

What is meant by the term “ELECTION,” as used in Christian Theology?

Packer succinctly describes election as the act whereby God picks an individual or group out of a larger company for the purpose or destiny of His own appointment. ¹

Klooster has captured election in his citation from the Canons of Dort's response to Arminianism. ²

The unchangeable purpose of God whereby before the foundation of the world, out of the whole human race, which had fallen by its own fault out of original integrity into sin and ruin, He has according to the most free pleasure of His will, out of mere grace chosen in Christ to salvation a certain number of specific men, neither better nor more worthy than others, but with them involved in a common misery.

Elwell frames the process or act of election as essentially the choosing or discriminatory evaluation of individuals, means, ends or objects with the view of selecting one above others, although not necessarily passing negative judgment upon those elements not chosen. He notes that it involves the will and results in a determination made and a preference expressed. ³

- **God's election is gracious**
- **God's election is sovereign**
- **God's election is an eternal personal choice of individual sinners**
- **God's election is through Christ**
- **God's election is for His glory**

Ephesians 1:3-14 (New American Standard Bible (1995 Update))

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 would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹ He made known to us the mystery of His will, according

¹ J. I. Packer, "Election", *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. v.1; (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 435-438.

² F. H. Klooster, "Elect, Election", *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. W. A. Elwell, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1984), 348-349.

³ Walter A. Elwell, "Elect, Election", *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. W. A. Elwell, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996), 199-201.

to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰ with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him ¹¹ also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹² to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. ¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 2:1-10 (New American Standard Bible (1995 Update))

¹ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 (New American Standard Bible (1995 Update))

¹³ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴ It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.

1 Peter 1:1-5 (New American Standard Bible (1995 Update))

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.