

THE DIVINE PROGRAM GROUP OF PRINCIPLES

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These theological principles may be grouped together because they each arise out of the interpretation of the purposes of God as revealed in Scripture. The principles all assume the practice of allowing the whole of God's revealed purpose to affect the interpretation of the parts of His revelation. Thus in using these principles, the interpreter will be causing the interpreted whole to affect the interpretation of its individual parts. The student should note that Chapter 15 is not a principle of interpretation but rather a redefinition of the Dispensations as they relate to the Chronometrical Principle.

Chapter 11

THE ELECTION PRINCIPLE

I. DEFINITION

That principle by which the interpretation of any verse or group of verses is determined by considering its relation to the election involved in the purposes of God.

II. AMPLIFICATION

A. Definition of Election: According to Webster's Dictionary, the word "election" means "to choose out; a choosing or choice." In theology it refers to the selection of, or giving preference to, certain persons or nations relative to the purposes of God pertaining to time or eternity. The following is a consideration of the relevant Hebrew and Greek words:

Old Testament Hebrew:

BACHIYR

= "to select, choose, the person chosen"

Translated:

choose II Samuel 21:6

chosen one I Chronicles 16:13; Psalms 89:3; 105:6, 43; 106:5, 23; Isaiah 43:20; 65:15.

elect Isaiah 42:1; 45:4; 65:9, 22.

New Testament Greek:

EKLOGE

= "selection, choice, the act of picking out, the person chosen"

Translated:

chosen Acts 9:15

election Romans 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28; I Thessalonians 1:4; II Peter 1:10.

EKLECTOS

= "picked out, chosen (by God)"

Translated:

chosen Matthew 20:16; 22:14; Luke 23:35; Romans 16:13; I Peter 2:4, 9; Revelation 17:14.

elect Matthew 24:22, 24, 31; Mark 13:29, 22, 27; Luke 18:7; Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; I Timothy 5:21; II Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1; I Peter 1:2; 2:6; II John 1:13.

The word "election" in its simplest meaning refers to the intention, process and result of making a choice. It refers to an act of the will, but more specifically in the Scriptures refers to an act of the Divine Will.

B. Distinctions in Election: There are two major aspects of God's election that must be distinguished:

1. **Election of Time:** This refers to God's choosing of individuals or nations to fulfill His purposes in relation to time. It pertains to a temporal purpose, whether positive or negative. Such was the case with Pharaoh, Moses, Cyrus, Paul, Israel, Assyria and Babylon.
2. **Election of Eternity:** This refers to the destiny of all freewill moral agents in relation to eternity.

C. Election in Redemption: In relation to the plan of redemption, election may be defined as the sovereign act of God in grace whereby He chose in Christ Jesus all those whom He foreknew would accept Him.

1. Election is a *sovereign act of God*, whereby certain are chosen among mankind for Himself (John 15:19). (God was under no obligation to elect anyone, since all had lost their standing before Him.)
2. Election is wholly of *grace*, apart from human merit (Romans 9:11; 11:5, 6). He chose those who were utterly unworthy of salvation. Man deserved the exact opposite; but in His grace God chose to save some.
3. Election is only applicable to those who are "in Christ." God could not choose man in himself because of his sinfulness and ill-deserving state; God could only choose man in the merits of another.
4. Election is according to and soundly *based on God's foreknowledge* (I Peter 1:1, 2). God chose only those whom He foreknew would accept Christ.

D. Election in Revelation: God, being the virtual author of Scripture, was able to reveal His elective purposes in the unfolding drama of creation and redemption throughout the Book He was writing. Though the Bible had various human writers, there was but one Divine Author, moving behind the scenes to guide and direct the inclusion of content relative to election in this Book of Books.

Thus, the literary method of *elective revelation* used in writing Scripture gives rise to the *election* principle of interpreting Scripture.

III. QUALIFICATION

A. The first step in using this principle is to determine whether the verse or passage under consideration has any relationship to God's elective purposes. This principle will not necessarily aid in the interpretation of every verse of Scripture, rather applies only where the truth of election is involved.

B. The distinction between the election of time and the election of eternity must be constantly kept in mind.

C. The election principle is vitally linked to the covenantal principle and should therefore be used in conjunction with it, whether relative to time or eternity.

D. A balanced concept of the doctrine of election is absolutely essential to the effective use of this principle.

IV. DEMONSTRATION

Malachi 1:2, 3 — "... Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau,..."

The subject of this verse is God's hatred for Esau and His love for Jacob. The problems presented by this verse can only be solved by viewing it in the light of God's purposes in election. In Genesis 25:19-34, we have the account of these twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca. Even before their birth God spoke to Rebecca concerning these two sons, saying, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." This shows God's preference and choice of Jacob above Esau before their birth, even though Esau was born first. The characteristics manifested in Esau and Jacob and the subsequent history of the nations proceeding from them only serve to confirm God's choice.

The New Testament offers more specific aid in helping us to understand this Divine choice. In Romans 9:6-24 Paul writes concerning Esau and Jacob, quoting from Malachi: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the *purpose* of God according to *election* might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." The reason for God's election of Jacob for His purpose, and His rejection of Esau, is to be found in His sovereign will, grace and foreknowledge. God could love Jacob and hate Esau before their birth because He foreknew their characters and the history of their nations.