

# Saved By Grace V – Election, Free Will, Fairness, and Evangelism

**Introduction** – This doctrine of God’s unconditional election always raises questions. Many of these questions surround whether I am a Christian because I...., or because God....

**Free Will and Election** – Some would claim that if God predestined all things, including the elect, that we have denied free will. This does not necessarily follow, as the scriptures make clear. Sure you have free will – but understand what you are saying.

**Doing What We Want** (Matt 17:12) – God created mankind with the natural liberty to freely choose according to his or her strongest desires. The fact is, a man cannot help but choose his strongest desire as his choice. You always choose what you prefer the most at that time.

**God’s Sovereignty in Our Choice** (Acts 4:27-28) – When the Jews and Gentiles together put to death the Son of God, they freely chose to do so only because God had determined beforehand that they would. God’s sovereignty and our free agency are both affirmed.

**Free Will And Your Nature** (Matt 7:17-20) – Can a good tree bear bad fruit? The will does not determine the contents of the heart. The contents of the heart determine the choices of the will. Men always choose the strongest desire of their heart. This is the nature of free will. A man who does not choose what he ultimately wants has no will. He is insane. This means that unless God has mercy upon sinners, they will continue to bear fruit according to their nature. This was Jesus’ point in John 8:43-44.

**So When Did I Decide?** (John 3:1-8) – We cannot decide to be born again any more than we can decide to be born. We can’t because this is the work of the Spirit who, like the wind, blows wherever He wishes. Jesus tells Nicodemus that He must be born again, He does not command Nicodemus to make himself born again. In my natural state, I will not choose God because I never will want to choose God (1 Cor 2:14, Rom 8:7, Eph 2:5). One must be born again in order to desire to repent and believe. And this is the glory of the gospel – “*This is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us*” (1 John 4:10). Paul announced that salvation is “*not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*” (Rom 9:16).

**Election and the Fairness of God** – God has predestined everything that comes to pass. God has created man with a will which now acts according to its fallen nature. God ordained the fall and teaches us that unless He changes our hearts, we will not believe on Him. Isn’t it God’s fault, then, if someone doesn’t believe?

**Common Ground With Paul** (Rom 9:14-24) – The first thing to notice is that these are exactly the objections Paul encountered as he preached on election. “Is there unrighteousness with God?”. Paul responds with a rebuke and then a reason.

**The Rebuke** (9:19-21) – To question God on such grounds shows how highly think of ourselves (Rom 12:3). Who are we to question God? And based on who’s standard would we judge the Judge of all things? God is righteousness. He defines righteousness, He is not judged by it. We are pots that need to put a lid on it.

**The Reason** (9:22-24) – The created order exists for the glory of God. God does not exist for us. Everything He has ordered is to declare the glory of Himself – all of His attributes. Let God be God and man be man. His decree is not unfair because He owes us nothing. God is not in heaven wringing His hands, wishing against hope that He could bring us to Himself but knowing He can’t for fear of not acting the gentleman. He is ordering all things to display His glory in His wrath and judgment upon sin and rebellion as well as the glory of His grace and mercy to undeserving sinners.

**Evangelism and Election** – The doctrine of election raises questions about why we should evangelize and how we should evangelize.

**The Predestined Means** (Acts 13:48, Rom 10:14-17) – Are you tempted to be less concerned about evangelism and missions if God has already determined who the elect are? Obviously, Jesus expected quite differently of us (Matt 28:18-20), as did Paul (2 Tim 2:10). It has been rightly stated before: Not only has God predestined the ends; He has also predestined the means. Continuing in his argument, Paul states that hearing will be granted by the power of the Holy Spirit in the faithful preaching of the Word.

**How Then Should We Preach?** (2 Cor 14:17) – If we believe in the exhaustive sovereignty of God, we will not be afraid of preaching the truth, even when we know that it will be an aroma of death to those who are lost. Our confidence will rest upon the promise of God that it will be an effective aroma of life to those who are being saved. Some suggest that these doctrines will drive sinners to despair. But that is the point – we must despair of our own efforts and cry out for the mercy of God.

**Conclusion** – Election does not exclude anybody from heaven who wants in. Election brings sinners into the kingdom who would choose otherwise to remain under God’s wrath forever. Election does not mean that God’s power is creating robots to follow Him, but that God’s love is granting life to the dead, and turning His enemies into His friends. Salvation is “*not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*”