

FOREKNOWLEDGE, THEN ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

(**Bold type** and underlining in scripture text have been added for emphasis)
(Your questions and comments are welcome)

In this consideration, we will inquire into what scripture reveals concerning foreknowledge, election, and predestination. While this will not be an exhaustive study, it is intended to provide a scripturally accurate perspective of the subject. We will commence by considering definitions of the words that are the subject matter of this study.

Foreknowledge-is the English translation of the Greek word “prognosis” which means “*forethought*”. “Prognosis” is from the Greek word “proginosko” meaning, “*to know beforehand*”. The prefix “pro” means “*fore*”, i.e. *in front of, prior...to*. The Greek word “gnosis” means “*knowing (the act), i.e. (by impl.) knowledge*”.

Elect-is the English translation of the Greek word “eklektos” meaning “*select;...*” Eklektos is also translated *chosen* in some scriptures. The Greek word “eklegomai”, from which “eklektos” derives means “*to select*”, and is also translated *chosen* in some passages.

Predestinate-is an English translation of the Greek word “proorizo”, meaning *to limit in advance* i.e. (fig.) “*predetermine*”. “Proorizo” derives from “pro” and “horizo”. “Horizo” means “*to mark out or bound (‘horizon’), i.e. (fig) to appoint, decree, specify*”. Other English translations of the Greek word “horizo” are: declared, determine, limit, ordained, and determinate. These definitions are taken from Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

The apostle Peter has given us an introduction to our consideration at:

1 Peter 1

² Elect **according to** the foreknowledge of God the Father, **through** sanctification of the Spirit, **unto** obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

This scripture informs us that God selected or chose persons according to knowledge that he possessed before or prior to choosing them. To understand this topic, it is important to notice that **foreknowledge precedes election.**

Another significant point to be noted in the above definition of foreknowledge is that **foreknowledge means, simply and plainly, to know prior to some event, the event in the referenced scripture being God’s choosing persons, “unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”. What God knows is merely passive, while that which God determines is active volition. Also, electing or choosing is an act of the will.**

There are numerous books written on this subject. I would suggest that, while reading this consideration, or any of the available books on this or any other theological subject, that the reader notice, whether or not, comments and conclusions are supported by the referenced and other relevant scriptures, or are they the product of reasoning. The latter method is philosophy.

A question that remains to be answered, what was it that God knew that moved Him to elect or choose persons “unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”. The apostle Paul addresses the matter of election at: 2 Thessalonians 2

¹³ But 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:

¹⁴ Whereunto he called you **by our gospel**, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here we learn that, what persons are chosen to is salvation. This is equivalent to “sprinkling of the blood” in the above referenced passage in the epistle by Peter. In both scriptures, this result is accomplished **through the sanctifying work** of the Spirit. In Peter’s epistle, we learn that **this work of the Spirit brings a person to obedience**. The word “obedience” in this passage is translated from the Greek word “hupakoe” meaning “*attentive hearkening*, i.e. (by impl.) *compliance* or *submission*”. (Strong’s Concordance) In the Thessalonians’ passage, we read that in addition to the sanctification of the Spirit, this salvation is accomplished **through “belief** of the truth”. The word “belief” is translated from the Greek word “pistis” which is, with very few exceptions, translated **faith** throughout the New Testament. We are also informed in the Thessalonians’ passage that we are **called** to salvation **by the gospel** that the apostle Paul preached. It should be noted that, “**salvation**” is **through “faith”**, rather than, “**faith**” being through salvation. And we will read in another scripture, that **faith comes by hearing the word of God**. So, **through the Spirit’s sanctifying ministry in the word, one comes to an understanding of the truth, and can believe that truth. Thus, one is chosen on the basis of faith.**

The testimony of these passages is in accord with the role of faith expressed throughout the New Testament. The clear and unequivocal testimony of scripture is **that man’s acceptance by God, in his relationship with the Father and the Son, rests on faith, as opposed to works**. The accuracy of this statement must be established by scripture testimony. **We read: Acts 26**

¹⁸ To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified **by faith** that is in me.

Romans 3²⁶ To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which **believeth** in Jesus.

Romans 4

³ For what saith the scripture? Abraham **believed** God, and **it** was counted unto him for righteousness.

⁵ But to him that worketh not, but **believeth** on him that justifieth the ungodly, his **faith** is **counted** for righteousness.

¹⁶ Therefore it is **of faith**, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of **the faith** of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Romans 5

¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

² By whom also we have **access by faith** into this **grace wherein we stand**, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 9

³⁰ What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is **of faith**.

³¹ But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

³² Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

³³ As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever **believeth** on him shall not be ashamed.

Romans 10

¹⁵ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

¹⁷ So then **faith cometh by hearing**, and **hearing by the word of God**.

Hebrews 4

² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but **the word** preached **did not profit them**, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Galatians 3

² This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing **of faith**...

¹⁴ That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith...

²² But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

²⁶ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Romans 16

²⁶ But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Philippians 3

⁹ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Hebrews 11

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

1 Peter 1

² Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴ To an **inheritance** incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven **for you,**

⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

⁸ Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet **believing, ye rejoice** with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

⁹ Receiving the **end of your faith**, even **the salvation** of your souls.

John 1:11,12—He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as **received** him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that **believe** on his name.

These are but a few of the approximately three hundred fifty scriptures in the New Testament referring to the words faith, faithful, and faithfulness. Also, there are approximately the same number of scriptures referencing the words believe, believed, and believeth.

Because faith and faithfulness are such weighty matters, we will emphasize several points in the above referenced scriptures.

- Acts 26:18-shows us that the sanctification process is **through** faith.
- Romans 5:1,2-not only are we justified by faith, but our **continuing access** to God's grace is **by faith**.
- Romans 4:3,5,16-it is our **faith** that is **counted** to us for righteousness. If we are **without faith**, God has nothing to put to **our account** for righteousness. God determined that the promise of inheritance would inure to us through faith, (as opposed to works) **that** it might be by His **grace**. Again, we see that **faith** is **our access** to **grace**.
- Galatians 3:2,14-we receive the Spirit **by hearing**, (the word of God) **and then, believing**. It should be noted that **faith precedes the receiving of the Spirit**. "Received ye the Spirit" **refers to the Spirit's coming to indwell us**, and not to the sanctifying work of the Spirit mentioned in the above passages of first Peter and second Thessalonians.
- Romans 10:15,17-**faith comes** by hearing God's word. The sanctifying work of the Spirit that we read about in 1Peter 1:2 and 2 Thessalonians

2:13 enables us to understand the scriptures, that we might submit to God on the basis of the truth that we have come to understand. And at Hebrews 4:2, we learn that those who hear the Word do not benefit, except that, they believe.

- 1Peter 1:2-9-**God's power that keeps us to the eternal inheritance is available to us through faith.** One's faith is more precious than gold. Clearly, the Lord views **faith** as being **of great value.** And, the **final deliverance** of our soul is the **end result of our faith.**
- John 1:11,12- **faith is a volitional matter.** He came to His own, (Israel) and **to those who received Him, He gave power to be God's children.** Clearly, **faith is not a gift** sovereignly implanted in one's heart, subsequent to regeneration, as some contend.

Faith is sometimes treated by expositors of the Bible as a gift, whereby the initial implant secures all. A common expression is that we are saved from the penalty of sin by "**one act of faith**". Some contend that man cannot resist God's grace (irresistible grace), therefore, His children are, **by necessity,** faithful (Lordship salvation). Others, who hold this security view, say that **faithfulness is not necessary** to inherit in God's kingdom (Non-lordship salvation). **I mention this, not to suggest that we cease to be a child of God if we do not continue in faith,** but because scripture contradicts this security proposition, and both of the supporting arguments for it. Also, such a security proposition seems to convey to the reader a rather superficial view of the extremely important **inward posture** of faith, which is volitionally taken.

The apostle Paul writes concerning continuing in faith at:

Colossians 1

²¹ And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet **now** hath he **reconciled**

²² In the body of his flesh through death, to present you **holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight:**

²³ **If ye continue in the faith** grounded and settled, and **be not moved away** from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Further, we read at:

Hebrews 3

⁶ But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, **if we hold fast** the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope **firm unto the end...**

¹² Take heed, **brethren,** lest there be in any of **you** an evil heart of **unbelief,** in **departing** from the living God.

¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of **you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**

¹⁴ For we are made partakers of Christ, **if we hold the beginning** of our confidence stedfast **unto the end;**

The Colossians' and Hebrews' passages, inform us that, what is available to us in Christ is beneficial to us by **continuing** in faith. (As opposed to **an initial act** of faith)

To understand what the word faith actually means, we will view a situation involving three of God's faithful men. At Hebrews 11:33,34 we read, "Who through faith...quenched the violence of fire..."

In the book of Daniel there is the account of King Nebuchadnezzar ordering all of the people to fall down and worship the image that he had made. When the three Hebrew men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not comply with the king's command, they were brought before the king, and he said to them:

Daniel 3

¹⁵ Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, **we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.**

¹⁷ **If it be so**, our God whom we serve **is able** to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

¹⁸ **But if not**, be it known unto thee, O king, that **we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image** which thou hast set up.

If we were to continue with the account, we would learn that God did deliver the three men from the burning furnace, unhurt by the fire. And, referring back to the passage in Hebrews, chapter eleven, we may recall that **"through faith"** the violence of fire was quenched. Also, it should be noted that under the law in the Old Testament, it was commanded that the Hebrew people must not bow down to images or worship other gods. **These Hebrew men had knowledge of God's will in this matter.**

Several observations from this scripture in the book of Daniel are:

- For defying the king's order the consequence was painful death.
- The men's confidence was in God's **ability to deliver them**, and **not that He would deliver them.**
- Whether or not God chose their deliverance, **they would not** worship the image made by the king.

From this account of scripture, it is evident that the **attitude**, or **inward posture**, of these men was one of unwavering inward commitment and devotion to God. Such an **inward posture of commitment and devotion is faith.** The **outward demonstration of their faith** is evidenced in that:

- They were careful to **observe their duty to do God's will** by not bowing to and worshipping before the king's image.

- They had unwavering **loyalty to God** by being steadfast in their relationship with Him in the face of temptation to renounce, or at least to ignore it.
- They **depended on God** for the outcome, rather than taking the proffered way of escape by bowing down to and worshipping the image.

God chose people before the foundation of the world, as we read at:

Ephesians 1

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

⁴ According 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:

⁵ Having **predestinated** us unto the **adoption of children** by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

⁶ To **the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted** in the beloved.

Here we are told, not only were we chosen **before** the foundation of the world, but that we are chosen, that we should be holy and without blame before Him. His **pleasure** is that His children **be holy and without blame before Him**. **That we would be His children is something that God predetermined**, and that it would bring praise to **His glorious grace by which** He accomplishes such a **marvelous achievement with humankind**. It should be noted that, also, in the Colossians' passage cited above, that **we were reconciled** "In the body of his flesh though death, to present you **holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith...**". But, if we may still be left with the question of, **what was it that God had knowledge of** before the foundation of the world, **that He would choose some men and women** to be the beneficiaries of His loving kindness, **let us look at another passage of scripture that further addresses our question. John 6**

⁴⁰ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and **believeth** on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

⁴¹ The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

⁴² And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

⁴³ Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

⁴⁴ No man can come to me, **except the Father which hath sent me draw him**: and I will raise him up at the last day.

⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath **heard**, and hath **learned** of the Father, **cometh unto me...**

⁶³ It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: **the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.**

⁶⁴ But there are **some** of you that **believe not**. For Jesus **knew** from **the beginning** who they were **that believed not**, and who should betray him.

⁶⁵ And he said, **Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were**

given unto him of my Father.

Jesus told the people that followed Him, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” And related to this statement He said, “But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”

In the matter of election being according to foreknowledge, it is significant that it was what Jesus knew from the beginning that determined who the Father would draw to Him, and what Jesus knew was who they were that believed not. Also, at verse 40, we are told that it is the Father’s will that **everyone** who sees the Son and **believes** on Him shall have everlasting life. The testimony of scripture is quite clear that **what God knew** that **determined** His choice before the foundation of the world is **the same** as that **which determines** who He **draws** to His Son in time. *And that which Jesus knew from the beginning was who would or would not believe.*

In another passage of scripture that addresses the topic that we are considering, we read: Romans 8

²⁸ And we know that **all things** work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

²⁹ For 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.

³⁰ Moreover whom he did **predestinate**, them he also **called**: and whom he **called**, them he also **justified**: and whom he **justified**, them he also **glorified**.

This scripture informs us that all things work together for good:

- To them that **love** God.
- Because that, those who God knew beforehand, He **predetermined** that they should be conformed to the image of Christ.
- And, because it is God who **accomplishes** His predetermined end, by calling, justifying, and glorifying.

In the matter of glorification, we read at: Romans 8

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God;

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; **if so be** that we **suffer with him**, that we may be also glorified together.

Glorification as joint-heirs with Christ is contingent on our suffering with Him. And, “suffering with Christ” is the result of “continuing in the faith”, as the apostle Paul shows at: Philippians 3

⁸ Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

⁹ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through **the faith** of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

¹⁰ That I may **know** him, and the **power** of his resurrection, and the **fellowship** of his sufferings, being made conformable unto **his death**;

Do all of God's children love Him? What do the scriptures say?

John 14

²¹ He that hath my commandments, and **keepeth** them, he it is that **loveth** me: and he that **loveth** me **shall be loved** of my Father, and **I will love him**, and will **manifest myself** to him.

Revelation 2

² I know **thy works**, and **thy labour**, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

³ And hast borne, and hast patience, and **for my name's sake** hast laboured, and **hast not fainted**.

⁴ **Nevertheless** I have somewhat against thee, because **thou hast left thy first love**.

⁵ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and **repent**, and **do the first works**; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will **remove thy candlestick** out of his place, **except** thou repent.

2 Timothy 4

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have **finished** my course, I have **kept the faith**:

⁸ **Henceforth** there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that **love** his appearing.

⁹ Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

¹⁰ For Demas hath forsaken me, having **loved** this present world,...

2 Timothy 1

¹⁵ This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;...

Some points in the above scripture passages that are pertinent to the question:

Do all of God's children love Him?

- John 14:21—**those of God's children who love Him, keep His commandments**, and He makes Himself known to them. It is a proper inference that those of God's children, who are not faithful to do His will, do not love Him.
- Revelation 2:2-5—those of the church at Ephesus had incurred God's displeasure **because they had left their love for Him**, even though they patiently labored for the sake of His name. **Unless they repent and turn back to Him, they would cease to be a place of light.**
- 2 Timothy 4:7-10—Pauls, having "fought a good fight", and having "finished my course" was a matter of faithfulness. Again, being faithful to God's will is evidence of loving Him, and is the basis for receiving a "crown of righteousness". Further, we learn that **Demas, a "fellowlaborer"** with Paul, (Philemon verse 24) had left Paul, having "loved this present world". "...If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)

- 2 Timothy 1:15—“all they which are in Asia be turned away from me:” is clear indication that **they had not continued in the way of the Lord**, as did Paul, **which is evidence that they did not continue in their love for the Lord.**

There is clear testimony in scripture that there are severe consequences for God’s children who ignore His will. The apostle Paul is addressing “Brethren” at: Galatians 6

⁷ Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man **soweth**, that shall he **also reap**.
⁸ For he that **soweth to his flesh** shall of the flesh **reap corruption**; but he that **soweth to the Spirit** shall of the Spirit **reap life everlasting**.
⁹ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season **we shall reap, if we faint not**.

Another passage addressing this matter is at:

Hebrews 10

²⁶ For if **we** sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,
²⁷ But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.
²⁸ He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:
²⁹ Of how much sorer **punishment**, suppose ye, shall **he** be thought worthy, who hath **trodden under foot** the Son of God, and hath counted the **blood** of the covenant, **wherewith he was sanctified**, an unholy thing, and hath **done despite** unto the **Spirit of grace?**
³⁰ For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge **his people**.
³¹ It is a **fearful thing** to fall into the hands of the living God.

Some contend that this Hebrews’ passage does not apply to the Lord’s people however, the text is clear and unequivocal in saying that “The Lord shall judge **his people**”. Others have said that the passage does not refer to punishment for sin, but rather, judgment inside the kingdom. However, the text says, “Of how much sorer **punishment**”. And, this punishment is for willingly sinning.

As to the location of such punishment, we read at:

Matthew 8

¹¹ And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, **in the kingdom** of heaven.
¹² But the **children of the kingdom** shall be **cast out** into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Another scripture referring to location of punishment of a servant of the Lord is at: Luke 12

⁴⁶ The lord of that **servant** will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion **with the unbelievers**.

⁴⁷ And **that servant**, which **knew his lord's will**, and prepared not himself, **neither did according to his will**, shall be beaten with many stripes.

⁴⁸ But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few

stripes. For unto whomsoever **much is given, of him** shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

While God is sovereign in power and authority, and therefore moves according to His own will, and there are scriptures that often remind us of this fact, the Lord, in His sovereign prerogative has established and revealed principles according to which His purpose shall be fulfilled as it relates to man. Because God has granted to man certain prerogatives for exercise of his own will, and because God relates to man according to certain considerations such as faith, sin, repentance, etc., does not require that God has relinquished control, but that He relates to man according to His predetermined, sovereignly established principles.

We have already perused scriptures that explain the role of faith to be essential to a person's relationship with God. These scriptures have explained:

- That **faith** is a person's access to God's grace. (Ro. 5:2)
- That God's promise is **of faith** that it might be **by grace**, to the end that it might be sure to all the seed. (Ro.4:16)
- That we are **kept by God's power** [grace], **through faith** to an inheritance reserved in heaven for us. (1Pet. 1:4,5)
- That the **end** of our **faith** is the salvation of our souls. (1Pet. 1:9)
- That it is impossible to **please God** apart from faith. (Heb. 11:6)
- That our **faith** (not our being a child of God) **is counted to us for righteousness**, and **on this basis** God does not **impute sin** to us. (Ro. 4:5,8)
- That faith is a **volitional** matter. (Joh.1:12)

Repent is another **divinely established principle** for which **man bears responsibility** before the Lord. With few exceptions, repent is the English translation of the Greek word "metanoeo", which means "*to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider...*" The Greek word "metanoia" derives from "metanoeo", and means "(subj.) *compunction* (for guilt, including *reformation*); by impl. *reversal* (of [another's] decision)". (Strong's Concordance)

Repent and repentance mean, simply, **to change one's mind**. The following are passages of scripture addressing the matter of repentance:

Acts 3

¹⁹ **Repent** ye therefore, and **be converted**, that your sins **may be blotted out**, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Acts 8

²² **Repent** therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be **forgiven thee**.

Acts 17

³⁰ And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where **to repent**:

Acts 20

²¹ Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance** toward God, and **faith** toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 26

²⁰ But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should **repent** and **turn to God**, and **do works meet for repentance**.

These scriptures need little explanation. However, a few comments may be appropriate.

- The words “converted” (3:19), and “turn” (26:20) are the same Greek word, which also is translated return, turn again, and turn about.
- **Repentance** (changing of one’s mind) **is related to sin**, and sin’s being blotted out. (3:19) This passage also includes being converted (turn again) from sin. **Change of mind concerning wicked thoughts is a condition for forgiveness.** (8:22)
- Repentance [change of mind] is also directed toward God. (20:21) This passage not only speaks of repentance, but also, **faith** [commitment and devotion] **to His Son.**
- **Repentance, then turning to God, and conduct fitting of repentance** (26:20) is commanded of men everywhere, both, Jew and Gentile.

We will review the following scriptures that introduce another dimension to our consideration of repentance:

2 Timothy 2

²⁴ And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

²⁵ In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; **if God** peradventure will give them **repentance** to the acknowledging of the truth;

²⁶ And that they may **recover themselves** out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Hebrews 6

¹ Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, **let us go on** unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

² Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

³ And **this will we do, if God permit.**

⁴ For **it is impossible** for those who were once **enlightened**, and have **tasted of the heavenly gift**, and were made **partakers of the Holy Ghost**,

⁵ And have **tasted the good word of God**, and the **powers** of the world to come,

⁶ **If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance**; seeing they **crucify** to themselves the Son of God afresh, and **put him to an open shame.**

In these passages, we will focus on the points: “if God peradventure will give them repentance” (2 Ti 2:25), and “And this will we do, if God permit...For it is impossible...If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance;” (Heb. 6:3-6)

These, and other similar statements of scripture have been used to support the concept that repentance is a gift given by God to selected persons that He was pleased to save. ***However, these passages are, as evidenced by their context, addressing the need for repentance by God's children.***

In the passage in 2 Timothy 2, Paul is writing to Timothy, that in the ministry of teaching, to avoid “foolish and unlearned” questions that serve only to the causing of strife. The word “oppose” themselves in verse 25 means “*to set oneself opposite, i.e. be disputatious;...*” The word “recover” themselves in verse 26 means “*to become sober again, i.e. (fig.) regain (one's) senses*”. (Strong's Concordance) **Thus, those who need repentance have had clarity in understanding, but, having been deceived by the devil, may if God permit, regain their clarity of understanding, “to the acknowledging of the truth,” and this, to the end that they might obtain salvation with eternal glory-verse 10 below, rather than, being ashamed at His appearing. (1 John 2:28) We read at: 2 Timothy 2**

¹ Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

² And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also...

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

¹¹ **It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:**

¹² **If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:**

¹³ **If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.**

¹⁴ Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers...

²³ But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

Also, the Hebrews' passage is addressed to God's children who are “dull of hearing”, and have not matured. They are told that, at this time they should be teachers, but instead, they have need to be taught the most basic truths-5:11,12. However, they are encouraged to go on to perfection or maturity, “if God permit”. The application of the phrase, “if God permit”, is explained in that it is impossible for those who have been partakers of God's grace, that is in Christ, if they fall away, to “renew them **again** unto repentance”.

The scripture teaches that *when we resist the Lord's will, such resistance has a hardening effect within, that limits our capacity to respond positively to Him. We will consider scriptures that address hardening of the heart:*

Exodus 7

¹ And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

² Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

³ And **I will harden Pharaoh's heart**, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of

Egypt.

⁴ But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.

⁵ **And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD**, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

⁶ And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they.

Exodus 10

¹² And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left.

¹⁶ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.

¹⁹ And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt.

²⁰ But **the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

Exodus 5

¹ And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

² And Pharaoh said, **Who is the LORD**, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? **I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.**

³ And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

⁴ And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, **let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.**

⁵ And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them **rest from their burdens.**

⁶ And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying,

⁷ Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: **let them go and gather straw for themselves.**

⁸ And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, **ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof:** for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.

⁹ **Let there more work be laid upon the men**, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

Exodus 8

⁸ Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the Lord to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the Lord ." ...

¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, **he hardened his heart** and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.

Exodus 14

⁵ When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, "**What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and**

have **lost their services!**" [Pharaoh's army pursued after the Israelites to prevent them leaving Egypt]

The following are several points in the above scriptures that need emphasis:

- Exodus 7:3-5—**God's purpose** with Pharaoh's resistance **was to reveal His power** in many signs and judgments, that the Egyptians might know that He is Lord. At Ro. 9:17, it says of this matter with Pharaoh, "that my name might be declared throughout all the earth".
- Exodus 5:4-9—**Pharaoh's resistance** to Israel's leaving Egypt **was motivated by the benefit to Egypt of their labor**. Also, at 14:5 the king and his officials **lamented their loss of Israel's service**.
- Exodus 7:3 and 10:20—We read that the **Lord hardened** Pharaoh's heart.
- Exodus 8:15—We read that **Pharaoh hardened** his own heart. (There are other scriptures that express the hardening as being caused, both, by the Lord and by Pharaoh).

Now we will view several passages of scripture regarding hardness of the people of Israel.

2 Kings 17

¹³ Yet **the LORD testified against Israel**, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, **saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes**, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

¹⁴ Notwithstanding **they would not hear**, but **hardened their necks**, like to the neck of their fathers, that **did not believe** in the LORD their God.

Nehemiah 9

¹⁶ But **they and our fathers** dealt proudly, and **hardened their necks**, and **hearkened not** to thy commandments,

Matthew 13

¹⁵ For this people's heart is **waxed gross**, and their ears are **dull of hearing**, and their eyes **they have closed**; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and **should understand** with their heart, and **should be converted**, and I should **heal them**.

Here we observe that hardening of the heart occurs when the Lord's people hold to their own ways, rather than, submitting to the will of the Lord. Several points in: Matt.13:15:

- The words "waxed gross" means "*thick*"; to *thicken*, i.e. (by impl.) to *fatten* (fig. *stupefy* or *render callous*). (Strong's Concordance) Thus, the heart is **insensitive** to the Lord.
- "their eyes **they** have closed."
- "and their ears are dull of hearing". It was also said of the persons in the above referenced passage in Hebrews, that they were "dull of hearing". They were not attending to what they were told.

This condition of heart raises the question of whether or not we can be turned from our own ways back to the Lord. Have our hearts become so unresponsive to the Lord that we cannot be renewed again to repentance? In the above referenced Hebrews passage this is what is meant by, “let us go on unto perfection...And this we will do, if God permit”.

In another passage, Hebrews 3:6-14, the Lord’s children who constitute the “Church” are admonished to not harden their hearts, as did the children of Israel. We read at: Hebrews 3

⁶ But Christ as a son over **his own house**; whose house **are we, if we hold fast** the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope **firm unto the end**.

⁷ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

⁸ **Harden not your hearts**, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

⁹ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

¹⁰ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway **err in their heart**; and they have not known my ways.

¹¹ So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

¹² Take heed, **brethren**, lest there be **in any of you** an evil heart of **unbelief**, in **departing from** the living God.

¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; **lest any of you be hardened** through the **deceitfulness** of sin.

¹⁴ For we are made **partakers** of Christ, **if we hold the beginning** of our confidence **stedfast unto the end**;

In verse 13, we learn that the process of our becoming hardened or insensitive to the Lord occurs without our awareness of it. This is because of the deceitfulness of sin. The reason that we resist the way of the Lord is to pursue our own desires and interests. We legitimize this pursuit through rationalization, which leaves us deceived. (The consideration entitled, “What Happened To Man In The Garden Of Eden”, utilizes scripture to explain this process of becoming deceived.)

The above referenced scriptures testify that, both, God and man have a role in the process of hardening the heart. From the scriptures, there emerge two observations. First, God has shown to His people what He requires of them. (His commandments) Second, man refuses to comply with the commandments. Thus, God’s role in the hardening of man’s heart is that of making demands, while man’s role is his refusal to obey. The essence of the process is Divine demand and human refusal, culminating in such inward insensitivity to God that “it is impossible...to renew them again to repentance”. This point is addressed at: Proverbs 29¹ He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

In the preceding scriptures, God’s urging of His people to repent and turn from their wicked ways, and keep His commandments, which they often did not, presupposes their having sufficient liberty of will to have done so. *God enables*

performance to those who are willing. In the flesh, we cannot perform, however, God has given us the Holy Spirit to deliver (save) us from the desires and interests of the flesh, if we are willing to forsake those desires and interests, and walk in the Spirit's enlightenment through the Word. This is the joy of salvation, and is not of ourselves, but is by grace through faith.

Romans 7

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to **will is present** with me; but **how to perform** that which is good **I find not...**

²⁴ O wretched man that I am! **who shall deliver me** from the body of this death?

²⁵ **I thank God** through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 8

¹ There is therefore **now no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk **not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**.

² For the law **of the Spirit** of life in Christ Jesus hath made me **free** from the law **of sin and death**.

³ For what the law could not do, in that it was **weak through the flesh**, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and **for sin, condemned sin in the flesh**:

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be **fulfilled** in us, who walk **not after the flesh**, but **after the Spirit**.

In conclusion, we will consider additional scriptures that confirm the previous assertion of the **premise**, that there are **divinely established principles**, such as faith, repentance, sin, etc., **according to which God relates to people**.

Jeremiah 18

¹ The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

² Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

³ Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

⁴ And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: **so he made it again another vessel**, as **seemed good** to the potter to make it.

⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

⁶ O house of Israel, **cannot I do with you** as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, **so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel**.

⁷ At what instant I shall speak **concerning a nation**, and **concerning a kingdom**, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;

⁸ **If that nation**, against whom I have pronounced, **turn** from their evil, **I will repent** of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

⁹ And at what instant I shall speak **concerning a nation**, and **concerning a kingdom**, to build and to plant it;

¹⁰ **If it do evil** in my sight, that **it obey not** my voice, **then I will repent** of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Related to our premise, note the following points:

- Verses 4 and 6—Just as the potter has complete control over the clay, so also, the Lord can do with Israel according to His will. **(God is sovereign in authority and power.)**

- Verses 7-10—If a nation or kingdom **turns** from it's evil, or it's righteousness, **the Lord will relate** to that nation or kingdom **accordingly**. (There are **principles that govern** the relationship, and **God has revealed these principles to us**.)
- God's pronouncements and determinations are **alterable** according to His **sovereignly established principles**.

Other scriptures evidencing alterability of God's pronouncements and His choices are:

1 Samuel 2³⁰ Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, **I said indeed** that **thy house**, and the **house of thy father**, should walk before me **for ever: but now** the LORD saith, **Be it far from me**; for them that **honour me** I will **honour**, and they that **despise me** shall be **lightly esteemed**.

³¹ Behold, the days come, that I will **cut off thine arm**, and the arm **of thy father's house**, that there **shall not be** an old man in thine house.

- This scripture refers to the **unfaithfulness** of Eli the priest, to whom **God had promised** that Eli's house and the house of his father, "should walk before me forever". However, **God's promises are contingent on one's faithfulness**.

2 Kings 23²⁷ And the LORD said, I will **remove Judah** also out of my sight, as I have **removed Israel**, and will **cast off** this city **Jerusalem which I have chosen**, and the house of which **I said, My name shall be there**.

- Because of the sin in Judah, during the reign of King Manasseh, God allowed His **chosen** city Jerusalem to be captured and destroyed by the King of Babylon

Luke 6¹³ And when it was day, he called unto him **his disciples**: and of them **he chose** twelve, whom also he named apostles;

Matthew 10¹ And when he had called unto him **his twelve disciples**, **he gave them power** against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Acts 1¹⁶ Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before **concerning Judas**, which was guide to them that took Jesus.¹⁷ For **he was numbered with us**, and had **obtained part of this ministry**.

²¹ Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,²² Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

²⁵ That he may **take part of this ministry and apostleship**, from which **Judas by transgression** fell, that he might go to his own place

Judas Iscariot is the subject of the three New Testament scriptures cited immediately above.

- From among the disciples of Jesus, He **chose** twelve.
- Jesus **gave the twelve**, whom He called apostles, ("a *delegate*"; an *ambassador...*; a *commissioner...*"—Strong's Concordance) **power** to cast out unclean spirits, and to heal the sick.

- Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus to His captors for thirty pieces of silver (**covetousness**), and then he hanged himself.
- Peter said of Judas, “For he was **numbered with us**, and had **obtained part of this ministry**.” And further, Peter said that Judas, **by transgression** fell from this ministry and apostleship.

(While some expositors of scripture view Judas’ relationship to Jesus as somewhat of an anomaly, and not relevant to God’s children, it is in complete harmony with the testimony of other scripture that explains the **effects of transgression**. Remember Demas, the apostle Paul’s **fellowlaborer**, who forsook Paul, “having loved this present world.” Judas’ contribution to the **crucifixion of Jesus** is **equivalent** to the testimony of **Hebrews 6:6**, which says that it is impossible, “If they shall fall away, to renew them **again** unto repentance; seeing they **crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh**, and put *him* to an open shame.” This Hebrews’ passage is **addressing God’s children**, as explained on page thirteen of this consideration.)

The sum of this concluding point, as clearly testified to by the referenced scriptures is that, while God is sovereign, His choosing, according to His foreknowledge, and His predestinating are alterable in accordance with principles that He, according to His sovereign prerogative, established to accomplish His eternal purpose with man.