

1. **Introduction:** God's ultimate purpose in creating humans is clear in Rev 21:3.
2. **Revelation 21:3:** *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.'*
 - God's intent is to create a people for Himself with whom He will dwell. A person must be holy and righteous (Heb 12:14) to dwell in God's presence. The attitude and actions toward God and people of acceptable persons must be a moral image of Christ.
 - When God created Adam and Eve, He created them in His image, holy and righteous. As created, they had unconstrained "free will" making it possible to disobey God. Though they were holy and righteous, Satan convinced them to disobey God. They freely chose to eat fruit from the one tree in Eden that God had forbidden.
 - Consequences of their disobedience were immediate and devastating. They died spiritually, breaking their spiritual connection with God. They began to physically disintegrate leading eventually to mortal death. Now unholy, they could no longer live in the Garden in God's presence and were cast out.
 - Unconstrained "free will" was lost and the human will became a "slave to sin."
 - All consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience would be transmitted to all their progeny. To overcome those consequences would require God's intervention.
3. **Election:** Before the foundation of the world, God sovereignly chose individuals to be redeemed from the consequences of disobedience. His "choosing" is called election.
 - Recognizing the need for election before He created people, implies God knew Adam and Eve (the first humans created), would disobey Him and suffer dreadful consequences.
 - What problem is election intended to solve? Since Adam and Eve's fall, no human in their own power and of their own inclination seeks God. Romans' 3:23 says, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*
 - Unless God intervened and made it possible for fallen people to become "like Christ", there could be no holy and righteous people to live in God's presence. Had God's intention to create a holy people to live with Him been thwarted?
 - Sovereign election answers that question with "no." There will be certainly be holy and righteous people to dwell with God in eternity, people chosen and redeemed by God.
4. **Ephesians 1:3-4:** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*
 - Though no one deserves to be saved from the consequences of their sin, God graciously chooses to redeem some. Why does He choose some but not others?
 - We don't know. But we can be sure there is a holy and righteous reason.
 - We rightfully strive to understand God's election of some, but it seems no mortal human will ever fully understand it. **Deuteronomy 29:29** says, *"The secret things belong to the*

Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

- To live in eternity in the presence of God, people must be redeemed from the condemnation due their sins and made holy. Only God can do that. Election assures there will be some redeemed.
 - Since God chose to redeem some but not all, who decides who will be redeemed?
 - God need not have redeemed anyone. In Noah’s flood, God saved only 8 people.
 - Logically, since only God has the necessary power and it is only He who can pay the redemption price, it is God who should decide who will be redeemed.
 - Election (predestination) is a contentious topic, difficult to enunciate clearly, even more difficult to do so in such a manner that everyone agrees.
 - However, God’s purpose and implementation of redemption is fixed and immutable.
 - Redemption is what God has ordained it to be. Scripture clearly says election is a part of God’s plan of redemption. The question then is “what does election mean?”
 - People may violently disagree about what election means and whether it is just or not, but God’s plan is not affected by what people think. He is sovereign and gracious.
5. **Election in the Westminster Confession:** Chapter 3 says, *“God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.”*
- This is a difficult statement. Since Adam’s Fall, everyone born into the world is born spiritually dead, unable to meet the requirement to obey God in thought, word, and deed. They are destined to remain condemned unless God intervenes.
 - Everyone needs salvation but cannot achieve it in their own power. God must intervene.
 - How can anyone who is spiritually dead achieve salvation?
 - God begins with election. How does election work? How are the elect determined and what happens to those who are not among the elect?
 - Logically, God’s provision for salvation must be either limited or unlimited.
 - 2 Peter 3:9 mentions that God does not wish for any to perish. Peter does not say “none will perish” only that God does not wish (or desire) for any to perish.
 - But the message found throughout Scripture is that some will be saved but not all.
 - That means some people are destined to perish. If God truly “ordained whatsoever comes to pass” then God at least permits some people to perish.
 - Many Christians believe salvation is limited, but some believe it is unlimited.
 - Because limited salvation appears obvious in Scripture, most Christians have some form of doctrine explaining how some acquire salvation, but others do not.
 - God does nothing to cause those “not elect” to be condemned. The “not elect” remain in their fallen state and simply follow their own inclination.

- All who truly seek God will find Him. Jeremiah 29:13 says, *“You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”*
 - The problem is that after the “fall” no one has a seeking heart. Of their own accord seeks God. Romans 3:10-11 says, *As it is written, “There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.”*
6. **Election Part 2:** For those in whose lives God chooses to intervene, He does everything necessary to make them holy and bring them to Himself.
- For those in whose lives He chooses to not intervene, He allows them to live according to their own desires (Romans 1).
 - It goes against human pride to think God elects and bestows mercy without using human input. Humanly, it seems unfair that before they are born some are chosen for redemption and some are passed over.
 - A frequent question is why aren’t the “passed over” given an opportunity to believe. The gospel is indeed offered to everyone, but only some will believe.
 - How can God hold people responsible for the outcome of their life if He makes the most vital decision of their life (to be regenerated or not) without their input?
 - Almost everyone (saved and unsaved) reacts to election with apprehension and often with doubt and confusion. To an unbeliever, election is unlikely to make sense.
 - Ultimately, believers who accept Scripture to be God’s Word accept election because it is found in Scripture.
 - My impression is that, even when accepted as true, almost everyone continues to struggle with the implications of the reformed doctrine of election.
 - Most believers are apprehensive that God’s sovereign choice might result in passing over of relatives and friends. Can God be trusted to make the right choice?
 - Is God unfair to withhold saving grace from some? Paul wrestles with that problem in Romans 9 regarding his fellow Israelites, so many of whom are not believers.
 - Paul declares that God is not at fault in any way. God’s purpose and plan remain constant through the ages.
7. **Election Part 3:** Who is elect? No one should ever presume to know for certain whether a person, living or dead, is of the elect. That is totally in God’s control.
- Behavior and life events provide some clues to a person’s spiritual state but not with 100% certainty. Only God knows for sure.
 - Knowing a person’s spiritual state requires examining a person’s heart, which only God can do. The one exception is that each person can examine their own heart.
 - Since we can never know whether people we meet are elect or not, we are to assume everyone, no matter how good or bad they seem to us, is elect.
 - Believers are to minister to people on that basis, praying for them. A person may seem today to be a dreadful sinner, but tomorrow may be repentant, regenerated and justified. That is one reason Jesus says, “love your enemy.”

- Your enemy may be elect. A seemingly implacable, unregenerate enemy may well be one of God's elect who tomorrow will receive God's call, be regenerated and justified, and become our brother or sister in Christ.
- Another question that tugs at our hearts is, how can we be certain we are among the elect? Even after many years of believing as a Christian, we will still think and do sinful things that shock us. How can we do such things if we belong to Christ?
- The Apostle John instructs believers to regularly confess their sins, repent, and ask for forgiveness. He does so because he knows even believers will continue to sin.
- Knowing we sin is worrisome. Even obeying John's admonition, there may be doubts.
- Matthew 7:21 concerns people who think they are regenerate but are not. It is a frightening verse. Jesus says, not everyone who says to me, "**Lord, Lord,**" will enter the kingdom of heaven. Only those who obey the will of the Father will enter.
- Saying "Lord, Lord" is an indication of knowledge of God, perhaps being convinced of being "in Christ." Only a deep personal relationship with Christ our Savior will bring the satisfaction of conviction that we have been redeemed.
- ***Romans 8:29-30: For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.***
- Jesus says in John 5:44 a, "***No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.***"
- The Father sovereignly chooses whom He will draw to Jesus Christ.