

**Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics**

Protestant Reformation Doctrines of Salvation

The Heights Church January 26, 2020

Election: Correcting Misunderstandings about Election (Review)

- References to election occur in many passages in the NT written by several authors.
- The NT views election as:
 - A comfort for the elect
 - A reason to praise, glorify and thank God
 - An encouragement to evangelize.
- Election is not fatalistic or mechanistic.

Election: Correcting Misunderstandings about Election

2. Election is **not** based on God's Foreknowledge of our faith.

- The original Articles of the Arminians presented at the Synod of Dort did not claim that God based election upon his Foreknowledge of who would come to faith independently of God's sovereign choice/action.
- However, overtime the idea that God based election upon his Foreknowledge of who would come to faith independently of God's sovereign choice/action came to be one of the primary misunderstandings about election. It was based upon Article 1 Conditional Election and Article 4 Resistible Grace

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- Paragraph 3.2 of the 1689 London Baptist Confession of faith states:

God knows everything that could happen under any given

conditions.⁵ However, his decree of anything is not based on foreseeing it in the

future or foreseeing that it would occur under such conditions.⁶

⁵Acts 15:18. ⁶Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18.

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¹⁴ Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,

¹⁶ “After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, ¹⁷ that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things ¹⁸ ***known from of old.***’ (Acts 15:14 – 18)

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though they were not yet born and had **done nothing either good or bad**--in order that God's **purpose of election** might continue, **not because of works but because of him who calls**-- she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." **So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.** (Romans 9:11 – 18)

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2. Election is **not** based on God's Foreknowledge of our faith.

For those **whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:29)

- God predestines certain persons he knows. He does not predestine people based upon his foreknowledge of what they will ***independently*** do. Nor does he predestine groups.

Election: Correcting Misunderstandings about Election

2. Election is **not** based on God's Foreknowledge of our faith.

- If God based predestination on works then salvation would be merit based and not grace based.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as **he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that **we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us** for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will**, to the **praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3 – 6)

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2. Election is **not** based on God's Foreknowledge of our faith. (Israel)

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. (Romans 11:1 – 6)

Election: Correcting Misunderstandings about Election

- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.
 - We must assume that God's foreknowledge is perfect. If it is not then we must affirm a form of "Open Theism" in which God does not infallibly know the future.
 - Therefore, if God knows by his perfect foreknowledge that person "A" will come to faith and person "B" will not come to faith then these are fixed facts and it is not possible that either "A" will not come to faith or "B" will come to faith.

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- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.
 - In addition if God foreknows person "A" will come to faith and person "B" will not come to faith then these facts would not in any way be made more certain if God were to decree that "A" would come to faith and "B" would not come to faith.

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- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.
- Furthermore, since it must be a fact that "A" will come to faith but "B" will not, we must ask, "Why is this true?" There are four possibilities.
 1. There is some powerful being other than God that ultimately controls people's destinies.
 2. There is some impersonal force in the universe that makes things turn out the way they do.
 3. God has given people autonomy over their salvation.
 4. The Reformed doctrine of unconditional election is correct.

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- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.
- The truth of the Reformed doctrine of unconditional election has already been established. We must reject the other three possibilities for the following reasons:

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- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.
 1. There is some powerful being other than God that ultimately controls people's destinies.
- People do not have free choice because another powerful being controls their ultimate destiny.
- Such a belief is untenable based upon Scripture. Satan is the only possibility but as we see in Job, God places limits on what he can do.

And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." (Job 1:12)

And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life." (Job 2:6)

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- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.
 2. There is some impersonal force of in the universe that makes things turn out the way they do.
- This view must be rejected because it denies the sovereignty of God.
- It trades election based on the love, grace, and mercy of God for some kind of impersonal determinism that does not allow individuals free choice.

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- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.
 3. God has given people autonomy over their salvation.
 - If people were autonomous in deciding whether to believe or not believe in Jesus it is possible that no one would believe and Jesus would have died in vain.
 - If people were autonomous in deciding whether to believe or not believe in Jesus, then the doctrine of moral inability resulting from the Fall would not be true.

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- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.

3. God has given people autonomy over their salvation.

- If God chose the elect based upon his foreknowledge of their autonomous choices, what would be the point of God's election?
- Why does Scripture include passages about God choosing the elect?
- Why does Scripture **not** include any passages that clearly state God has given people autonomy over their salvation?

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- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.
 3. God has given people autonomy over their salvation.
- Scripture never speaks of belief in Jesus as the reason God chose the elect. Indeed Paul explicitly excludes what people would do in life as a reason for choosing them in Romans 9:11 – 16.

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- Predestination based upon God's foreknowledge does not give people free choice.

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