

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 8, Election Systematic Formulations, Number 3

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Salvation. This is session number eight, Election Systematic Formulations, Number 3.

Having surveyed Romans 8:28-30 and Ephesians 1:3-14, I should have said that first, Ephesians 1:3-14, Romans 8:28-30 and Romans 9, at least most of it, the great passages, historical passages on election, we return to the systematic lectures.

2 Timothy 1:9, is one of two places where Paul locates God's electing grace before eternal ages, before the creation of the world, Ephesians 1:4. That grace is efficacious, for although planned in eternity, God manifested it in time, to use the language of 1 Timothy 1:10, through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. God's election of his people for salvation is based upon his sovereignty and grace, his purpose and mercy, and his will and love. He chooses both individuals and the church, as the next section shows.

Elections scope individuals and the church. God chooses individuals for salvation that corporately constitute his church. Scripture plainly teaches God's individual and corporate or communal election of his people.

We begin with corporate election because it is not contested. Although, again, to be frank, Calvinism has not, to my estimation, adequately emphasized corporate election, and it is thereby missed out on some communal or fellowshiping applications. Corporate election of God's people is taught in every New Testament corpus, the Gospels.

Matthew 13:20, 22, 26 and 27. Matthew, did I say Matthew? I have a mistake here. Excuse me.

I have Mark written down, but I think it might be. No, it isn't Mark. Mark 13:20, 22, 26, 27. Matthew 22, 14. That was my mistake. John 6:37. John 10:26, 27. John 17:2 and 24. Acts 18:9 and 10.

Paul's letters. Corporate or plural election is taught in Ephesians 1:4. Romans 8:29 and 30. Colossians 3:12.

1 Thessalonians 1:4 and 5. 2 Thessalonians 2:13. 2 Timothy 1:9. Titus 1:1. In the general epistles, James 2:5. 1 Peter 1:1 and 2. 2 Peter 1:10. 2 John 1 and 13.

Revelation 17:14. Let me quote a couple of these texts. 1 Peter 5:13.

She who is in Babylon chosen together with you. It's a reference to the church in Rome using the cryptic symbolism of Babylon, the ancient enemy of God for the current enemy of God, Rome. She who is in Babylon chosen together with you sends you greetings as does Mark my son.

1 Peter 5:13. 2 John 1 and 13. Verses 1 and 13.

The elder, the author, to the elect lady and her children. It seems to be a reference to a church whom I love in the truth and not only I but also those who know the truth.

The children of your elect sister send you greetings. 2 John 1 and 13. The woman in Babylon chosen, the elect lady, 2 John 1, and her elect sister, verse 13, are references to churches and thus to corporate election.

Scripture teaches corporate election. It also teaches individual election in the gospels, Acts, and Paul's letters. Jesus tells of the son's choosing to reveal the father to some people.

Matthew 11:27 ESV. All things have been handed over to me by my father, and no one knows the son except the father, and no one knows the father except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him. Matthew 11:27.

The father and the son have unique reciprocal knowledge of one another. The father has granted authority to the incarnate son to make the father known as the son chooses. After healing a man who had been lame for 38 years, Jesus says he always does the Father's will and, at the same time, performs works that only God can do.

John 5:19 and 20. The purpose of the latter quote is that all may honor the son just as they honor the father. Verse 23.

One work performed by father and son is giving life. Quote: just as the father raises the dead and gives them life, so the son gives life to whom he wants. Verse 21.

Who is plural and consists of the individuals chosen and quickened by Jesus. Acts stress the significance of repentance and faith and underline God's sovereignty. It speaks of election only twice, once of corporate election, Acts 18:9 and 10, and once of individual election, Acts 13:48.

After being rejected by the Jews in Perga of Pamphylia, Paul turns to the Gentiles, citing Isaiah 49:6. "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." When the Gentiles heard this, no, I am still

quoting, when the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord, and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed in Acts 13:47, 48.

God's appointment of individuals to eternal life results in saving faith. Faith is not the basis of God's election, it is the result of God's election. We see the same thing in 1 Thessalonians 1, which answers the question, how do we know who the elect are? How do we know whom God has chosen? Remember Calvin's answer to the worried parishioner? We look at Christ, the author of election.

We see that in 1 Thessalonians 1. In 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 2, we give thanks to God always for you all, praying for you. Verse 4, for we know, brothers, loved by God, that he has chosen you. We know, brothers, loved by God because he has chosen you.

Because we have looked deeply into the eternal counsels of the Lord and have discerned the divine will before creation. Balderdash. He doesn't say anything like that.

Rather, he says, that's the labyrinth Calvin warned us about. We don't try to probe God's eternal counsels. Good grief.

We know, brothers, loved by God, he has chosen you because, here's how we know, our gospel came to you, not only in word but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. We know whom God has chosen by who believes the gospel. Faith is not the basis of election.

Faith is the result of election. God chooses, and the Son redeems those same people. We skip that step here.

And the Spirit illuminates those people, regenerates those people, draws those people to a saving knowledge of Christ. Paul teaches both corporate and individual election. In Romans 9, he cites Moses' teaching of the divine prerogative from Exodus 33, 19.

God tells Moses, I'll have mercy to whom I'll show mercy. I'll have compassion on whom I have compassion. Romans 9:15.

The words to whom and on whom are singular. Paul's words apply Moses' words to Paul's ministry. So then, quote, he has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Verse 18. On whom is singular, pointing to God's choice of individuals as recipients of God's saving mercy and to his rejection of other individuals. A neglected election text appears among Paul's greetings at the end of Romans.

Greet Rufus. Romans 16:13. I bet if you asked a church, not one person could name this text.

Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord. Romans 16:13. After considering the possibility that Paul was referring to a man named Rufus as an outstanding or choice man, it's not impossible for Electos to mean that.

Doug Moo interprets this as a reference to God's choice of Rufus for salvation.

Quote: Paul probably simply means he was a Christian chosen as all Christians are. Romans 16:13.

Elections goals, our salvation, and God's glory. God chose people in eternity's past with a view to eternity's future. The new heavens and new earth.

God set goals pertaining to election for the church and for himself. For the church, the goal is final salvation, which is communicated in many ways, including holiness. Ephesians 1:4 adoption.

Verse five. Conformity to Christ. Romans 8:29.

And inheritance. Ephesians 1:11. And glory.

Romans 8, 30. Second Thessalonians 2:14. Paul combines election and final salvation in Second Timothy.

Quote, this is why Paul says, I endure all things for the elect, so that they also may obtain salvation, which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Second Timothy 2, 10. If they're elect, why do they have to obtain salvation? Because election is God's eternal choice.

Obtaining salvation obtains in time and space. It's interesting. Paul, the greatest author of election in the Bible, is also, I'll be minimalist, one of the greatest evangelists in the Bible.

And election drives him. This is why I endure all things for the elect, so that they also may obtain salvation. Paul knows they need to hear the gospel to believe it and be saved.

Concerning God himself, what is the goal of election? It is his own glory, which is the ultimate goal of God in all things. We, too, glibly add to the end of our prayers. For your honor and glory, amen.

It is better to add it than not, but it is better to mean it than just to glibly say it. God chose Jews and Gentiles for salvation with the goal that, quote, they might bring praise to his glory. Ephesians 1:12.

Clint Arnold is correct in his commentary on Ephesians. God's ultimate purpose in selecting and predestinating a people for himself is that it would lead to his own glory. Believers feel compelled to join the apostle when he sings, quote, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever.

Amen. Ephesians 3:21. Election, historical and eternal.

John Frame. Frame is a remarkable man. He loves the Lord.

He faithfully served for many years. I remember calling him and asking him to write a chapter in a book I was co-editing and he said, I'm with you. I believe in your project.

I would like to help you, but I'm trying to finish a systematic theology book before the Lord calls me home. Well, in God's providence, he finished that book and some others after it. Concerning that particular project, he gave us permission, Christopher Morgan and me, to use his previous writing, which is the best thing we could find, to try to explain the problem of evil in our book on sin for Crossway.

John Frame distinguishes helpfully between historical and eternal election in his book, *The Doctrine of God*, pages 317 through 330. God's choosing Israel is a historic election. Although God chose a nation in history, his choice did not necessarily result in the salvation of every Israelite.

Those who opposed him and continually broke the covenant was not saved. In a similar way, God chooses, via historical election, the visible New Testament church as a corporate people. But not every individual in the church experiences salvation.

By contrast, eternal election always results in salvation. For God chooses individuals for salvation before creation, as revealed in the New Testament. Both historical election and eternal election are types of election because both involve God's choice, but not vice versa.

Historical election puts one in the community of faith but does not guarantee that one has been eternally elected for salvation. Elect individuals ultimately believe and obey God. Another source that's good to mention at this point is Thomas Schreiner's essay, *Does Romans 9 Teach Individual Election Under Salvation?*, in a book that he co-edited with Bruce Ware called *Still Sovereign, Contemporary Perspectives on Election for Knowledge and Grace*.

Thomas Schreiner, Does Romans 9 Teach Individual Election Under Salvation?, in Still Sovereign, Contemporary Perspectives on Election for Knowledge and Grace. This brings us to election and foreknowledge. In the Arminian tradition, election is subordinated to foreknowledge.

After all, Paul says, those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers or sisters. Romans 8:29. Arminians hold that predestination depends upon foreknowledge, which they understand as God's foreseeing beforehand who would believe.

When human beings foreknow something, they simply foresee what will happen. The word foreknow is used in this sense in 2 Peter 3:17. I acknowledge different uses of the words foreknow and foreknowledge in the New Testament.

Such word studies ought to be independent of theological conclusions, and as a matter of fact, sometimes they speak of people knowing facts in the future. Sometimes, they speak of God's effective planning of the future. And my contention is sometimes they speak of God's setting his love for loving people, setting his love on people beforehand.

Biblically, God's foreknowledge, although it includes prescience, prescience is God's foreknowledge of facts. Foreknowledge, it's his foreknowledge of facts, of events, of what's going to happen. Although foreknowledge includes his foresight, prescience, foreknowing of things, and the idea that God sees beforehand what will occur, it also includes the notion of foreordination, which was a word I was trying to get, foreordination.

Such an inclusion is not merely philosophical, but textually grounded. God's knowledge of persons, when it's knowledge that leads to salvation, has a covenantal or personal dimension. That's what I was going for as well.

This is evident in how the word *no* is used in the Old Testament. God chose, literally knew, from *Yadah*, Abraham, Genesis 18:19. The translation rightly represents the significance of the word *no*, for the text does not merely say the Lord had mental cognition of Abraham, but also signifies that the Lord set his love upon him.

Another example stems from Amos 3:2. Ah, there it is, Amos 3:2, where the Lord addresses Israel, I have known only you out of all the clans of the earth. Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.

God's love of his people includes discipline. Here again, the word *Yadah* occurs for known, and some translations, for good reason, translate the word as chosen. You alone have I chosen out of all the clans of the earth.

NIV, NET, NASB. Obviously, God cognitively knows all the nations of the earth. And thus, in Amos 3:2, the word no has a personal and covenantal dimension.

The Lord has known Israel in that he has chosen it as his special possession among all nations. We noted earlier that Jeremiah was known as prophet in the same way. I'm not sure if we knew that earlier, I'm sorry.

I don't think I mentioned that. Jeremiah 1-5, God knew him. We see a similar usage in Psalm 1-6, where the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly will perish.

Certainly, the Lord knows cognitively the way of the wicked as well, for the next line says the way of the wicked leads to ruin, the way of the ungodly will perish. God knows the path of the righteous, which means he cares for and protects his people. Paul also uses the word no of God setting his love for his own good pleasure on his people.

Paul reproves the Galatians. Now, since you know God, or rather have become known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elements? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again? Galatians 4:9. The Galatians, knowing God, signified their conversion.

But then Paul considers a deeper reality, the ultimate reason they know God, and he traces it to God's knowledge of them. He set his covenant affection upon them. Believers know God only because God knew them first.

A similar text occurs in an introductory paragraph addressing the issue of food offered to idols. 1 Corinthians 8:1-3. The knowers were those proud of their knowledge of idols and foods but not caring for the weak.

Verses 1-13. They were proud of their knowledge, but were using it as a club on the heads of weaker Christians. Paul reminds and reproves them.

Quote, but if anyone loves God, he is known by him. Verse 3. The fundamental issue is not how much the knowers know but whether they are known by God. Those who love God, that is, believers, compare Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 2:9, are previously known.

Those who love God are previously known by God. Those who love God, that is, believers, are previously known by God. The perfect tense of known indicates that human love is a result of God's knowing.

Love springs up in human hearts in those who have been known by God, in those who have been the objects of his covenant love. Another example of the word knowing signifying God's covenant affection surfaces in 2 Timothy 2:19. Nevertheless, 2 Timothy 2:19, God's solid foundation stands firm bearing this inscription: the Lord knows those who are his, and let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness.

Paul considers the influence of false teachers who were undermining the faith of those who confessed faith in Jesus, verses 15-18. As a result of the machinations of such teachers, the faith of some was ruined, verse 18. Does that mean some who were truly believers are now lost? Certainly not.

Paul alludes in 2 Timothy 2:19 to Numbers 16:5 and the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram who rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. The point of the story is that the Lord knows those who are truly his. Korah and his friends, by their apostasy, showed that they didn't truly belong to the Lord.

And the same is true of those who defected from the faith according to 2 Timothy 2-18. Those whom the Lord knows, however, those upon whom God has set his covenant affection, will never depart from him. In the New Testament, then, God's foreknowledge is not mere cognition but refers to his covenant affection and relationship with his people.

We see this clearly in Romans 11:2, where we read that God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Paul asks here whether God rejected his people Israel. And the answer is, absolutely not.

The preservation of a remnant demonstrates that there is a future for Israel. In the midst of this discussion, the meaning of foreknew is evident from the context and its use in the sentence. In context, it clearly refers to Israel's election, Romans 11:5, and preservation, verse 4. The meaning is also clear in the sentence because the word foreknew stands in contrast to rejected.

We could put it this way. Israel was not rejected but selected. Foreknew here means God set his covenant affection and love upon Israel.

We see another example of foreknowledge in Romans 8-29. Those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son. We've seen from the Old Testament and Romans 11:2 that there are good reasons to think that foreknow means foreordain and designates God's covenant affection that he bestows on his people.

Such an understanding of foreknowledge is also supported by 1 Peter 1:20, where we read that Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed

in these last times for you. Certainly, God foreknew when Christ would come, but he didn't merely foreknow his arrival. He also foreordained and determined when Christ would come.

Similarly, the death of Christ was not an accidental event. Christ was delivered up according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, Acts 2:23. The word determined assists us in defining foreknowledge, showing that foreknowledge includes the notion of foreordination.

The interpretation proposed here is supported also by Acts 4:27-28, which teaches clearly that Jesus' death was predestined. In this city, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, assembled together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed to do whatever your hand and your will had predestined to take place. Limiting foreknowledge to foresight falls short of the actual usage of the word.

We've seen in Acts 2:23 and 1 Peter 1:20 that foreknowledge includes the idea of foreordination. The same applies to 1 Peter 1:1 and 2. To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. The elect are chosen according to the foreknowledge.

Just as God foreordained the coming of Christ, 1 Peter 1:20, he also elected believers based on his choice to set his covenant affection upon them. 1 Peter 1:2. Thus foreknowledge combines God's foreordination and commitment to love.

I like the translation fore loved, foreknew, and for loving for foreknowledge in these salvific, soteriological contexts. Election and union with Christ. Paul often uses words, the words in Christ, to speak of union with Christ.

Not always, but often. Twice, he ties union with Christ to pre-temporal election. It's striking to me that the two times that Paul teaches a pre-temporal or eternal election, in both of those places, he says that that election was in Christ.

And I scratch my head to try to understand that fully. In Ephesians 1:4, Paul says that God chose people in Christ before the foundation of the world. In 2 Timothy 1:9, as we've seen many times already, Paul says, God gave us grace in Christ Jesus before time began.

The difference between Paul's normal use of Christ and these two texts is temporal. Every other time Paul uses the phrase in Christ to speak of union, he tells of God's uniting people to Christ in history. In Ephesians 1:4 and 2 Peter 1:9, he speaks of union with Christ in eternity.

Paul thus teaches that God united the elect to Christ before creation. What does this mean? It does not refer to actual union with Christ, for before creation, we did not exist. Rather, Paul includes union with Christ in God's plan.

God not only chose to save people but also planned the means to save them. He planned to unite them spiritually to his Son. This helps us understand 2 Timothy 1:9 better.

“God has saved us according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before time began.” Union with Christ was not a divine afterthought.

It was a part of God's plan of salvation from the beginning. Election and calling. Sometimes, the Bible shows a systematizing tendency.

That is, sometimes, it connects its own teachings. And obviously, I like that. I like it when I can discover those connections.

Election and calling. Three times, Paul connects election and calling. God effectively brings people to salvation and calls them through the gospel.

We're going to see calling includes the gospel call, the message of salvation that goes to everyone if the church does its job, and an effective or effectual call that God gives through the gospel call to his own people. First of all, we see a connection between election and calling in Romans 8, 28-30. We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

For those he foreknew, he also predestined, and those he predestined, he also called. Those he called, he also justified. Those he justified, he also glorified.

Romans 8:28-30. Paul explains that lovers of God are those called according to his purpose. Verse 28.

He then connects God's choice of people to his calling them to Christ. Those he predestined, he also called. Without fail, he will glorify them. Verse 30.

A second passage connects calling and election. Romans 9:22-24.

What if God, wanting to display his wrath and make his power known, endured with much patience objects of wrath prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make known the riches of his glory on objects of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory? On us, the ones he also called, not only from the Jews, but also from the Gentiles. Romans 9:22-24. Although Romans begins by holding both Jews and Gentiles responsible, accountable, and culpable before God, before a holy God.

Romans 1:18-3:20. Here, he treats more of the ultimate matters. God is sovereign over every human being's destiny.

There are objects of wrath prepared for destruction. 8:22. 9:22.

My mistake. And objects of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory. Verse 23.

God's choices are not mere hypotheticals because Paul identifies the first-century believing Jews and Gentiles as among the objects of God's mercy. Namely, us, the ones he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles. Third.

The third passage connects election and calling. Paul declares that God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. We do not save ourselves, but God saves us.

One object of his salvation, one aspect of his salvation, is calling. God's drawing us to himself through the gospel. He called us with a holy calling.

Paul contrasts our works with God's own purpose and grace, which he gave us before creation. God gives grace before time began and he summons people to himself in time and space when they believe the good news. Thus, God connects eternal election with temporal calling.

Once again, this shows that faith is the result of election, not its cause. And we will take up that election and faith as we begin our next lecture.

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