

Week Eight

Quarter 2

Election and Reprobation

The Gospel Call and Effective Calling

Outline

- Chapter 32 – Election and Reprobation
 - Does the New Testament Teach Predestination?
 - How Does the New Testament Present the Teaching of Election?
 - Correcting Misunderstandings of the Doctrine of Election
 - Objections to the Doctrine of Election
 - The Doctrine of Reprobation
 - Practical Application of the Doctrine of Election
- Chapter 33 – The Gospel Call and Effective Calling
 - Effective Calling
 - The Elements of the Gospel Call
 - The Importance of the Gospel Call

The Order of Salvation

1. **Election (God's choice of people to be saved)**
2. The Gospel Call (proclaiming the message of the gospel)
3. Regeneration (being born again)
4. Conversion (faith and repentance)
5. Justification (right legal standing)
6. Adoption (membership in God's family)
7. Sanctification (right conduct of life)
8. Perseverance (remaining a Christian)
9. Death (going to be with the Lord)
10. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

Definition of Terms

- **Election** – an act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure
- **Reprobation** – the sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins, and thereby to manifest His justice
- **Predestination** – both election and reprobation
- Don't use the term **double-predestination**
 - Reprobation and election are carried out in different ways
 - They demonstrate different aspects of God's character
 - Predestination already covers both terms

Does the New Testament Teach Predestination? (1)

- “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48)
- “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom He predestined He also called; and those whom He called He also justified; and those whom He justified He also glorified.” (Rom 8:28-30)
- “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 His call, she was told, ‘The elder will serve the younger.’ As it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’” (Rom 9:11-13)
- “Israel failed to obtain what it sought. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened” (Rom 11:7)
- “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. He destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace.” (Eph 1:4-6)

Does the New Testament Teach Predestination? (2)

- “We who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of His glory” (Eph 1:12)
- “For we know, brethren beloved by God, that He has chosen you; for our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (1 Thes 1:4-5)
- “We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth” (2 Thes 2:13)
- God is the one “who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of His own purpose and the grace which He gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago” (2 Tim 1:9)
- Peter writes “To God’s elect...scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Pet 1:1)
- Peter later calls them “a chosen race” (1 Pet 2:9)
- “And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has both been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain” (Rev 13:7-8)

How Does the New Testament Present the Teaching of Election to the Elect?

- A comfort
 - Paul’s comments in Romans say that God has always acted for the good of those whom He called to Himself (From 8:28-30)
 - And if that is true, then will He not also in our present circumstances do the same?
- A reason to praise God
 - “He destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace” (Eph 1:5-6)
 - “We give thanks to God always for you all...For we know, brethren beloved by God, that He has chosen you” (1 Thes 1:2,4)
 - “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved” (2 Thes 2:13)
- An encouragement to evangelism
 - “I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10)
 - It is as if someone invited you to go fishing and they say “I guarantee that you will catch some fish – they are hungry and waiting”

Correcting Misunderstandings of the Doctrine of Election

- Election is not fatalistic or mechanistic
 - Fatalism – a system in which human choices and human decisions do really not make any difference
 - Mechanism – an impersonal universe in which all things that happen have been inflexibly determined by an impersonal force long ago
 - The New Testament presents a picture of a personal God and personal creatures
 - God “destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:5)
 - “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from His way and live” (Ez 33:11)
 - We see willing choices by real people
 - Even if we cannot understand it, that doesn’t mean we can’t believe it or that it can’t be true

Election is Not Based on God's Foreknowledge of Our Faith (1)

- This line of thought concludes that all God does in predestination is to give confirmation to the decision He knows people will make on their own
 - “For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom 8:29)
- Arguments against
 - Foreknowledge of persons, not facts
 - The verse only says that God knew them, not that He knew some facts about them
 - Much like “But if one loved God, one is known by Him” (1 Cor 8:3)
 - Scripture never speaks as faith as the reason God chose us
 - “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 His call, she was told, ‘The elder will serve the younger.’ As it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’” (Rom 9:11-13)
 - God “saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of His own purpose and the grace which He gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago” (2 Tim 1:9)

Election is Not Based on God's Foreknowledge of Our Faith (2)

- Arguments against (cont.)
 - Election based on something good in us (our faith) would be the beginning of salvation by merit
 - If the ultimate determining factor is our choice, then we should deserve some credit for the fact that we were saved
 - “He destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace” (Eph 1:5-6)
 - Ultimately, what is the difference between those who believe and do not believe – human ability or the grace of God?
 - Predestination based on foreknowledge still does not give people a free choice (they now have to have faith)
- Conclusion – election is unconditional

Objections to the Doctrine of Election (1)

- Denominational impact
 - Supported by: Reformed, conservative Presbyterian, and some Lutherans, Episcopalians, Baptists, etc.
 - Rejected by Methodists, Catholics, and some Lutherans, Episcopalians, Baptists, etc.
- Election means that we do not have a choice in whether we accept Christ or not
 - God causes us to choose Christ voluntarily
 - The mistaken assumption underlying this objection is that a choice must be absolutely free to be a genuine human choice
- On this definition of election, our choices are not real choices
 - If God makes us in a certain way and then tells us that our voluntary choices are real and genuine choices, then we must agree that they are (pg 681)
 - God is the definition of what is real and genuine in the universe

Objections to the Doctrine of Election (2)

- The doctrine of election makes us puppets or robots – not real persons
 - God has created us and we must allow Him to define what genuine personhood is
 - We are real people created in God’s image, and God has allowed us to make genuine choices that have real effects on our lives
- The doctrine of election means that unbelievers never had a chance to believe
 - The Bible does not allow us to say that unbelievers had no chance to believe
 - “You refuse to come to Me that you may have life” (John 5:40)
 - Romans 1 makes it clear that they are “without excuse” for rejecting the revelation from God
 - People who remain in unbelief do so because they are unwilling to come to God, and the blame for such unbelief always lies with the unbelievers themselves, never with God (pg 681)

Objections to the Doctrine of Election (3)

- Election is unfair
 - We must remember that it would perfectly fair for God not to save anyone (remember the angels?)
 - If He does choose to save some at all, this is a demonstration of grace that goes far beyond the requirements of fairness and justice
 - “You will say to me [Paul] the, ‘Why does He still find fault? Who can resist His will?’” (Rom 9:19)
 - “But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, ‘Why have you made me thus?’ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use? What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, in order to make known the riches of His glory for the vessels of mercy, which He has prepared for glory, even us whom He has called, not for the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?” (Rom 9:20-24)
 - He is sovereign

Objections to the Doctrine of Election (4)

- The Bible says that God wills to save everyone
 - Support
 - God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4)
 - “The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Pet 3:9)
 - Answer
 - There is a difference between God’s revealed and hidden will
 - God’s revealed will (what we should do) is that all are saved
 - His hidden (eternal plans for what will happen) is that not all will
- There is agreement between the two views
 - God commands us in scripture what to do – repent and trust in Christ for salvation

The Doctrine of Reprobation (1)

- **Reprobation** – the sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins, and thereby to manifest His justice
 - Probably the most difficult of all the teachings of scripture for us to think about and accept
 - It is right that we feel dread in contemplating it
- Jude speaks of some persons “who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly persons who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 4)

The Doctrine of Reprobation (2)

- “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing My power in you, so that My name may be proclaimed in all the earth.’ So then He has mercy upon whomever He wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever He wills...What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction” (Rom 9:17-22)
- Peter says of those who reject the gospel, “they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do” (1 Pet 2:8)
- Jesus thanked God both for hiding the knowledge of salvation from some and for revealing it to others: “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was Your gracious will” (Matt 11:25-26)

The Doctrine of Reprobation (3)

- John Calvin called this doctrine “dreadful” (fearful, or awe-inspiring)
- We must remember that there are important differences between election and reprobation
 - Election is viewed as a cause for rejoicing and praise
 - God actively chooses us
 - Reprobation is viewed as something that brings God sorrow
 - The blame for the condemnation is always put on the people or angels who rebel
 - “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ez 33:11)

Practical Application of the Doctrine of Reprobation

- I am a Christian simply because God in eternity past decided to set His love on me
- Humility – it is by God's grace alone that we are saved

The Order of Salvation

1. Election (God's choice of people to be saved)
2. **The Gospel Call (proclaiming the message of the gospel)**
3. Regeneration (being born again)
4. Conversion (faith and repentance)
5. Justification (right legal standing)
6. Adoption (membership in God's family)
7. Sanctification (right conduct of life)
8. Perseverance (remaining a Christian)
9. Death (going to be with the Lord)
10. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

The Gospel Call and Effective Calling

- Effective calling is an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which He summons people to Himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith
- The preaching comes through humans
 - “To this He called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thes 2:14)
- Not everyone responds to a general gospel call
 - Those who receive an “effective call” do so through a work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts
 - In these occasions, a kind of “summons” from the king of the universe is received and is always effective
 - “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor 1:9)
 - This response is a voluntary, willing choice

Elements of the Gospel Call (1)

1. Explanation of the facts concerning salvation
 1. All people have sinned (Rom 3:23)
 2. The penalty for our sin is death (Rom 6:23)
 3. Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins (Rom 5:8)
 - Note – simply understanding and agreeing with these facts is not enough
2. Invitation to respond to Christ personally in repentance in faith
 - “Come to me...and I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28)
 - This is just as true today as it was then – a genuine personal invitation
 - Any genuine gospel proclamation must include an invitation to make a conscious decision to forsake one’s sins and come to Christ in faith, asking Christ for forgiveness of sins (pg 695)

Elements of the Gospel Call (2)

3. A promise of forgiveness and eternal life
 - “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16)
 - “Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19)
 - Coupled with the promise of forgiveness and eternal life should be an assurance that Christ will accept all who come to Him in sincere repentance and faith seeking salvation (pg 695)

The Importance of the Gospel Call

- “How are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?” (Rom 10:14)
- He speaks to our wills by asking us to hear His invitation and respond willingly in repentance and faith – to decide to turn from our sins and receive Christ as Savior and rest our hearts in Him for salvation

Reading For Next Week

- Chapter 34
 - Regeneration
 - Homework – questions 1,3,5
- Chapter 35
 - Conversion (Faith and Repentance)
 - Homework – questions 1,3,6
- Chapter 36
 - Justification (Right Legal Standing Before God)
 - Homework – questions 1,3,4