

The Church of the Servant King

Soteriology Series

SO_6_Predestination & Election – Part 9 – Important Vocabulary

As we begin a study of the doctrine of predestination and election and an analysis of related issues and topics, we need to define some vocabulary that will be used throughout the remainder of this series. This lesson will not exhaust the extent of vocabulary terms and additional terminology will be introduced as we progress in this study; however this study will provide an introduction to some basic terminology related to this topic that may be unfamiliar to those who have not studied this topic previously. Also, it is important to note that the definitions of some of these terms will vary greatly depending upon the paradigm of the person defining the term. The definitions I will provide are based upon the paradigm that I have developed and will be presenting on this topic.

TULIP – an acronym representing the five points of Calvinism. We shall study these in greater detail in a future lesson. They are:

- T – Total depravity
- U – Unconditional Election
- L – Limited Atonement
- I – Irresistible Grace
- P – Perseverance of the Saints

Election – as applied to the believer of the Church Age, election is God's sovereign choice in eternity past to place into the Body of Christ all those who place their trust in His Son for eternal life based upon His foreknowledge of who would believe.¹ (Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13) There is also an election of Israel as a chosen nation; however for now, our focus is upon the Church Age.

Foreknowledge – that aspect of the omniscience of God that focuses upon the *actual* as it applies to the believer. In other words, an omniscient God knows both the *actual* and the *possible*. Foreknowledge is a term to describe God's knowledge of the *actual*. It is not to be confused with *election*.² (2 Pe 3:17 cf. Acts 2:23; Ro 8:29-30; 11:2; 1 Pe 1:1, 2, 18-20)

Predestination – God's sovereign choice to include within His decree from eternity past that Church Age believers will be conformed to the image of Christ.³ (Rom 8:29-30)

Reprobation – a term used primarily by moderate Calvinists to describe God's action in regard to the unbeliever in contrast to election in regard to the believer. God passes by the unbeliever and leaves the unbeliever in a state of condemnation. Passages such as Isaiah 6:9-10 and Romans

¹ Note the difference between this definition and the following definition – “That aspect of the eternal purpose of God whereby he certainly and eternally determines by means of unconditional and loving choice who will believe. This is not merely the intention of God to save all who may believe; rather, it determines who will believe.” H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 91.

² See Norman Geisler, *Chosen, But Free* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1999), 70 for an extended analysis of this point. Also, contrast with the following definition – “The selective knowledge of God that makes one an object of God's love; it is more than mere knowledge or cognition beforehand. The term focuses on God's motivation to act, relating to person s rather than what the persons will or will not do” found in H. Wayne House, *Charts*, 91.

³ Please note all the things that this definition does not include, e.g. a predetermination of who will be saved and who will not be saved.

11:7 are cited in an attempt to support this term and concept. Similar terms include *preterition* (God passing over the non-elect, allowing them to continue in sin to their destruction) and *retribution* (a predestination of the unbeliever to condemnation).

General Calling – a term used by the Calvinist to describe the call of the Gospel through its proclamation. It does not always result in salvation (Matt 22:14; 11:28; John 3:16-18).

Effectual Calling – a term used by the Calvinist to describe the application of the word to the elect. It always results in salvation because the Holy Spirit does this work in the elect. (Ro 8:28-29; 1 Co 1:1, 2, 9, 24).

The Decree of God – God's sovereign plan that includes the existence of man's free will, the provision of a plan for salvation, and the election of believers to be conformed to the image of His Son. Theologians usually break the decree of God into five decrees: the decree to create, the decree to permit sin, the decree to provide salvation, the decree to elect, and some refer to the decree to reprobate.⁴ (Job 22:28; Ps 2:7; 148:6; 1 Co 7:37)

Limited Atonement – the view that Christ died only for the elect – the L in TULIP. This position is held by the strong Calvinist and is based upon an interpretation of such passages as John 6:29, 37, 44; 10:27-29 and others. The problem is that the Bible never says that Christ died only for the elect.

Unlimited Atonement – the view that Christ died for all, including the unbeliever. (2 Pe 2:1; 1 Jn 2:2; 2 Co 5:19; Isa 53:6; Jn 1:29; 3:16-18 and others).

⁴ Charles Baker, *A Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Grace Publications, 1994), 161.