

The Church of the Servant King
Soteriology Series

SO_6_Predestination & Election – Part 13 – A Recap and Review

Introduction

Prior to moving forward in this series and studying the doctrine of predestination and the divine decree, I thought it would be helpful to spend one lesson in recapping that which we have previously studied. Hopefully, this will serve the purpose of solidifying our grasp on the major people affecting the historical development of this doctrine as well as our understanding of the reasons for some of the divisions in the universal body of believers known as the church.

Recap of Historical Development

I thought it best to incorporate the following chart to list some (but not all) of the more significant people and movements that we've reviewed in our study of this subject to date.

Century	Augustinian	Semi-Pelagian	Pelagian	Peripheral People & Movements
4th & 5th Church sympathetic to Augustine views	Augustine (354-430) – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original sin & the consequent corruption of the very nature of man Man morally dead – incapable of producing “the good” (i.e. satisfaction of God’s righteousness) Irresistible grace (i.e. unconditional election) Salvation & predestination – God’s choice to give grace to some 	John Cassian (360-435) & Massilians – Salvation & predestination – salvation, a combination of works and grace – notions of gracious ability. Rejected Augustinian notions of irresistible grace and believed predestination based upon foreknowledge.	Pelagius (360-420) – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adam – bad example; man still good Man morally healthy – man capable of producing “the good” All free to believe Predestination & salvation – God’s foreknowledge of who would do “the good” (i.e. satisfy God’s righteousness) 	Council of Ephesus (431) – condemned Pelagianism
6th Move toward semi-Pelagianism		Gregory the Great (540-604) – Romish theology – semi-Pelagian influenced ideas of penance and progressive satisfaction for sin		Synod of Orange (529) – condemned semi-Pelagianism – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The semi-Pelagian idea that salvation begins with man’s initiative (i.e. human good works) was rejected The emphasis of the Synod came to be placed upon the grace given at baptism (i.e. a sacramental grace) instead of Augustinian notions of the irresistible grace of predestination A cooperative salvation from an Augustinian perspective was

				advocated, e.g. salvation originates with God in that God provides the grace to cause prayer to be offered for salvation and God does not wait upon our wills, but prepares our wills.
9th Attempts made to move toward an Augustinian position	Gottschalk (804-869) – stressed the doctrine of predestination to the neglect of other doctrines; double predestination; carried Augustine's doctrine to its extreme logical conclusions			Hinkmar, Archbishop of Rheims – persecutes Gottschalk; believes predestination is a result of the foreknowledge of God
11th thru 13th Continued dominance of semi-Pelagian thought with attempts at Augustinian ideas	Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) – not focused on predestination and election so much as original sin and grace; differed from Augustine on the issue of grace in that he did not believe in a concept of irresistible grace. Also, he believed that natural man has freedom, but not to choose "the good", i.e. divine assistance was needed.			
	Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) – prevenient grace vs. co-operating grace; as a variation of Augustine's view of irresistible grace, Aquinas made a distinction between prevenient grace which renews the will of man and a subsequent, co-operating grace [Phase II grace] that assists in the operational aspects of life. The former grace, he termed sufficient and the latter efficient grace; a "confused medley on opposites" – first of all the infusion of grace, then the turning of the free will to God, next the turning of the free will against sin, and, finally, the remission of guilt			
14th Early Attempts at Reform				John Wycliffe (1328-1384) – visible church not needed for salvation; Lollards – itinerant preachers

<p>15th External influences, i.e. the Renaissance; importance of human development to its fullest potential was emphasized. Individuals could have a relationship with God on their own apart from the priest</p>				<p>Gutenberg Printing Press (ca. 1450)</p> <p>Erasmus (1466-1517) - against corruption in the church and he caused people to question the established church; faith seemed to be more in education and moral improvement than in Christ as the only means of satisfying God's righteousness.</p>
<p>16th The Reformation – a shift from Semi-Pelagian thought to Augustinian thought</p>	<p>Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) - Zwingli was even more forceful than Calvin in his insistence upon reprobation as a part of the divine decree</p>			<p>Philip Melancthon (1497-1560) – wrote the Augsburg confession – the official statement of the Lutheran position; began to ascribe certain measure of freedom to the will.</p>
	<p>Martin Luther (d. 1546) – believed in a double predestination; however, at times he manifested an inclination to deny the doctrine of reprobation (i.e. predestination of the unsaved) and to make predestination dependent upon God's foreknowledge; wrote <i>The Bondage of the Will</i> (1525) in response to Erasmus' <i>The Freedom of the Will</i> (1524); used passages such as Romans 9:6-18 to support his position.</p>			
	<p>John Calvin (1509 – 1564) – Calvin, too, believed in double predestination although he approached the issue more cautiously;</p>			<p>Johann von Staupitz vs. Ockhamists – Staupitz influenced Calvin; Ockhamists believed in foreknowledge</p>
	<p>Theodore Beza (1519-1605) – protégé of Calvin; representative of the Protestants in France – Huguenots</p>			<p>Felix Manz & Conrad Grebel (1498-1526) – desired greater separation from the Roman Catholic Church; led Anabaptist movement</p>

16 th (Cont'd)			Socinianism – led by Faustus (1525-62) and Laelius Socinus (b. 1539) – represented a revival of the Pelagian heresy; viewed man as in a neutral state vs. a depraved condition at birth; if man was capable of producing “the good” on his own, there was no need for a “limited atonement,” an “unconditional election,” or an “irresistible grace.”	
16 th – 17 th Post Reformation		Arminianism – led by Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) – views ultimately expressed via John Wesley – founder of Methodism		
	Synod of Dort (1618) – ecumenical council held in Holland; Arminians were defendants; adopted Calvinistic positions			
18 th Post Reformation		John Wesley (1703-1791)		
	Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) – leader in the Great Awakening			
19 th – 20 th	Karl Barth (1886-1968) – modified view of election			

In summary, the Church initially rejected Pelagianism (man’s total ability). During the Medieval era leading to the Reformation period, the church progressively slipped into semi-Pelagianism (man’s ability aided by God’s grace). The importance of these facts in regard to the doctrine of predestination and election is related to one’s view of man’s free will in the issue of salvation. While a few voices arose that focused upon God’s foreknowledge, the Reformation was dominated by those influenced by Augustinian thought, therefore the focus was upon God’s sovereignty and man’s total depravity and inability. Augustinian and Calvinistic thought has been the predominant influence upon this subject since the Reformation.

The Situation Today

Over time, the protestant groups that emerged would fall into two major categories when considered in view of the subject of predestination. One category is known as Reformed and the other category I would term the Free Grace category. There is probably a wide divergence of views within each category in regard to other doctrines; however, generally speaking, the Reformed category includes those who adhere to a Calvinist position on this subject, whereas the Free Grace category includes those who are either moderate Calvinists or who have adopted an

intermediate position between the Calvinist and the Arminian.¹ Generally speaking, the Reformed category adheres to a system of biblical interpretation that is more consistent with Covenant theology; whereas the Free Grace position adheres to a position that is more consistent with a dispensational approach. What makes all of this very confusing is that on any particular point, you might find a theologian or pastor in either category who applies his system of interpretation inconsistently. The result is that some of a dispensational, Free Grace orientation might inadvertently (or overtly) promote elements of the Reformed position and vice versa.

The Necessity for Balance

I believe that the answer to the paradox that exists in Scripture between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man rests in a synthesis of a Biblical understanding of the Angelic Conflict and God's essence. We've reviewed both of these categories of truth at length in the past; however, in the way of a brief recap, allow me to make the following points:

- Any answer to the paradox of man's free will vs. the sovereignty of God needs to be properly balanced by an understanding of God's sovereignty and His omniscience.
- Any answer to the paradox of man's free will vs. the sovereignty of God needs to properly balance the need for man's free will within the context of the Angelic Conflict and God's sovereign purpose in human history.

Some Important Vocabulary

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

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)

¹ Jacobus Arminius was a Dutch Reformed pastor and theologian who considerably modified the theological position in which he had been trained, i.e. that of Calvin and Calvin's successor, Theodore Beza. In 1587, Arminius was asked to defend Beza's doctrine of predestination in view of a pamphlet that was circulating against it. However, after studying the matter further, he developed views more akin to the positions he initially desired to refute. We will eventually study in greater depth the views of each major figure in Church history that has contributed to this subject; however, for now, Arminius related election to God's omniscience foreseeing who would choose to believe; whereas the Reformed position relates election to God's sovereign choice. While the view of election and predestination that I will present tends to align more with Arminius' view on this particular point, we'll eventually see where the view that I present adopts what I believe to be the best points from both positions and attempts to discard those points that don't synthesize with other doctrines.

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.

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 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. The more correct term (as we’ve previously studied) is the term “expiation” when referring to what Christ accomplished on the Cross in regard to sin.

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).

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.⁵ (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.

What Election of the Church Age Believer Is –

- Election is for believers only.
- A synonym for “election” is the term “chosen” or “called”
- Believers are elected “in Him [Christ]” – Ephesians 1:4

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.

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

⁵ 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.

- Election is declared as a result of God's foreknowledge (1 Pe 1:1-2 cf. Ro 8:28-29)
- Election is related to predestination. God's decision to include within His decree from eternity past that Church Age believers be conformed to the image of Christ (Ro 8:29-30), i.e. predestination, required the *election* of those who would believe as a component of the decree of God.
- We will fulfill the potential to which we were elected either in time (Phase 2) or eternity (Phase 3). See Romans 8:28-29 cf. 1 Peter 1:2.
- Election occurred in eternity past.
- The election of believers of the Church Age is consistent with the purposes of God in human history to include the free will of man in the resolution of the Angelic Conflict.

What Election of the Church Age Believer Is Not –

- It is not arbitrary or capricious, but according to God's eternal purpose and foreknowledge (Ro 8:28-29; 9:11; Eph 1:4-11; 1 Pe 1:2).
- It is not an act to choose some to be lost or a decree of reprobation. It is to salvation, not to condemnation (1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13)
- It is not man's choosing of himself. It is God's choice of who will be saved, i.e. those who God foreknows will believe.
- Election is not based upon any merit in the man who is elected. Man merely accepts the gift of salvation by faith – a non-meritorious act.
- Election is not unconditional, i.e. God did not elect (choose) one person to be saved as a result of a sovereign decision regarding that individual alone. God in His sovereignty corporately elects those whom He foreknew would believe in His son (Eph 1:4). This does not diminish God's omniscient knowledge of each individual who would believe. Rather, it enhances our understanding of the purpose of God in human history.

Some Questions That Have Been Addressed

Question/Issue: If one believes that God foreknew from eternity past those who would believe and thereby made His decision to place those who so believed in the body of the elect, isn't that person contending that God's actions are made contingent upon the actions of man?

Response: No, I don't believe that is a true assessment. Probably every serious theologian of every view on this issue admits that the subject of election and predestination has a point beyond which the finite mind of man can comprehend no further. For instance, we can never know the infinite possibilities that God considered through His omniscience prior to deciding the content of the divine decree that includes election and predestination. An omniscient and sovereign God cannot be limited by man's choices or actions. However, He can choose to allow free will and incorporate the consequences of free will in His decree. Therefore, God's actions have not been made contingent upon the actions of man. To the contrary, God is large enough to consider every thought and action of man as well every alternative and consequence if any man makes a different choice than the choice he makes. God is not reacting to human history. Human history is merely the outworking of that which an omniscient and sovereign God foresaw and included within the divine decree.

Question/Issue: Your view of election seems to indicate that man can produce a work (i.e. faith or the will) worthy of God's approval.

Response: This statement definitely reflects an Augustinian/Calvinistic paradigm of thought that includes the idea that faith, unless imparted to man as a gift from God, is a production of the will of man, therefore it is a work. If one accepts the total depravity of man, then man can produce no "work" of the will that is worthy of the approval of God.

This question or objection is based upon a false assumption regarding the position I have presented. The false assumption is that I am contending that man produces a faith worthy of

merit, i.e. meritorious faith. Another way of stating it is that I am contending that man can produce the will to believe if he strives hard enough. To the contrary, I believe that man's faith is not meritorious, but only a response by the unbeliever whose mind has been illumined through the convicting (convincing) ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-10). The merit is in the object of the faith, Jesus Christ and His work on the Cross that satisfied the righteousness of God the Father. The work of Jesus Christ is the gift of God, not faith (Eph 2:8-9).⁶

In the way of summary, I believe that saving "faith" is synonymous with "belief" or "trust." Inherent in saving "faith" is repentance or change of mind. The unbeliever changes his mind regarding the sufficiency of his works to satisfy God's righteousness and places his "faith" or "trust" in the all-sufficient work of Christ on the Cross. Thus, saving "faith" is not a work or a striving of the will; saving "faith" is a volitional acknowledgement of the all-sufficiency of Christ's work. The flip side of the coin of saving "faith" in the all-sufficiency of Christ's work is the recognition of the insufficiency of any human work. This acknowledgement constitutes a repentance and by definition excludes saving "faith" from human works. Thus, saving "faith" is non-meritorious. I know of no better way to distinguish "faith" from works. I also know of no better way to avoid the slippery slope of arguing that faith is a gift from God which is Scripturally suspect and is used in an attempt to support the notion of *Limited Atonement* (i.e. the "L" in TULIP).

Question/Issue: Doesn't the fact that there is variety in all of God's creation (e.g. classifications among the angels, different races of mankind, variations of the estates into which men are born, etc.) indicate that election is a doctrine that hinges upon the sovereignty of God?⁷

Response: First, I am not denying, but affirming the sovereignty of God in election. Almost all agree that God is in sovereign control of human history. But that is similar to a politician saying he wants peace and prosperity so as to imply his opponent doesn't. The real issue is what does the statement really mean? What is the paradigm of thought that underlies such a statement? Does that paradigm have basis or is it fraught with difficulties and inherent contradictions? One must not misconstrue the sovereignty of God so that the only logical conclusion to which one is forced is that man is merely a pawn (even if the extreme Calvinist and perhaps even some moderate Calvinists vehemently deny that statement). The fact is that the logic of some Christians regarding the issue of God's sovereignty can only lead to that conclusion no matter how it may be denied.

Second, the issue of election of the believer (Church Age type) as I have defined that term has nothing to do with classifications among the angels, men being born of different races and circumstances and abilities, or any other such matter. These are matters separate from the doctrine of election and there are satisfactory answers outside the scope of this study for these issues. For instance, when human history is viewed objectively (verses with a subjective focus upon the individual) and is seen in view of the angelic conflict, one can see that the issue of differing circumstances in life is traceable to the Fall of man. None of us willfully participated in that decision of Adam; however, we all suffer the consequences. God did not create the world the way that sin has adversely impacted it. God does not create the circumstances of an individual. God only chooses to impart soul life to the genetically influenced biological lump of clay that we call a baby. That is not necessarily creation and it is definitely not election. It is merely the perpetuation of the consequences of the Fall under the permissive will of God the Father.

⁶ I have provided material during the course of this series that concludes that the gift of this passage is in fact salvation, not faith. We will examine this particular passage and issue in a future lesson in depth.

⁷ For example, see Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas Seminary Press: Dallas, Texas, 1948), Volume III, 165.

Third, God's choice of certain individuals (e.g. Abraham, Issac, Jacob, etc.) was not made without giving consideration to the manner in which they would respond to divine revelation. Omniscient God knew every decision those He so selected would make prior to their selection was actually implemented and executed in time. God's sovereign choice of certain individuals in the Old Testament (e.g. Abraham, Issac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, etc.) resulted from the unified function of His other attributes in the matter. For instance, God's sovereignty did not act apart from His omniscient knowledge of the manner in which these individuals would respond to their special purpose and calling. Many times, a person of the Augustinian/Calvinistic persuasion seem to imply that anyone holding a contrary position is either denying or diluting the sovereignty of God. To the contrary, the position that I am presenting not only affirms the sovereignty of God, but it also recognizes the unified function of God's other attributes.

Question/Issue: Your view of election seems to imply that God's election is conditional versus an unconditional provision.

Response: We need to make a distinction between conditions surrounding God's giving salvation (i.e. the unconditional provision) and man's receipt of salvation (i.e. the conditional acceptance based upon the exercise of man's volition). The question/issue as posed confuses the basis of election (i.e. conditional based upon God's foreknowledge of who would choose to receive the gift) with the unconditional provision of the gift (i.e. salvation).

We probably need to examine this issue a bit further by exploring the subject of *unconditional election* from the standpoint of the Calvinist definition. The second premise of extreme Calvinistic thought is captured by the phrase unconditional election, the "U" in TULIP. By this, the extreme Calvinist means that there are no conditions for God's electing some to salvation OR for God's giving it or for our receiving it.⁸ Let's examine some of the texts that the extreme Calvinist attempts to use to support their view.

Ephesians 1:5-11 – "Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, **according to the good pleasure of His will**, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of **His will, according to His good pleasure** which **He purposed** in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, **being predestined according to the purpose of Him** who works all things **according to the counsel of His will**."

Things to note: 1) There is an implicit emphasis upon the sovereignty of God; 2) there is an implicit view of the term "predestination" that equates "predestination" with sovereign choice or predetermination apart from man's volition or God's omniscience; 3) this passage needs to be synthesized with an understanding of God's omniscience, the purpose of human history, and other passages that clearly teach that man has free will; 4) this passage needs to be synthesized with the teaching provided by other passages such as Romans 8:29-30 which define predestination as a predetermination by God that believers be conformed to the image of Christ; 5) there needs to be a distinction between the gift of salvation which is unconditional and the receipt of salvation which is conditioned upon faith (i.e. "justified by faith" – Ro 5:1; "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" to be saved – Acts 16:31).

⁸ If one adopts this position, then it is easy to see that it is only a small logical step to conclude that the gift of Ephesians 2:8 is the gift of faith. When faith is a gift given unconditionally only to the elect, then faith is really not a condition for salvation at all. Thus, not only is salvation provided unconditionally, but the receipt of salvation is unconditional.

Romans 8:28-30 – And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the **called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover **whom He predestined, these He also called**; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Things to note: 1) The extreme Calvinist emphasizes the phrases that tend to support his view of God's sovereignty without a satisfactory synthesis with other concepts such as man's free will, God's omniscience, and God's purpose in human history (i.e. the Angelic Conflict); 2) most moderate Calvinists believe that God's decision to elect is unconditional from God's point of view (i.e. election is seen as unconditional, there is nothing outside of God that prompted Him to elect); 3) the question is not whether there are conditions surrounding the provision, but whether there are any conditions for the receipt; 4) the next verse (v. 29) as well as other passages (e.g. 1 Pe 1:2) indicate that the elect have been chosen *according to the foreknowledge* of God the Father thereby confirming the unconditional decision by God to elect; 5) the moderate Calvinist would indicate that election is not dependent upon foreknowledge (i.e. conditional), rather election is in accordance with foreknowledge (thereby unconditional)⁹; 6) foreknowledge does not equate to election.

Another moderate Calvinist view: I would propose the following view of *unconditional election*. God's decision to elect some to eternal salvation and make election a part of His eternal decree was not conditioned upon any outside factor. In that sense, election is unconditional. However, the basis for a man becoming one of the elect is conditioned upon the receipt of the gift of salvation through faith. This is where the extreme Calvinist and some moderate Calvinists part paths with others. Extreme Calvinists and some moderate Calvinists view faith as the gift, therefore election is not conditioned upon the faith of the recipient. This is rather bizarre logic to say the least.

1 Corinthians 1:27-29 – But **God has chosen** the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and **God has chosen** the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that **no flesh should glory in His presence**.

Things to note: 1) Neither this nor any other passage of Scripture affirms that faith is not a necessary condition for receiving God's gift of salvation; 2) to the contrary, many passages affirm that faith is a condition to receive the gift of salvation (e.g. Jn 3:16; Acts 16:31; Ro 5:1); 3) it is erroneous to conclude that faith or trust equates to a basis for boasting; 4) as a condition of salvation, faith is opposed to works and works are opposed to faith; 5) salvation is an unconditional gift provision from God even though receiving it is conditioned on an act of faith on our part.

John 15:16 – You did not choose me, but **I chose you** ...

Things to note: 1) The context favors this as a reference to the Twelve to be His disciples (and apostles to Israel), not God's choice of the elect to eternal salvation; 2) sometimes the word "chosen" is used to refer to those who are not of the elect, e.g. Judas was "chosen" by Jesus, but was not one of the elect (Jn 6:70 – Have I not chosen you, yet one of you is a devil).

⁹ Norman Geisler, *Chosen, But Free* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1999), 68.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 – But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God ***from the beginning chose you for salvation*** through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

Things to note: 1) There is no disagreement that the elect are chosen by God; 2) the extreme Calvinist neglects to note that the very verses that they quote declares that salvation comes to us through “belief in the truth.”