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours to the fullest measure." This is one verse that is direct, meaningful and descriptive about election. It also reveals a progression of the work of God in Salvation. To be born again is a "work" of God, John 6:29. It comes through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and leads the sinner to obey Jesus Christ. The sprinkled blood is like the blood of the sacrifices that was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat of the Arc of the Covenant. Remember what God said in Egypt to the Israelites, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

The Greek word for foreknowledge in I Peter 1:2 is "*prognosis*," a word that we use in English today, especially used in medicine to declare with anticipation what the medical condition and end result of a sick person might be. In other words God the Father gives a spiritual prognosis of individuals who will be saved but it is based on what He knows will happen not because He forces the situation. He accurately gives His prognosis about those who do not want Christ and who will not receive His salvation

as well but the Bible never says that He chooses some to be committed to a lost eternity in the Lake of Fire. People choose this for themselves when they reject the communication of the Spirit to them through God's Word. This divine foreknowledge or prognosis of God regarding a person's salvation has more to do with God's omniscience (He knows everything) than it does His sovereignty (He has right and authority to do what He desires). God knows how every person will react against or accept the message of truth about themselves and God's provision for salvation who has ever lived or will live on earth. He knows how they will respond to His grace, either to spurn it or accept it. This personal information that He knows and understands about us is the basis for His foreknowledge in election. Election is not a prediction but a revelation about the outcome of a person's attitude toward the Savior, Jesus the Christ.

Many people believe that God's sovereignty is a key determining factor about who will be saved. The problem is if this is true that God violates Himself when someone suffers a lost eternity. We find in 2 Peter 3:9 this truth, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." God does not want one single soul to be damned forever in a lost eternity. According to His great love He wants all to be saved. So one can see how basing election on the sovereignty of God alone delivers a mistaken view of our God. The critics of the Bible have a hay day with this one. There is a place where the sovereignty of God does come in however; it is in His work of creation. We must understand that God created some with the knowledge that they would forever be lost to a doomed eternity because He knew that they would reject the offer of a Savior. He also had the knowledge that some would eventually repent of their sin and receive Christ in faith. Even though He created all men to be as they would choose to be or would desire to be He created all men with equal opportunity to deny or receive His offer of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. God gives to each person who ever existed a fair and equal chance to come into His kingdom. God has said, "whosoever will may come," Rev. 22:17. But the truth of the matter is that not all will come to receive the knowledge of the truth. Man is by evil nature and practice a rebel, stubborn and bent to wallow in his sin, though it may condemn him. Some men love sin so much they would rather have that than God's offer of His righteous Son to save their souls. Satan is a liar and a murderer from the beginning and He wants to sift every person and reduce him to fine powder.

Stated simply, election is the doctrinal truth that God in His divine foreknowledge has chosen repenting believing sinners to be saved. It is the Father who grants eternal life to the sinner. This terminology is very clear in John 6:65, look at it in the NAS Bible. It is the Father who qualifies a sinner to be saved and then transfers him to the Kingdom of His Son, Col. 1:12 to 14. How a person gets to this place for qualification as the Father sees it we will look at further down the page.

God has a record book in eternity called the *Lamb's Book of Life*, Rev. 21:27. There are eight verses with the term "Book of Life" mentioned in the verse. When a person has His name there, it will never be removed, Rev. 3:5. In Rev. 13:8 one sees that God has all the names of the elect in the Book of Life. In Rev. 17:8 we note that people who do not have their names in this book will be in great quandary during the tribulation. In Rev. 20:12 we see that the final judgment for all mankind will be based on whether one's name is in the Book of Life or not. In Rev. 21:27 the Bible claims that defiled people who lie and commit abominable things do not have their names in the Book of Life and will not be where God dwells

in eternity. The Book of Life is the record God has of the “elect” or chosen ones that He foreknew would answer the call of God for salvation from eternity past.

Sometimes the same Greek word election which is *eklektos* is translated to English as chosen. To be one of the elect is usually associated with a human position in God’s Kingdom. The chosen is usually associated with an act of God as it were to include some certain ones (that are qualified) in humanity for God’s Kingdom. Both words election and chosen are true and realistic. The question remains then **why** has God chosen or elected some to be saved and others were bypassed? Every sane person has a reason for doing what he does and our creator God is not any different.

A Biblical World View It is very hard for man to comprehend the way the created universe exists and how the souls of men exist on earth in relation to eternity where God dwells. How the spirit world exists as compared to how the physical world exists is very interesting to contemplate. The Bible speaks of two kinds of existence, those who dwell alive on earth and then about those who dwell in eternity the place of departed spirits. (The story of the rich man and Lazarus is a view into eternity where a departed spirit is, Luke 16. The existence that the living know on earth is associated with the time/space world. All we know and understand in life is associated with time, its present, past or future and the space that we occupy in our universe the vast expanse. God dwells in eternity where there is neither time nor space, He is not directly associated with these our limitations and yet His Son came to exist in a body with time/space limitations. God can see into, know and understand all that we call future or history because He is omnipresent in eternity. He is on the brink of any event in the past as well as the future, He is the eternal God and outside of Himself has created another dimension that he knows, the time/space universe with its expanse and limitations. Remember how He told the Jews before Abraham was... I am, John 8:58. When the worlds were in formation... He was there. When the fires of finality flash the heavens, He will be there.

Can we say that God in His ability can know the events of the future by mere cognizance or know the events of the future by virtually seeing and understanding it in His here and now? Though there is no Scripture to exactly state these ideas we believe the two mesh to one view that God knows everything about the future and yet the Bible simply states it as His foreknowledge or prognosis. He can make statements about the future because He is God. He can make statements about our future decisions because He is God. We must simply accept what we may not fully understand. For those who know Christ, they probably will understand it better when in eternity.

God brings up the case of Esau and Jacob in Romans 9. It is a good thing to look into the likes of these two people, brothers and yet a world of difference separated them, one was accepted by God the other rejected. To understand what made these guys really tick, so to speak, one would have to walk a few miles in their shoes. However God has left us adequate record in the Word about these men to discover the major clues that help define for us a part of the why God chooses some and why He rejects others to be a part of His kingdom. Esau’s name comes up in 85 verses in the Bible. The last time Esau is mentioned is in Hebrews 12 and there is a significant issue that God had with Esau in this verse. Here again we are going to have to go to the original languages to find significant meaning from the text. The other thing is that God has insights into our lives, our hearts and attitudes that sets the stage to make us

acceptable or unacceptable to Him or acceptable or rejectable for His Son's Kingdom. Do not be alarmed at this, it is part of the way any intelligent being operates. The more we live with intelligent ways we understand that we make decisions about life and living based on preferences that fit who we are. No one in his right mind would invite a vindictive terrorist into his home to become a member of the family, neither does God invite people into his Kingdom that would bring deceit, blasphemy and degradation and sin either. We shall get back to Jacob and Esau a little farther along in this paper.

Now travelling over to Romans 9 we shall take an interesting look at some of God's personal insights.

Not many people see divine realities but Abraham did, Elijah and Elisha did, the apostles did and so can we as we walk with Christ. Think about the divine things that they saw and isn't that what Jesus said would happen when you were born again, in John 3... *Unless a person is born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.* Not all human beings see beyond the horizon of life, they are not in touch with the Spirit who reveals all things, even the deep things of God, I Cor. 2:10. In Romans 9 we see the awesome privileges that Israel of old had in verses 3-5. But Paul makes an astounding statement in verse 6 that all Israel is not Israel even though they were descendants of Israel. Humanly speaking they belonged to the physical nation but spiritually speaking they did not in the sense of the meaning in this verse. Even as some today can be a part of a church they may not be a part of God's Kingdom. In this Romans 9 we see two men Jacob and Esau. One was a part of the nation, the other was not and we can discern the reason for this as we take a little deeper look into the events of Jacob and Esau's lives.

About the name Israel: God changed Jacob's name at Peniel to Israel, Genesis 32. The name Peniel as given in the text is "the face of God." At Peniel Jacob was privileged to see the face of God. It was at this place that Jacob wrestled with "a man" through the night. No doubt this man (a theophany or a physical appearance and bodily presence of the Son of God) was the second person of the Godhead. Jacob had it right when he said I have seen the face of God. God vividly reveals Himself to every earthly living soul who will come to him. The whole point is that there was a struggle that preceded the blessing, vs. 29. The text in Genesis 32 indicates that "a man" wanted to leave the wrestling match and end the night before Jacob was blessed, vs. 26. But Jacob clung to "a man" and would not let Him go. This was not the first time that Jacob had the reality of the sense of the presence of God in His life. He had grown up with it and seen it in His father and grandfather, Isaac and Abraham. Read Genesis 28 carefully and take note about what is a reality in this chapter. We see God doing several things with Jacob in these encounters. **The Struggle:** No one really gets into God's Kingdom without a struggle. The struggle is over leaving the old life of sin behind in exchange for what God gives in the new life. No one gets into heaven without a turn from sin to receive the living Savior. **The face of God:** Every person that comes to Christ in every case has a reality check with the living God, sins are vivid, judgment is vivid and likewise the Savior becomes vivid. There is no doubt, there is personal encounter, and there are spiritual verifications that are unexplainable in human terms. Paul could say, "I know in whom I have believed... I am persuaded that He is...", 2 Tim. 1:12. **The new cripple:** Jacob from that time forward had a limp, a mark of God touching him that hurt his flesh that really in Jacob and us was and is so obnoxious. God puts a hitch in our flesh also when we come to him and to an extent disables it so it does not rule our lives anymore. **The new name:** Finally Jacob's name becomes Israel... meaning "one who strives with God." These matters were not exactly all that Jacob passed through but it illustrates the truth of Romans 9:6. Are you

a spiritual Israel? One of the most significant things about this encounter was that Jacob would not let “a man” go. He was in earnest with God and held on until He got what he wanted... the blessing of God. Jacob got the promise of a future blessing from God in chapter 28. He got the blessing that God promised him in chapter 32. God promises us something today as well the promise is “eternal life.” This is His gift to those who struggle through the new life birth and receive the new name and the promise of an eternal blessing. Paul writes in verse 8 of Romans 9 “it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants...” Every person in God’s Kingdom is a child of the promise in one way or another. The promise may be a little different but the Giver is the same.

In Romans 9 Rebekah’s twins are mentioned: Esau is the first born and had right to being the heir. God had determined before these twins were ever born even though neither of them had done good or bad who would get the blessing. God knew these boys to the last degree before they were ever born. God emphatically states that “the work” issue did not come into play for the selection of who would get the blessing. No one can buy God. Note in verse 11 it states that the issue was decided by the One who called them to the gift offered, that being God. It does not say in this passage anything about the response to the call but, Esau did not answer the call, Jacob did. Jacob looked up to God and clung to Him and in spite of his character and was like John Newton though a wretch was accepted of God for blessing. Before anyone is ever born again he must hear the call of God in his mind and heart and he must answer that call in faith for the blessing of eternal life. See the call in Isaiah 55:1 and 7.

Esau did several things that disappointed his parents... and God. He went out and married a Canaanite woman when he knew exactly that it was wrong. We see how he sold his birthright with nary a thought for a bowl of soup; the value of that birthright must have been brought to the table in the family many a time. God looked on Esau in His foreknowledge and said of Esau that he spurned the birthright. The value of family and birthright is not to be given to the wind in any case. (When my dad and mom died I hardly got a thing but what I got I cherished, it was from my dad, the value didn’t count it was the kindness and gracious thought that mattered to me, I wanted what dad gave.) It says in Romans 9:13 that God hated Esau. The Greek word there really means to detest something as you would when you are around a very unpleasant odder. The same kind of word is used in Malachi (Hebrew) about the same subject with Esau. God is looking for people who will treasure what He has and wants to give to them. Esau had opportunity but spurned it. In Hebrews 12:16 Esau is said to have been immoral and godless in the NAS Bible. In the King James it uses the word profane instead of godless. The meaning of the Greek word here is “to cross the threshold of the doorway and go out into wickedness.” God offered, Esau refused the offer and took a nauseous road to his desired world. That world was totally unacceptable to God. Esau rejected God’s call and offer, a blessing, a promise, a birth right. God does not cast His pearls to the swine. The likes of this is a stench in His nostrils. God knew ahead of time that Esau would be like this and treat what he was offered recklessly. Jacob on the other hand though he was not naturally suited to be heir got the blessing that he wanted, it seemed good to Him and He went for it. Do you see why Esau was not chosen but Jacob (Israel) was? Read in the Word more about this and think about it.

Pharaoh is also mentioned in Romans 9. He just like Esau defied the God of heaven and later became fish bait. Galatians 6:7 comes into focus here, “God is not mocked, whatsoever a man sows he also

reaps.” The very next verse in Galatians also holds clues. God sees all these things in His divine foreknowledge. In yesterday with God (if there is such a thing in eternity, it is as if it is today.) God can choose in the future out of the past because the future to Him about us is all known to God and really is His here and now. This is why the fear of the Lord should shake us to our senses... God knows us to the core. I am to fear a God who is capable of knowing me and determining what I shall receive and be in His sight. Arrogance and neglect with God have grave consequences.

Man has a Problem: As a sinner and sinful descendant of Adam, Romans 5:12, I am in a hopeless condition. There is nothing in me that will respond to the Lord. Somehow there needs to be a spiritual awakening and the beginning of an upward journey to God. There is no pick me up by the boot strap method. God must make the first move. Built within every man there is knowledge of eternity, Eccl. 3:11. Also built within every man is the fact that there is a God. Man understands the superior qualities of God from creation. Man understands that God has eternal power and a divine nature. This apparently is stamped into the spiritual DNA of every human being. See Romans 1:19 and 20. God has said that no unregenerate man shall have a valid excuse in eternity for the loss he will eternally suffer. (People doing evangelism can capitalize on these insights that God gives about man when needed in a critical encounter with someone who calls himself an atheist.) God gives us insights into what most people don't know about themselves. In other words an atheist is a liar, just as God declares. Often these God awareness realities lie hidden and down trodden by sin in the life of the unconverted. But the Word will stir the ember and a flame may appear.

Seeing God: Seeing God is as Jacob did, remember what Jacob said, “I have seen the face of God.” In John 6:40 it tells us there that those who behold the Son and believe in Him may have eternal life. This is a prediction and promise. Understand the development of events. Understand the working of God Almighty producing by Himself in the sinner the awareness of the promise of life in a sinner needing Salvation. If someone gets a glimpse of Christ would they refuse Him? Does God give that glimpse to those He knows would still reject Him? Woe to the person who has seen the face of God and turned away, rejecting Him, the One whom to know who can alone give life eternal. I tend to think that only the elect will see the Savior that is to see in spiritual reality or to see Him by the eye of faith.

Drawn to God: This apparently is the work of the Father, directly or indirectly through the Spirit of God. The Father can do this directly and it is stated as such in John 6:44. It is very clear in the NAS Bible. No one will ever be saved if he refuses to be drawn to Christ. James 1:18 has similar words. You can double up on this thought through these needed verses for evangelism. Well you might as well add Hebrews 7:25 to the list, another complementary verse to this truth.

Taught of God: God's Word again says, *“faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God...”* Romans 10:17. The man or woman of God must use the Word of God as a divine tool with the sinner to bring to light the hidden things of darkness and the truth of the Almighty God. John 6:45 is a great verse to introduce here where it says that “they shall all be taught of God...” We must use the Word of God and count on it to do the job in the heart of the sinner needing salvation. If a sinner will not listen and turns a deaf ear he will never be saved, he is not one of the elect.

Bread from Heaven: This Bread (Jesus) is that which a person must eat to live John 6:51. Eat, means that the sinner takes Christ Jesus into or receives Christ Jesus into his innermost being. Eating and living forever is mentioned a few times in John 6. Refuse the divine Bread from Heaven and rejection of it in abandonment, is doing just like Esau did. How could anyone refuse that living Bread with a promise of life when taught by the spirit that it were so... eat and live.

Granted Access to the Son: Christ said the Father grants this eternal life in John 6:65. Only the Father can do this. It is the Spirit that gives life, Jn. 6:63. If you have the Son you have life and if not the wrath of God hangs over you for eternity. How can a soul reject God's offer; yet men do? A refusal along the road of God's teaching, drawing, views of Christ, tasting of the Bread of heaven and so forth brings down the curtain. Don't you see, can't you tell that God knows all this response of the human soul from eternity past. If God sees the acceptance and a soul longing for and clinging to and faith in, the attraction to Christ and His offer and personal remorse of sin and finally the reception of Christ the name goes in to the Lamb's book of life. Election and choosing is accomplished and secure as far as God is concerned from eternity past, if there is such a thing.

God knows who will and won't come to Him by his divine omniscience. God is a rewarder of those who come to God through Christ, Hebrews 11:6.

Repenting Sinners Under Inspection: This is mentioned in Colossians chapter one. Read, vs. 12-14. Again the inspection of the repenting sinner is done by the Father. He is the one who qualifies the sinner for placement in the Kingdom of the Son of His love. Can you imagine the Father placing a sinner who has a substandard repentance into the Kingdom of His beloved Son? No way José! The Father would be very finicky about who would be accepted. Repentance and faith must be genuine and absolute and who would know better than the Father, the Spirit or Son about those human realities. And the Father knew all about this from eternity past as well and declared those who are elect to be the ones with the names in the Book of Life.

In or Out. As Esau had bitter remorse over his eternal loss and so will every soul of man who plays fast and loose with God; and how sad to come to the state that you know you can't do business with God. Profane and reprobate, banished forever to outer darkness has been, is and will be the dilemma of millions because of the fact that they rejected at their own personal choice God's call to come to Him.

The Process and Choice: It is noted that a person just does not happen to be saved because of birth or religious association. Each person must choose for Himself Christ, The message is clear in John 1:12. When you receive and the Father grants salvation and transfers you into the Son's Kingdom the supernatural miracle of the new birth happens. The sinner passes from death to life forever a child of God. It is so wonderful to comprehend.

By Doug Crabb, December 2007 (A person who has found a place by divine grace in the Son's Kingdom)