

## Scriptures and Doctrine :: Thoughts on Election & Predestination by Joshua Friedrich

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### Thoughts on Election & Predestination

by Joshua Friedrich

Main Scripture: Ephesians 1:3-6

God has chosen a people for himself (vs. 6 – “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved”) from the foundation of the world (vs. 4 – “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love”).

God has predestined many things from the foundation of the world. These include more than the predestination of a chosen people:

The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8 – “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”) and Acts 2:23 – “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain”).

Names were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8).

God’s works were completed from the foundation of the world (Heb. 4:3 – “For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world”).

His eternal kingdom has been prepared from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34 – “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”).

God chose us unto sonship from the foundation of the world (vs. 4-5 – “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will”).

In eternity past God gave us grace (2 Tim. 1:9-11 – “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of t

he Gentiles”) and predestinated us to share in his life (Titus 1:2 – “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began”).

God initiates the fulfilling of his predestination of a people by making a covenant with Abraham (See Gen 12-17).

In the new testament we see that Paul tells us that Unbelieving Jews are branches broken off the tree and believing gentiles are grafted in (Rom. 11:20 – “Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear”), for God has chosen that there would always be a remnant (Rom. 11:5 – “Even so the n at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace”) which is according to the election of grace, and not by works (Rom. 11:6 – “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work”).

God’s covenant was made with Israel and not the Church (Isa. 45:4 – “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me”; 65:22 – “They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands”). Only when we believe are we grafted into the remnant and saved (Mark 16:16 – “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”).

God is eternal and has foreknowledge (1 Pet. 1:2 – “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied”, Rom. 8:29 – “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied”). However, this foreknowledge does not mean that God will force salvation on those he knows will seek after him. We should be clear on this point though, that those who seek after him become part of God’s elect, which God has willed to exist, even, “from the foundation of the world”.

We see then that God has fore-willed, his elect and also that he has foreseen individual salvations according to his foreknowledge, but we cannot overlap the choosing of a people with the foreknowledge of individual salvation. We see why Paul writes about the predestination of saints with regard to being a holy people. God has willed that his people would be holy (Lev. 19:2 – “Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy”).

Now that we have looked at what election is, let’s look at what election is not.

Election is not assurance of salvation. The book of 1 John is majorly given to assurance of salvation and it does not speak of election as an assurance of salvation. In fact there is no one passage of scripture that talks about election being an assurance of salvation. Only if God forced a salvation on someone by his will can you be assured that you will be saved since God will bring all things that he wills to pass. However, since this is not the case, we see that election is not assurance of salvation. Jesus said, “My own know me...and they shall hear my voice (John 10:14, 16).

Election is not unconditional. Election is according to the foreknowledge of God (1 Pet. 1:2 – “Elect according

to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied”), not according to his will (compare Eph. 1:5 with verse 4). Though God elected the nation of Israel, many Israelites are under the wrath of God. Not all tribes entered the promised land, Judas betrayed Jesus, and many Jews, “missed their visitation” (Luke 19:44).

The Death of Christ was for the world (John 1:29; 3:16; 1 John 2:2, 1 Tim. 2:6; 4:10). It is possible for everyone to be saved. Those who believe will be saved (Mark 16:16, John 3:15, Acts 16:31, Rom. 3:22, 26, 1 John 2:12).

According to the good pleasure of his will God has chosen that the Lamb would be slain before the foundation of the world, he has chosen a people for himself from before the foundation of the world, and he has chosen this people to be “holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph. 1:4b,5). We see God initiated the elect by making a covenant with Abraham. We see that unbelieving Jews, by putting their will against God (2 Pet. 3:5) were taken out of the group called the elect, and that believing gentiles were brought into this remnant, called the elect (Rom. 11). This group which God has chosen for himself, he has also made provision for from the foundation of the world through his son who has many spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Eph 1:3) and that this people are for the glory of God (vs. 6).

**Re: Thoughts on Election & Predestination by Joshua Friedrich - posted by yoadam (), on: 2010/2/28 2:18**

The verses quoted above are excellent and some of my favorite verses of the entire Bible, but the commentary presented along with them on the subject of "predestination according to foreseen faith", was originally rejected by protestant churches, as can be seen from reading the ([http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframehttp://www.reformed.org/documents/canons\\_of\\_dordt.html](http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframehttp://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_dordt.html)) Canons of Dort, where these views were universally denounced as erroneous and contrary to the teachings of Scripture.

"Article 7: Election

Election is God's unchangeable purpose by which he did the following:

Before the foundation of the world, by sheer grace, according to the free good pleasure of his will, he chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race, which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin. Those chosen were neither better nor more deserving than the others, but lay with them in the common misery. He did this in Christ, whom he also appointed from eternity to be the mediator, the head of all those chosen, and the foundation of their salvation. And so he decided to give the chosen ones to Christ to be saved, and to call and draw them effectively into Christ's fellowship through his Word and Spirit. In other words, he decided to grant them true faith in Christ, to justify them, to sanctify them, and finally, after powerfully preserving them in the fellowship of his Son, to glorify them.

God did all this in order to demonstrate his mercy, to the praise of the riches of his glorious grace.

As Scripture says, God chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, so that we should be holy and blameless before him with love; he predestined us whom he adopted as his children through Jesus Christ, in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, by which he freely made us pleasing to himself in his beloved (Eph. 1:4-6). And elsewhere, Those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified (Rom. 8:30).

Article 8: A Single Decision of Election

This election is not of many kinds; it is one and the same election for all who were to be saved in the Old and the New Testament. For Scripture declares that there is a single good pleasure, purpose, and plan of God's will, by which he chose us from eternity both to grace and to glory, both to salvation and to the way of salvation, which he prepared in advance for us to walk in.

**Article 9: Election Not Based on Foreseen Faith**

**This same election took place, not on the basis of foreseen faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, or of any other good quality and disposition, as though it were based on a prerequisite cause or condition in the person to be chosen, but rather for the purpose of faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, and so on. Accordingly, election is the source of each of the benefits of salvation. Faith, holiness, and the other saving gifts, and at last eternal life itself, flow forth from election as its fruits and effects. As the apostle says, He chose us (not because we were, but) so that we should be holy and blameless before him in love (Eph. 1:4).**

#### Article 10: Election Based on God's Good Pleasure

But the cause of this undeserved election is exclusively the good pleasure of God. This does not involve his choosing certain human qualities or actions from among all those possible as a condition of salvation, but rather involves his adopting certain particular persons from among the common mass of sinners as his own possession. As Scripture says, When the children were not yet born, and had done nothing either good or bad..., she (Rebecca) was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Rom. 9:11-13). Also, All who were appointed for eternal life believed (Acts 13:48).

#### Article 11: Election Unchangeable

Just as God himself is most wise, unchangeable, all-knowing, and almighty, so the election made by him can neither be suspended nor altered, revoked, or annulled; neither can his chosen ones be cast off, nor their number reduced.

#### Article 12: The Assurance of Election

Assurance of this their eternal and unchangeable election to salvation is given to the chosen in due time, though by various stages and in differing measure. Such assurance comes not by inquisitive searching into the hidden and deep things of God, but by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God's Word-- such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on.

#### Article 13: The Fruit of This Assurance

In their awareness and assurance of this election God's children daily find greater cause to humble themselves before God, to adore the fathomless depth of his mercies, to cleanse themselves, and to give fervent love in return to him who first so greatly loved them. This is far from saying that this teaching concerning election, and reflection upon it, make God's children lax in observing his commandments or carnally self-assured. By God's just judgment this does usually happen to those who casually take for granted the grace of election or engage in idle and brazen talk about it but are unwilling to walk in the ways of the chosen.

#### Article 14: Teaching Election Properly

Just as, by God's wise plan, this teaching concerning divine election has been proclaimed through the prophets, Christ himself, and the apostles, in Old and New Testament times, and has subsequently been committed to writing in the Holy Scriptures, so also today in God's church, for which it was specifically intended, this teaching must be set forth--with a spirit of discretion, in a godly and holy manner, at the appropriate time and place, without inquisitive searching into the ways of the Most High. This must be done for the glory of God's most holy name, and for the lively comfort of his people.

#### Article 15: Reprobation

Moreover, Holy Scripture most especially highlights this eternal and undeserved grace of our election and brings it out more clearly for us, in that it further bears witness that not all people have been chosen but that some have not been chosen or have been passed by in God's eternal election-- those, that is, concerning whom God, on the basis of his entirely free, most just, irreproachable, and unchangeable good pleasure, made the following decision: to leave them in the common misery into which, by their own fault, they have plunged themselves; not to grant them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but finally to condemn and eternally punish them (having been left in their own ways and under his just judgment), not only for their unbelief but also for all their other sins, in order to display his justice. And this is the decision of reprobation, which does not at all make God the author of sin (a blasphemous thought!) but rather its fearful, irreproachable, just judge and avenger.

#### Article 16: Responses to the Teaching of Reprobation

Those who do not yet actively experience within themselves a living faith in Christ or an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ, but who nevertheless use the means by which God has promised to work these things in us--such people ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor to count themselves among the reprobate; rather they ought to continue diligently in the use of the means, to desire fervently a time of more abundant grace, and to wait for it in reverence and humility. On the other hand, those who seriously desire to turn to God, to be pleasing to him alone, and to be delivered from the body of death, but are not yet able to make such progress along the way of godliness and faith as they would like--such people ought much less to stand in fear of the teaching concerning reprobation, since our merciful God has promised that he will not snuff out a smoldering wick and that he will not break a bruised reed. However, those who have forgotten God and their Savior Jesus Christ and have abandoned themselves wholly to the cares of the world and the pleasures of the flesh--such people have every reason to stand in fear of this teaching, as long as they do not seriously turn to God.

#### Article 17: The Salvation of the Infants of Believers

Since we must make judgments about God's will from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, godly parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy.

#### Article 18: The Proper Attitude Toward Election and Reprobation

To those who complain about this grace of an undeserved election and about the severity of a just reprobation, we reply with the words of the apostle, Who are you, O man, to talk back to God? (Rom. 9:20), and with the words of our Savior, Have I no right to do what I want with my own? (Matt. 20:15). We, however, with reverent adoration of these secret things, cry out with the apostle: Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond tracing out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Or who has first given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen (Rom. 11:33-36)."

([http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons\\_of\\_dordt.html](http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_dordt.html))  
[http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons\\_of\\_dordt.html](http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_dordt.html)

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2010/2/28 9:38**

Quote:  
-----The verses quoted above are excellent and some of my favorite verses of the entire Bible, but the commentary presented along with them on the subject of "predestination according to foreseen faith", was originally rejected by protestant churches, as can be seen from reading the Canons of Dort, where these views were universally denounced as erroneous and contrary to the teachings of Scripture.  
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Obviously you do not agree with anything except for the scriptures stated in the first post because you believe an 100% different interpretation of them. I think it is very clear from the passages given from the first post that predestination and election are not without man's will involved. And the context for many of the passages clearly indicates man's free will.

Please keep the discussion towards the first post and do not post other long reformed texts. This thread is here to discuss the truths and thoughts posed in the first post.