

true of the elect, whom we are told God 'foreknew' (Romans 8:29). That means He knew them—he loved them—before the foundation of the world."³⁰

Hosea 13:4-5: ⁴Yet I have been the LORD your God Since the land of Egypt; And **you were not to know any god except Me**, For there is no savior besides Me. ⁵**I cared for [Hebrew "yada" – to know] you** in the wilderness, In the land of drought.

Amos 3:2: You only have I **chosen [Hebrew "yada" – to know]** among all the families of the earth; Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Romans 11:2: God has not rejected His people **whom He foreknew**. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

In the first chapter of 1 Peter, believers are said to be "**chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. . .**" (vs. 1-2). Several verses later, Peter writes that Christ "**was foreknown before the foundation of the world**" (v. 20). In Acts 2:23 and 4:27-28, Peter speaks in a sermon and prays with a group of Christians. We know his words are inspired by God's Holy Spirit because they are included in Scripture. In these passages, he affirms that Christ's election as Savior and God's foreknowledge of His crucifixion occurred "**by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.**" Obviously, foreknowledge has a much fuller meaning here than simply prior knowledge of the events! Peter affirmed that God's foreknowledge of these events **resulted from His predetermined plan**, not from looking into the future to see what would happen. He **foreknew** these events because He chose, elected, and planned them. God's foreknowledge is a necessary result of His **decree and foreordination** of whatsoever comes to pass.

Acts 2:22-23: ²²Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—²³this Man, **delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God**, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Acts 4:27-28: ²⁷For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸**to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.**

Consider the following discussion of the Greek word for "foreknowledge" in Spiros Zodhiates' New Testament Word Study.

4267. prognôskœ; fut. prognôsomai, 2 d aor. proégnœn, from pró (4253), before, and ginôskœ (1097), to know. To perceive or recognize beforehand, know previously, take into account or specially consider beforehand, to grant prior acknowledgement or recognition to someone, to foreknow.

(I) Used of mere prescience, to know before (Acts 26:5; 2 Peter 3:17).

(II) **Used of God's eternal counsel it includes all that He has considered and purposed to do prior to human history.** In the language of Scripture, something foreknown is not simply that which God was aware of prior to a certain point. Rather, it is presented as that which God gave prior consent to, that which received His favorable or special recognition. Hence, **this term is reserved for those matters which God favorably, deliberately and freely chose and ordained.**

³⁰ John MacArthur *Grace to You Questions QA86* – "What does the bible teach about election"

(A) Used of persons, to foreknow with approbation, to fore-approve or make a previous choice of, as special people (Rom 8:29; 11:2).

(B) Used of events, to previously decide or plan, to foreknow for God is to foreordain 1 Peter 1:19,20 presents Christ as the “Lamb of God foreknown from the foundation of the world” (a.t.). He is said to be foreknown because God had planned and determined in His eternal counsel to provide His Son as a sacrifice for His people. Certainly more is meant than that God knew ahead of time that Christ would so come and die. God’s foreknowledge is given here as the cause for His Son’s sacrifice — because He planned and decreed it.

(C) In Rom 8:29, in relation to believers, *proginôskœ* occurs with the verb *proôrise*, aor. act. indic. of *proorizœ* (4309), **to predestinate. Foreknowledge and foreordination are logically coordinate.** The former emphasizes the exercise of God’s wisdom and intelligence in regard to His eternal purpose and the latter emphasizes the exercise of God’s will in regard to it. **What He has decreed is what He has decided.** This foreknowledge and foreordination in the Scripture are always unto salvation and not unto perdition. Therefore, it should be said that the Lord never foreordains someone to be lost. **Rather, He foreordains unto salvation those whom He specially considered and chose in eternity past (see Matt 7:23; John 10:14; Rom 11:2; 1 Cor 8:3; Gal 4:9; 2 Tim 2:19; Sept.: Hos 13:5; Amos 3:2).** Any thought of the lost being appointed or ordained unto condemnation should be understood as an act of passing over in which the lost are permitted to suffer the consequences of their choice of sin (1 Peter 2:8). **The salvation of every believer is known and determined in the mind of God before its realization in time. Thus, *proginôskœ* corresponds with the idea of having been chosen (*eklégomai* [1586], to choose) before the foundation of the world mentioned in Eph 1:4 and logically precedes the action indicated by *proorizœ*. *Proginôskœ* essentially entails a gracious self-determining on God’s part from eternity to extend fellowship with Himself to undeserving sinners (Rom 8:29).³¹**

Question #141: Explain in your own words how the Bible affirms that God’s *foreknowledge* is based on His predetermined plan, not on looking into the future to see what will happen. _____

Election is a major theme in God’s plan

Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines *election* as: “The gracious and free act of God by which He calls those who become part of His kingdom and special beneficiaries of His love and blessings. The Bible describes the concept of election in three distinct ways. Election sometimes refers to the election of Israel and the church as a people for special service and privileges. Election may also refer to the election of a specific individual to some office or to perform some special service. Still other passages of the Bible refer to the election of individuals

³¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG Publishers, 1991), 1215-1216.

to be children of God and heirs of eternal life.”³² We see from this definition that the doctrine of election is not confined to the New Testament; it characterizes God’s interaction with mankind throughout all of human history. Election describes God’s method of God for selecting specific individuals for specific purposes. Those purposes include the performance of *particular services* and the receipt of *particular privileges*.

Question #142: Based on the information in the preceding paragraph, write a simple definition of election that a young child would understand. _____

Consider the following **biblical examples of election**:

Noah was specifically chosen by God to build an ark in which he and his family would be saved from God’s coming destruction of the entire population of the earth. Noah’s faith in God’s Word was credited to him and his family for eternal salvation.

Hebrews 11:7: By faith **Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen**, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Abraham was specifically chosen by God from among the Gentiles in Chaldea to move to Canaan and become the ancestor of Christ. He became the father of the nation of Israel through which the Messiah would come.

Genesis 12:1-3: Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, **To the land which I will show you; ²And I will make you a great nation**, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”

Nehemiah 9:7: Thou art the LORD God, **Who chose Abram And brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees, And gave him the name Abraham.**

Joshua 24:2: And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, **Terah, the father of Abraham** and the father of Nahor, and **they served other gods.**””

Moses was specifically chosen by God to deliver Israel from cruel bondage in Egypt.

Exodus 3:10: Therefore, **come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh**, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.

Question #143: In what specific ways were Noah, Abraham, and Moses *elected* by God? _____

Israel was specifically chosen by God to witness His incomparable power displayed in mighty miracles that resulted in their release from Egyptian bondage. **Israel** was specifically chosen by God to be bound to Him in a covenant relationship rich in great privileges. **Israel** was specifically chosen by God to receive the Word of God, record it in the Old Testament Scriptures, and bring forth the prophesied Messiah.

³²Nelson’s *New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, gen. ed. Ronald F Youngblood (Nashville: Nelson, 1995), 389.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8: ⁶For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; **the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.** ⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Isaiah 41:8-9: ⁸But you, Israel, My servant, **Jacob whom I have chosen**, Descendant of Abraham My friend, ⁹**You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts, And said to you, “You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you.”**

Isaiah 44:1-4: But now listen, O Jacob, My servant; And **Israel, whom I have chosen:** ²Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, “Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And **you Jeshurun whom I have chosen.** ³For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; **I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring, And My blessing on your descendants;** ⁴And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.”

Consider how greatly Israel was blessed to be specifically chosen by God! They were appointed to:

- be the nation through whom the **Messiah** would come
- be the people through whom God would speak in the **Law and the Prophets**
- have a **personal relationship** with God as He led them by prophet, fire, and cloud
- be heirs of **salvation by grace through faith** in God’s promise to them
- have access to Him through the **Levitical Priesthood** and the prescribed service of worship
- have God’s **Shekinah glory** dwell in their midst
- eventually inherit **the promised land and God’s Kingdom** on earth

Romans 9:3-5: ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, ⁴who are Israelites, **to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,** ⁵**whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh,** who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen

Question #144: In what specific ways was Israel blessed by God’s election? _____

Question #145: Does Israel’s election for specific purposes and blessings necessarily mean that every Israelite was saved? _____ Explain your answer. _____

In addition to those listed above, Gideon, Samson, David, Solomon, and many others became the recipients of God’s special favor (His grace), **through no merit of their own.** They too were specifically chosen by God for His service and richly blessed by innumerable related benefits. This clearly discernable Old Testament pattern runs through the New Testament as well, firmly

supporting the cardinal doctrine of salvation by faith alone through grace alone. The New Testament clearly affirms that people come to Christ and are saved because they have been *elect*ed by God beforehand for this blessed privilege.

John 6:37, 44, 65: ³⁷All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. . . . ⁴⁴No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. . . . ⁶⁵And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that **no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**”

John 15:16: You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.

Ephesians 1:3-6: ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.** In love ⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Romans 8:29-30: ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and whom He predestined, these He also called, and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Romans 11:5-6: ⁵In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

2 Thessalonians 2:13: But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because **God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation** through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

Cornelius and his family were specifically chosen by God for salvation (Acts 10:1-44). In this passage, note how God worked in specific, unusual ways to save this God-fearing Roman centurion and his Gentile family:

- God used an angelic vision to instruct Cornelius to send for Peter, who was staying with the tanner named Simon (vs 1-8, 22).
- God prepared Peter for the arrival of Cornelius’ messengers by giving him a heavenly vision (vs 9-16).
- God instructed Peter to go to Cornelius (vs 17-33).
- Peter preached the Gospel to Cornelius, his relatives, and friends (vs 34-43).
- God sovereignly imparted the Holy Spirit to the whole crowd, to the amazement of the Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter (vs 44-48).

Saul of Tarsus was specifically chosen by God, not only for salvation, but also to be His Gospel messenger to the Gentile world. Saul’s salvation was particularly amazing because of his vicious hatred of the Church.

Acts 9:13-17: ¹³But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, **how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem;** ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name.” ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, “**Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;** ¹⁶for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

Galatians 1:13-17, 22-24: ¹³For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, **how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it;** ¹⁴and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries, being more

extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. ¹⁵But **when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,** I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. . . . ²²And I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; ²³but only, they kept hearing, "**He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.**" ²⁴**And they were glorifying God because of me.**

Lydia was specifically chosen by God to be saved.

Acts 16:14-15: ¹⁴And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and **the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.** ¹⁵And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

Christ's disciples were specifically chosen by God to be saved. Consider how the Bible describes their salvation.

John 15:16, 19: ¹⁶**You did not choose Me, but I chose you,** and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you. . . . ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, **but I chose you out of the world,** therefore the world hates you.

John 6:70: Jesus answered them, "**Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve,** and yet one of you is a devil?"

The New Testament refers repeatedly to the *election* of the church to salvation. The Greek word for *church* (*ekklesia*) means "to call out of."

1 Peter 2:9: But **you are a chosen race,** a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies **of Him who has called you out** of darkness into His marvelous light;

Mark 13:20: And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the **sake of the elect whom He chose,** He shortened the days.

Colossians 3:12: And so, as those who **have been chosen of God,** holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

Scripture plainly declares that God reserves the right to choose whomever He will for His own purposes.

Luke 1:30-31: ³⁰And the angel said to her, "**Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.**" ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus."

John 5:5-9: ⁵And **a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness.** ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, "**Do you wish to get well?**" ⁷The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." ⁸Jesus said to him, "Arise, take up your pallet, and walk." ⁹And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk.

Acts 10:40-41: ⁴⁰God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible, ⁴¹**not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God,** that is, to us, who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

Question #146: From the New Testament scriptures listed above, explain the role that God's election plays in the salvation of sinners. _____
