

## *EVANGELICAL VIEWS ON ELECTION*

### A. Decrees of God

1. To create man
2. To permit the fall
3. To provide in Christ redemption sufficient for all
4. To elect some to salvation
5. To send the Spirit to secure the acceptance of redemption on the part of the elect.

### B. God determined to save from sin.

#### 1. Notes

- a. God must take the initiative in salvation.
- b. Man is responsible.
- c. God's decrees are not based on caprice but on His wise and holy counsel.

#### 2. Evangelical positions

##### a. Election based on prescience - dependent on divine foreknowledge

- 1) Election is the sovereign gracious act of God whereby He chose in Christ for salvation all those whom He foreknew would respond positively to prevenient grace.
  - a) Due to sin, man is without any ability or desire to change.
  - b) God responded by prevenient grace which restores to the sinner the ability to make a favorable response to God, Rom. 2:4; Titus 2:11.
  - c) It is man's response to the revelation which God made of Himself that is the basis of his election.
  - d) In election, God has determined to save those who accept His Son.
  - e) In predestination, He has resolved to effectively accomplish that purpose, Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:5.
- 2) Because of prevenient grace man is able to make an initial response to God, and God will then give to him repentance and faith.
  - a) Thus, foreknowledge is not itself causative.
  - b) Election follows foreknowledge.
  - c) God provides everyone the opportunity to respond to Him through prevenient grace if they choose.
  - d) God elects to salvation those whom He knows will respond.
- 3) Arguments in favor of this view
  - a) God's salvation has appeared to all men, not merely the elect, Titus 2:11.
  - b) Christ died for all, 1 Tim. 2:6; 4:10; Heb. 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2; 4:14.
  - c) God desires that none perish, 2 Peter 3:9.
  - d) The invitation to salvation is to all, John 3:15f; 4:13f; 11:26; 12:46; Acts. 2:21; 10:43.
  - e) Exhortations to turn to God, to repent, to believe, Is. 31:6; Joel 2:13f; Mat. 18:3; Acts 3:19; Mat. 3:2; Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 17:30; John 6:29; Acts 16:31; 1 John 3:23.
  - f) Scripture bases election on foreknowledge, Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Peter 1:1f.
  - g) This view tends logically to great missionary endeavor.
- 4) Objections to this view
  - a) The Father gave certain ones to Christ, John 6:37; 17:2, 6, 9.
  - b) Salvation originates in the choice of God and as being all of grace, Eph. 1:5-8; 2:8-10.

##### b. Election based on choice - election and foreknowledge are inseparable and essentially the same.

- 1) Election is the act of God by which He graciously and on account of no foreseen merit chooses out from among sinful men certain ones to be the recipients of His special saving grace.
- 2) Foreknowledge is antecedent to election and both are acts of God.
- 3) Arguments in favor of this view
  - a) Clear biblical statements, Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:27-30; Gal. 4:9; Eph. 1:5, 11; 1 Thes. 1:4; 1 Peter 1:1f; 2:9.
  - b) The whole process of salvation is the gift of God, Rom. 12:3; Eph. 2:8-10.
  - c) Men are given to Christ, John 6:37; 17:2.
  - d) God's sovereign calling upon individuals, Paul, Gal. 1:15; Jeremiah, Jer. 1:5.
  - e) An appeal to a godly life is made on the basis of election, Col. 3:12; 2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Peter 2:9.
  - f) Election is portrayed as being from all eternity, 2 Tim. 1:9.
  - g) There is no injustice with God in condemning; salvation is a matter of pure grace, Eph. 2:8.

- 4) Objections to this view
    - a) It makes foreknowledge and election virtually the same.
    - b) If election is limited by God, surely atonement must be limited as well. Yet, many passages teach unlimited atonement, John 1:29; 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2.
    - c) It makes God responsible for reprobation.
    - d) Election discourages evangelism.
    - e) It portrays God as partial and arbitrary.
    - f) This view of election instills pride within the elect.
- 

Primary reference: Thiessen, Henry Clarence. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.