

PREDESTINATION

For Jesus Sake/Not a Dark Cloud

Franz Pieper on Eternal Election

- Paper by Pastor Seth...

The Formula of Concord

- **XI. Election.**
- *On this article there has been no public conflict among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession. However, because it is an article of comfort when properly treated, it is also explained in this document so that no offensive dispute may arise in the future.*

Particular Election

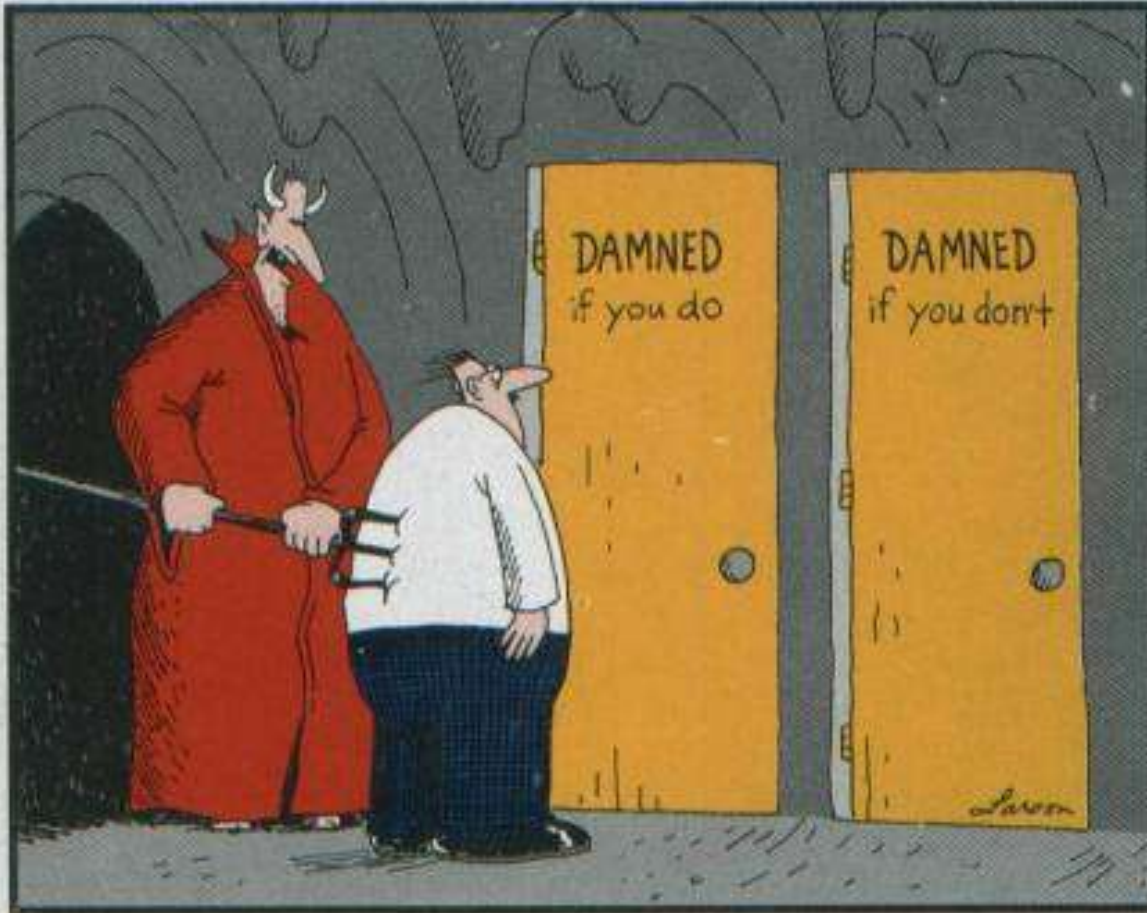
You shall and you shan't

You will and you won't

And you will be damned if you do,

And you will be dammed if you don't.

-Lorenzo Dow, 1836



"C'mon, c'mon — it's either one or the other."

Christ the Savior

- 1 Peter 1:1-25
- “God’s elect...who have been chosen...”
- A translation of convenience for the English language.
- *eklektos*- “elect”
 - ▣ used to describe Christians
 - 1 Thessalonians 1:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Revelation 17:14
 - ▣ Although God chose us before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), His choice was not arbitrary.

Christ the Savior

- He chose us to be saved by Christ and in union with Christ who Himself is God's "Chosen One."
 - ▣ Luke 9:35, 1 Peter 2:4-6
- God chose us in love, not in anger or judgment.
- Paul speaks only of choosing for redemption.
 - ▣ Romans 8:29-33; 11:5

Chosen in Christ

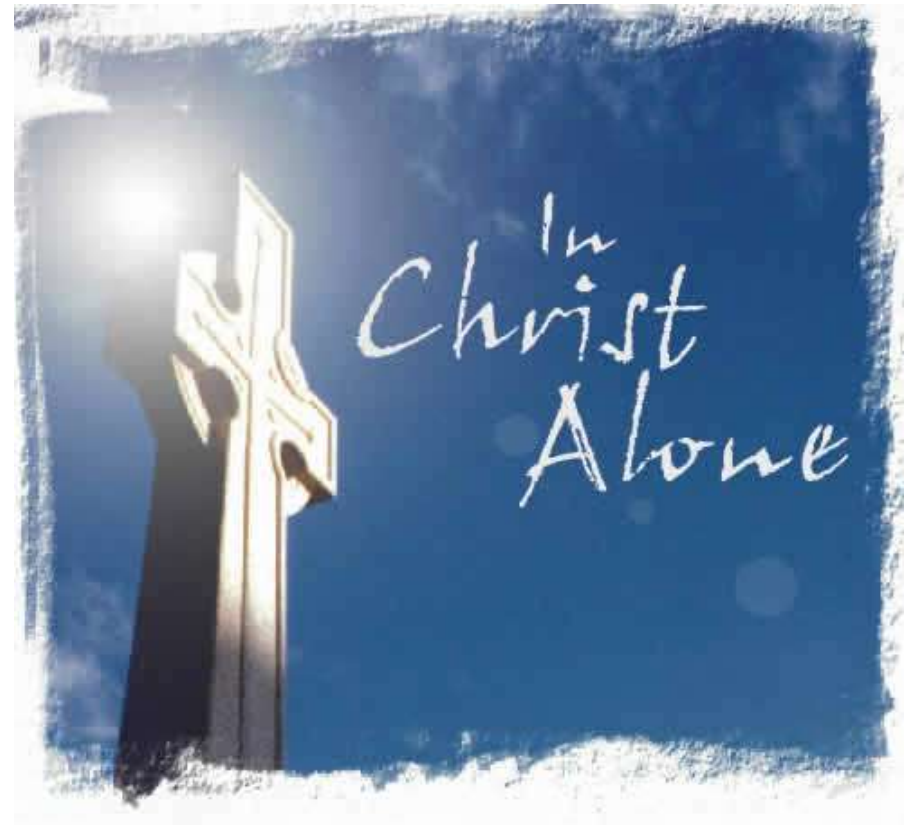
- *“This eternal election of God is to be considered in Christ, and not outside of or without Christ. For ‘in Christ,’ the apostle Paul testifies, ‘He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,’ as it is written, ‘He has blessed us in the Beloved’ (Eph. 1:4,6). However, this election is revealed from heaven through the preaching of His Word...”*

Chosen in Christ

- *“...So the entire Holy Trinity—God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—directs all people to Christ, as to the Book of Life, in whom they should seek the Father’s eternal election...Christ Himself says, ‘No one comes to the Father except through Me’ (John 14:6)”*
 - FC SD XI 65-66

In Christ Alone!

- In what ways is the Christ-centered focus of faith and of election important for the whole Christian Church?



In Christ Alone!

*No guilt of life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
'til He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand*

Destiny

- *“I don’t know if we each have a destiny, or if we’re all just floating around accidental like on a breeze, but I think maybe it’s both. Maybe both is happening at the same time.”*

□ *Forrest Gump*



Destiny...Fate...Predestination

- At the heart of the movie *Forrest Gump* were questions of God's will and the future, which troubled the main characters.
- For many people, the issue of predestination hangs over their heads like a dark cloud.



Just Fatalism...

- ❑ Fatalism discourages people from living by faith because in fatalism the things we do make no difference in the end.
- ❑ Some people connect this with predestination by arguing, “Why should I make use of Baptism or Absolution, or even believe and repent at all, if I am guaranteed to be saved no matter what happens in my life?”
- ❑ See Acts 2:38-41

Questions about predestination...

- These questions have been raised for centuries.
- The founding pastor, in one of the very first LCMS churches in St. Louis, and first president of the synod C.F. W. Walther addressed the concerns of his parishioners from the pulpit.



C.F.W. Walther

- He showed the connection between predestination and the joy of Christmas.
- He explained that predestination does not hang over believing Christians as a dark, threatening storm cloud, so that they must always anxiously ask, “Ah, am I also a chosen one? No, far from being a dark cloud, the doctrine of predestination is much more a brightly shining sun of grace, comfort, and joy, which rises over every person as soon as he has been called by the Gospel and thereby has become a believer.”
 - Sermon on Predestination, 1881

A Dark Cloud...

- What can make this doctrine seem like a dark cloud?
- Has it ever seemed so to you, or to someone you know?



A Dark Cloud... Not at all!

- Who is the audience of each of these books?
 - Colossians 1:2
 - Ephesians 1:1-4
 - 1 Peter 1:1-2
 - Titus 1:1-4

A Dark Cloud... Not at all!

- 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17
- 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5
- What is the attitude of the elect?
- The Word of God takes for granted that one can know of one's election.
- By what means has God chosen to bring about the salvation of the elect?
- How does this help remove the dark cloud?

A Dark Cloud... Not at all!

- What should follow from thankful knowledge of one's election?
 - ▣ See 2 Thess. 2:17
- What does Paul suffer for the sake of the elect in 2 Timothy 2:8-10?

Through the Gospel

- 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
- What is the importance of the Gospel?
- How can this truth be used to dispel the dark cloud of predestination?

This Brings Comfort

- Election is God's persistent reassurance that we are safely in His care.
- He has chosen us, he has done everything necessary for our salvation, and he will keep us in the faith.
- We are safe in Him.
- God whispers words of encouragement to us in Scripture.
 - ▣ "I have chosen you."
 - ▣ "You are my child"
 - ▣ "Do not worry"
 - ▣ "You will live with me forever"

This Brings Comfort

- Many great verses come from chapters 8-11 of Romans but we must remember that these chapters are all firmly rooted in the doctrine of election.
 - *“And 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 8:28
- Romans 8:29-39
- Look at the tense of the words, God knew us, predestined, called, justified, and glorified us.
- So certain in our election that all of these things are listed in the past tense.

Knowledge of Election

- We need this divine assurance, because Satan tempts us to doubt God's Word.
- One of the subtle ways he does this is by tempting us to doubt our election.
 - ▣ "Sure, God will bring his elect to salvation, but are you sure that you are one of the elect? Maybe he didn't choose you?"
- We are tempted to doubt, but God would move us to confidence.

Knowledge of Election

- Only God has direct knowledge of those he has chosen.
- He knows every one of his chosen children.
- We can recognize the elect by the fruits of their election.
- The elect have been called by the Gospel, and given the gift of faith.

Knowledge of Election

- *I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has **called** me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.*
- From Luther's Small Catechism "Meaning of the 3rd Article"

Knowledge of Election

- How do you know if you are among the elect?
 - ▣ If you have faith in Jesus as your savior.
- Whenever the Bible speaks of election, it addresses Christians as the elect. It never qualifies it, saying “God choose some of us...”
- All Christians are addresses as the elect.
- This is God’s word of comfort.
- By God’s grace, I am one of his adopted children. I am one of the elect.
- All who are in Jesus can say the same thing.

Reliance on Grace

- We know that we are not God's children because we are wonderful people or outwardly righteous.
- We are rightly using the doctrine of election when it reminds us that we contributed nothing to our election or salvation. It is all a gift from God.
- After all, *"it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy."* (Romans 9:16)
- We can live at peace, knowing that he had done this for us.

Need more info...

- The Formula of Concord Article XI- Eternal Election
 - Handout- FC Epitome

