

Before the Foundations of the World

“...He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him...” (Ephesians 1:4, ESV)

1. Before the foundations of the world tells us that there are **foundations somewhere** and before they were created **God chose us in Christ**.

2. God asked **Job where he was** when He laid the foundations of the earth.

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, ” (Job 38:4–6, ESV)

3. We see in scripture that there are both **people and angels** who were chosen before the foundation of the world and they are called **the elect**.

“And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. ” (Mark 13:20, ESV)

“And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. ” (Matthew 24:31, ESV)

“And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ” (Luke 18:7, ESV)

“Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ” (Romans 8:33, ESV)

“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. What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, ” (Romans 11:5–7, ESV)

“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. ” (1 Timothy 5:21, ESV)

We may define the doctrine of election as follows:

“Election is 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.”

4. When the Scriptures say “He chose us in Him” it is saying that God **picked out**, He **chose for Himself** a people for Himself for His own glory.

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ” (Ephesians 1:11–12, ESV)

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"We have an idolatrous preoccupation with ourselves. The polls tell us that 76% of evangelicals believe that man is basically good by nature, and that 86% believe that the gospel is mostly about God helping us to help ourselves." --James Montgomery Boice

5. Paul records the fact that we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God which He **decreed before the ages** for our glory.

To decree means to give an official order, a judgement or decision, something decided.

“But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ” (1 Corinthians 2:7, ESV)

6. God promised this **before the ages began**.

“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior; ”
(Titus 1:1–3, ESV)

7. God **saved** us and **called** us and gave us a **holy calling** before the ages began.

“who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ” (2 Timothy 1:9, ESV)

8. The **Books of Life** were written before the foundation of the world.

“and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. ” (Revelation 13:8, ESV)

“The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. ” (Revelation 17:8, ESV)

9. God the Son was **foreknown or for-loved** before the foundation of the world.

“**He was foreknown before the foundation of the world** but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. ” (1 Peter 1:20–21, ESV)

10. We will **inherit a kingdom** prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ ”
(Matthew 25:34, ESV)

You cannot diminish, you cannot increase the number, why preach the gospel? Now, I thought my friend Mr. Bloomfield anticipated this difficulty well enough. There must be a harvest,—why sow, why plough? Simply because the harvest is ordained to save some.

I wish that any sinner who is troubled about election, for instance, would wait till God tells him he is not elected, or, if he has any misgiving about whether he may come to Christ, he would wait till he finds a passage which tells him that he may not come.

Man is made out to be a poor, weak creature, victimised by a law too rigid for his frailty. It is represented that he has a right to mercy, and a great uproar is made if we deny him any such right; and much anger is felt if we declare that mercy is the sovereign prerogative of God, and may be exercised at his own absolute discretion. Rebellion against divine election is often founded on the idea that the sinner has a sort of right to be saved, and this is to deny the full desert of sin.

The other day when we preached the electing love of God, you grumbled and muttered that God was unjust to choose one rather than another. What did this mean? Did it not mean that you felt you had some claim upon God?

There is no more humbling doctrine in Scripture than that of election, none more promoting of gratitude, and, consequently, none more sanctifying. Believers should not be afraid of it, but adoringly rejoice in it. - CHS

To me, it is one of the sweetest and most blessed truths in the whole of Revelation; and those who are afraid of it are so because they do not understand it. If they could but know that the Lord had chosen them, it would make their hearts to dance for joy. – CHS

Stagger not at electing love; it is one of the highest notes of heavenly music. - CHS

However much this may be disputed, as it frequently is, you must first deny the authenticity and full inspiration of the Holy Scripture before you can legitimately and truly deny it. - CHS

I believe the man who is not willing to submit to the electing love and sovereign grace of God, has great reason to question whether he is a Christian at all, for the spirit that kicks against that is the spirit of the devil, and the spirit of the unhumbled, unrenewed heart. - CHS

Answer me, ye that deny God's sovereignty, and hate his election—how is it that angels are condemned to everlasting fire, while to you, the children of Adam, the gospel of Christ is freely preached? The only answer that can possibly be given is this: God wills to do it. - CHS

Our Arminian antagonists always leave the fallen angels out of the question: for it is not convenient to them to recollect this ancient instance of Election. They call it unjust, that God should choose one man and not another. By what reasoning can this be unjust when they will admit that it was righteous enough in God to choose one race—the race of men, and leave another race—the race of angels, to be sunk into misery on account of sin. - CHS

To this day, men cannot bear that doctrine. Free will suits them very well, but free grace does not. They would not let Christ choose his own wife; I say it with the utmost reverence. - CHS

A controversialist once said, "If I thought God had a chosen people, I should not preach." That is the very reason why I do preach. What would make him inactive is the mainspring of my earnestness. If the Lord had not a people to be saved, I should have little to cheer me in the ministry.

I believe that God will save his own elect, and I also believe that, if I do not preach the gospel, the blood of men will be laid at my door.

"But some truths ought to be kept back from the people," you will say, "lest they should make an ill use thereof." That is Popish doctrine, it was upon that very theory that the priests kept back the Bible from the people, they did not give it to them lest they should misuse it. "But are not some doctrines dangerous?" Not if they are true and rightly handled. Truth is never dangerous, it is error and reticence that are fraught with peril. "But do not men abuse the doctrines of grace?" I grant you that they do; but if we destroyed everything that men misuse, we should have nothing left.