

Called (TCR 2725) (Strong's 2822)

In the Bible, the specific phrase "**the called**" appears primarily in the New Testament. It is a translation of the Greek word *klētos*, which refers to those invited or summoned by God.

While different translations (KJV, NKJV, ESV) may vary slightly in wording, here is a comprehensive list of verses where this specific designation is used:

Matthew 20:16:

KJV - ¹⁶So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be **called**, but few chosen.
ESV - ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first last.”
NIV - ¹⁶“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Matthew 22:14

KJV - ¹⁴For many are **called**, but few are chosen.
ESV - ¹⁴For many are **called**, but few are chosen.”
NIV - ¹⁴“For many are **invited**, but few are chosen.”

Romans 1:1

KJV - Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, **called** to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
ESV – Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, **called** to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,
NIV - Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, **called** to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God

Romans 1:6-7

KJV – ⁶Among whom are ye also the **called** of Jesus Christ: ⁷To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, **called** to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
ESV – ⁶including you who are **called** to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷To all those in Rome who are loved by God and **called** to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
NIV - ⁶And you also are among those Gentiles who are **called** to belong to Jesus Christ. ⁷To all in Rome who are loved by God and **called** to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:28

KJV - ²⁸And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the **called** according to his purpose.
ESV - ²⁸And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are **called** according to his purpose.
NIV - ²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been **called** according to his purpose.

Romans 8:29-30

KJV - ²⁹For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he **called**, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

ESV - ²⁹For 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. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he **called** he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

NIV - ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he **called**, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

1Corinthians 1:1-2

KJV - **1** Paul **called** to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, **2** Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called** to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's:

ESV - **1** Paul, **called** by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, **2** To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called** to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

NIV - **1** Paul, **called** to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, **2** To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and **called** to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

1Corinthians 1:24

KJV - ²⁴But unto them which are **called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

ESV - ²⁴but to those who are **called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

NIV - ²⁴but to those whom God has **called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Jude 1:1

KJV - **1** Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and **called**:

ESV - **1** Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,

To those who are **called**, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:

NIV - **1** Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,

To those who have been **called**, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 9:15

KJV - ¹⁵And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are **called** might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

ESV - ¹⁵Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are **called** may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

NIV - ¹⁵For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are **called** may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Revelation 17:14

KJV - ¹⁴These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are **called**, and chosen, and faithful.

ESV - ¹⁴They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are **called** and chosen and faithful."

NIV - ¹⁴They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his **called**, chosen and faithful followers."

Revelation 17:14

KJV - ¹⁴These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are **called**, and chosen, and faithful.

ESV - ¹⁴They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are **called** and chosen and faithful."

NIV - ¹⁴They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his **called**, chosen and faithful followers."

Contextual Notes

- **The Difference Between "Call" and "The Called":** The Bible contains hundreds of instances of the verb "to call" (e.g., God calling Moses). However, the specific noun/adjective form "**the called**" is almost exclusively used by the Apostles (especially Paul) to describe the collective body of believers.
- **Greek Root:** The word *klētos* is the root for *ekklesia* (the Church), which literally means "the called-out ones."

Quick Comparison Table

Theme	Key Verse
Identity	Romans 1:6 - "the called of Jesus Christ"
Purpose	Romans 8:28 - "the called according to his purpose"
Status	Revelation 17:14 - "called, and chosen, and faithful"

Elect (TCR 2724) (Strong's G1588)
Chosen (TCR 2725) (Strong's 1586)
Predestination

The term "**the elect**" (Greek: *eklektos*; Hebrew: *bachiyr*) appears throughout the Bible to describe individuals or groups specifically chosen by God for a purpose, relationship, or salvation.

Because the Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek, the exact phrase "the elect" appears more or less frequently depending on which English translation you use (such as the KJV, ESV, or NIV).

The New Testament

The New Testament contains the most frequent usage of the term, primarily referring to followers of Christ.

Matthew 22:14 (see above for "called")

KJV - ¹⁴For many are **called**, but few are **chosen**.

ESV - ¹⁴For many are **called**, but few are **chosen**."

NIV - ¹⁴"For many are **invited**, but few are **chosen**."

Matt 24.22

KJV - ²²And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the **elect's** sake those days shall be shortened.

ESV - ²²And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the **elect** those days will be cut short.

NIV - ²²"If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the **elect** those days will be shortened.

Matt 24:24

KJV - ²⁴For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very **elect**.

ESV - ²⁴For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the **elect**.

NIV - ²⁴For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the **elect**.

Matt 24:31

KJV - ³¹And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his **elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

ESV - ³¹And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his **elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

NIV - ³¹And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his **elect** from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Mark 13:20

KJV - ²⁰And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the **elect's** sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

ESV - ²⁰And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the **elect**, whom he chose, he shortened the days.

NIV - ²⁰"If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the **elect**, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.

Mark 13:22

KJV - ²²For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the **elect**.

ESV - ²²For false christians and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the **elect**.

NIV - ²²For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the **elect**.

Mark 13:27

KJV - ²⁷And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his **elect** from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

ESV - ²⁷And then he will send out the angels and gather his **elect** from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

NIV - ²⁷And he will send his angels and gather his **elect** from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

Luke 18:7

KJV - ⁷And shall not God avenge his own **elect**, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

ESV - ⁷And will not God give justice to his **elect**, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?

NIV - ⁷And will not God bring about justice for his **chosen** ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?

John 13:18

KJV - ¹⁸I speak not of you all: I know whom I have **chosen**: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

ESV - ¹⁸I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have **chosen**. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'

NIV - ¹⁸"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have **chosen**. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'

John 15:16

KJV – ¹⁶Ye have not chosen me, but I have **chosen** you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

ESV – ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I **chose** you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

NIV – ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I **chose** you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

John 15:19

KJV – ¹⁹If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have **chosen** you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

ESV – ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I **choose** you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

NIV – ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have **chosen** you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

Acts 13:17

KJV – ¹⁷The God of this people of Israel **chose** our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

ESV – ¹⁷The God of this people Israel **chose** our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it.

NIV – ¹⁷The God of the people of Israel **chose** our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country;

Romans 8:33

KJV – ³³Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's **elect**? It is God that justifieth.

ESV – ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's **elect**? It is God who justifies.

NIV – ³³Who will bring any charge against those whom God has **chosen**? It is God who justifies.

Romans 8:29-30

KJV – ²⁹For whom he did **foreknow**, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did **predestinate**, them he also **called**: and whom he **called**, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

ESV – ²⁹For 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. ³⁰And those whom he **predestined** he also **called**, and those whom he **called** he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

NIV – ²⁹For those God **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰And those he **predestined**, he also **called**; those he **called**, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Romans 11:7

KJV – ⁷What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the **election** hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

ESV - ⁷What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The **elect** obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

NIV - ⁷What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The **elect** among them did, but the others were hardened,

Romans 16:13

KJV - ¹³Salute Rufus **chosen** in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

ESV - ¹³Greet Rufus, **chosen** in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.

NIV - ¹³Greet Rufus, **chosen** in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

1 Corinthians 1:26

KJV - ²⁶For ye see **your calling**, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

ESV - ²⁶For consider **your calling**, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

NIV - ²⁶Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were **called**. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

Ephesians 1:4-5

KJV - ⁴According as he hath **chosen** us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having **predestinated** us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

ESV - ⁴even 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 for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

NIV - ⁴For he **chose** us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he **predestined** us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

Ephesians 1:11

KJV – ¹¹In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being **predestinated** according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

ESV – ¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined** according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

NIV - ¹¹In him we were also **chosen**,^[a] having been **predestined** according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

2 Thessalonians 2:13

KJV - ¹³But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning **chosen** you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

ESV - ¹³But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God **chose** you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

NIV - ¹³But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God **chose** you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Colossians 3:12

KJV - ¹²Put on therefore, as the **elect** of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

ESV - ¹²Put on then, as God's **chosen** ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

NIV - ¹²Therefore, as God's **chosen** people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

1Timothy 5:21

KJV - ²¹I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the **elect** angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

ESV - ²¹In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the **elect** angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.

NIV - ²¹I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the **elect** angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

2 Timothy 2:10

KJV - ¹⁰Therefore I endure all things for the **elect's** sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

ESV - ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the **elect**, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

NIV - ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the **elect**, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

Titus 1:1

KJV - Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's **elect**, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

ESV - Paul, a servant^[a] of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's **elect** and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness,

NIV - Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's **elect** and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness -

James 2:5

KJV - ⁵Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God **chosen** the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

ESV - ⁵Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God **chosen** those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

NIV - ⁵Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God **chosen** those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

1 Peter 1:1

KJV - Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the **strangers** scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

ESV - Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are **elect** exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

NIV - Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's **elect**, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

1 Peter 2:9

KJV - ⁹But ye are a **chosen** generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

ESV - ⁹But you are a **chosen** race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

NIV - ⁹But you are a **chosen** people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:10

KJV - ¹⁰Which in time past were not a people, but are now the **people of God**: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

ESV - ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are **God's people**; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

NIV - ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the **people of God**; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

2 John 1:1

KJV - ¹The elder unto the **elect** lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

ESV - ¹The elder to the **elect** lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

NIV - The elder, To the lady **chosen** by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth—

2 John 1:13

KJV - ¹³The children of thy **elect** sister greet thee. Amen.

ESV - ¹³The children of your **elect** sister greet you.

NIV - ¹³The children of your sister, who is **chosen** by God, send their greetings.

Revelation 17:14

KJV - ¹⁴These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are **called**, and **chosen**, and faithful.

ESV - ¹⁴They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are **called** and **chosen** and faithful."

NIV - ¹⁴They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his **called**, **chosen** and faithful followers."

The Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the term often refers to the nation of Israel as a whole, or specifically to the Messiah (the “Chosen One”).

- **Isaiah 42:1:** “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My **Elect One** in whom My soul delights!” (Refers to the Messiah).
- **Isaiah 45:4:** “For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel My **elect...**”
- **Isaiah 65:9:** “My **elect** shall inherit it, and My servants shall dwell there.”
- **Isaiah 65:22:** “...for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My **elect** shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”
- **Psalm 105:6:** “O seed of Abraham His servant, you children of Jacob, His **chosen ones!**” (Translated as *elect* in many versions).
- **Psalm 106:5:** “That I may see the benefit of Your **chosen ones...**”

Key Related Terms

While “the elect” is the specific noun form, the Bible frequently uses the verb “**chosen**” or the noun “**election**” to describe the same concept:

- **John 15:16:** “You did not choose Me, but I **chose** you...”
- **Ephesians 1:4:** “...just as He **chose** us in Him before the foundation of the world.”
- **2 Peter 1:10:** “Be even more diligent to make your call and **election** sure.”

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Who are the elect of God?

Simply put, the “elect of God” are those whom God has predestined to salvation. They are called the “elect” because that word denotes “determining beforehand,” “ordaining,” “deciding ahead of time.” Every four years in the U.S., we “elect” a President—i.e., we choose who will serve in that office. The same goes for God and those who will be saved; God chooses those who will be saved. These are the elect of God.

As it stands, the concept of God electing those who will be saved (predestination) isn’t controversial. It is a biblical truth ([John 6:44](#), [Romans 8:28-30](#), [Ephesians 1:4-5](#)). What is controversial is how and in what manner God chooses those who will be saved. Throughout church history, there have been two main views on the [doctrine of election](#). One view, which we will call the prescient or foreknowledge view, teaches that God, through His omniscience, knows those who will in the course of time choose of their own free will to place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation. On the basis of this divine foreknowledge, God elects these individuals “before the foundation of the world” ([Ephesians 1:4](#)).

The second main view is the Augustinian view, which essentially teaches that God not only divinely elects those who will have faith in Jesus Christ, but also divinely elects to grant to these individuals the faith to believe in Christ. In other words, God’s election unto salvation is not based on a foreknowledge of an individual’s faith, but is based on the free, sovereign grace of Almighty God.

The difference boils down to this: who has the ultimate choice in salvation—God or man? In the first view (the prescient view), man has control; his free will is sovereign and becomes the determining factor in God’s election. God can provide the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, but man must choose Christ for himself in order to make salvation real. Ultimately, this view diminishes the biblical understanding of God’s sovereignty. This view puts the Creator’s provision of salvation at the mercy of the creature; if God wants people in heaven, He has to hope that man will freely choose His way of salvation. In reality, the prescient view of election is no view of election at all, because God is not really choosing—He is only confirming. It is man who is the ultimate chooser.

In the Augustinian view, God has control; He is the one who, of His own sovereign will, freely chooses those whom He will save. He not only elects those whom He will save, but He actually accomplishes their salvation. Rather than simply make salvation possible, God chooses those whom He will save and then saves them. This view puts God in His proper place as Creator and Sovereign.

The Augustinian view is not without problems of its own. Critics have claimed that this view robs man of his free will. If God chooses those who will be saved, then what difference does it make for man to believe? Why preach the gospel? Furthermore, if God elects according to His sovereign will, then how can we be responsible for our actions? These are all good and fair questions that need to be answered. A good passage to answer these questions is [Romans 9](#), the most in-depth passage dealing with God’s sovereignty in election.

The context of the passage flows from [Romans 8](#), which ends with a great climax of praise: “For I am convinced that... [nothing] in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” ([Romans 8:38-39](#)). This leads Paul to consider how a Jew might respond to that statement. While Jesus came to the lost children of Israel and while the early church was largely Jewish in makeup, the gospel was spreading among the Gentiles much faster than among the Jews. In fact, most Jews saw the gospel as a stumbling block ([1 Corinthians 1:23](#)) and rejected Jesus. This would lead the average Jew to wonder if God’s plan of election has failed, since most Jews reject the message of the gospel.

Throughout [Romans 9](#), Paul systematically shows that God's sovereign election has been in force from the very beginning. He begins with a crucial statement: "For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" ([Romans 9:6](#)). This means that not all people of ethnic Israel (that is, those descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) belong to true Israel (the elect of God). Reviewing the history of Israel, Paul shows that God chose Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau. Just in case anyone thinks that God was choosing these individuals based on the faith or good works they would do in the future, he adds, "Though they [Jacob and Esau] were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad – in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls" ([Romans 9:11](#)).

At this point, one might be tempted to accuse God of acting unjustly. Paul anticipates this accusation in v. 14, stating plainly that God is not unjust in any way. "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" ([Romans 9:15](#)). God is sovereign over His creation. He is free to choose those whom He will choose, and He is free to pass by those whom He will pass by. The creature has no right to accuse the Creator of being unjust. The very thought that the creature can stand in judgment of the Creator is absurd to Paul, and it should be so to every Christian, as well. The balance of [Romans 9](#) substantiates this point.

[Ephesians 1:5](#) tells us that God "predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will." According to this verse, the basis of our being predestined is not something that we do or will do, but is based solely on God. This predetermination is based on His sovereignty, unchanging character ([Malachi 3:6](#)), foreknowledge ([Romans 8:29, 11:2](#)), love ([Ephesians 1:4-5](#)), and plan and pleasure ([Ephesians 1:5](#)). God's desire is that all would be saved and come to repentance ([1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9](#)). He offers salvation to everyone ([Titus 2:11](#)) and has made Himself plain to everyone so that everyone is without excuse ([Romans 1:19-20](#)).

Both predestination and personal responsibility are true—God is completely in control, and humanity makes choices and is completely accountable for those choices. The Bible does not present these as irreconcilable truths (as theological traditions sometimes do). We learn that, if God elected those He foreknew, He both knows His creation before it exists and He determines important things about His creation. If God is great enough to be the Creator of all, then He is not stumped by the mutual existence of His sovereignty and human volition, choice, and responsibility.

From <<https://www.gotquestions.org/elect-of-God.html>>