

[Eph. 1:4 \[a.\]](#); [2 Thess. 2:13 \[b.\]](#). This assurance of one's personal election, however, springs only from faith in the Gospel, from the assurance that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; on the contrary, through the life, suffering, and death of His Son He fully reconciled the whole world of sinner unto Himself. Faith in this truth leaves no room for the fear that God might still harbor thoughts of wrath and damnation concerning us. Scripture inculcates that in [Rom. 8:32, 33](#): “[He that spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.](#)” Luther's pastoral advice is therefore in accord with Scripture: “Gaze upon the wounds of Christ and the blood shed for you; there predestination will shine forth.” (St. Louis ed., II, 181; on Gen. 26:9) That the Christian obtains the personal assurance of his eternal election in this way is taught also by our Lutheran Confessions (Formula of Concord, Triglot, p. 1071, Paragraph 26, M. 709): “Of this we should not judge according to our reason nor according to the Law or from any external appearance. Neither should we attempt to investigate the secret, concealed abyss of divine predestination, but should give heed to the revealed will of God. For He has made known unto us the mystery of His will and made it manifest through Christ that it might be preached, [Eph. 1:9ff.](#); [2 Tim. 1:9f \[e.\]](#).” -- In order to insure the proper method of viewing eternal election and the Christian's assurance of it, the Lutheran Confessions set forth at length the principle that election is not to be considered “in a bare manner (nude), as though God only held a muster, thus: ‘This one shall be saved, that one shall be damned’” (Formula of Concord, Triglot, p. 1065, Paragraph 9; M., p. 706); but “the Scriptures teach this doctrine in no other way than to direct us thereby to the Word, [Eph. 1:13](#); [1 Cor. 1:7 \[Bible\]](#); exhort to repentance, [2 Tim. 3:16 \[Bible\]](#); urge to godliness, [Eph. 1:14 \[Bible\]](#); [John 15:3 \[Bible\]](#); strengthen faith and assure us of our salvation, [Eph. 1:13](#); [John 10:27f \[Bible\]](#).; [2 Thess. 2:13f \[b.\]](#)” (Formula of Concord, Triglot, p. 1067, Paragraph 12; M., p. 707). -- To sum up, just as God in time draws the Christian unto Himself through the Gospel, so He has already in His eternal election endowed them with “sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” [2 Thess. 2:13 \[b.\]](#). **Therefore: If, by the grace of God, you believe in the Gospel of the forgiveness of your sins for Christ's sake, you are to be certain that you also belong to the number of God's elect,** even as Scripture, [2 Thess. 2:13 \[b.\]](#), addresses the believing Thessalonians as the chosen of God and gives thanks to God for their election.

- m. ^{ESV} [Ephesians 1:9](#) making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ...
- n. ^{ESV} [Ephesians 1:13](#) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...

A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod (1932)

Of the Election of Grace

<http://www.creeds.net/lutheran/missouri.htm>

This is expanded to include the Scripture references from the English Standard Version.

Some key phrases in this document have been underlined!

35. By the election of grace we mean this truth, that all those who by the grace of God alone, for Christ's sake, through the means of grace, are brought to faith, are justified, sanctified, and preserved in faith here in time, that all these have already from eternity been endowed by God with faith, justification, sanctification, and preservation in faith, and this for the same reason, namely, by grace alone, for Christ's sake, and by way of the means of grace. That this is the doctrine of the Holy Scripture is evident from [Eph. 1:3-7](#); [2 Thess. 2:13, 14](#); [Acts 13:48](#); [Rom. 8:28-30](#); [2 Tim. 1:9](#); [Matt. 24:22-24](#) (cp. Formula of Concord Triglot, p. 1065, Paragraphs 5, 8, 23; M., p. 705).

- a. ^{ESV} [Ephesians 1:3](#) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace...
- b. ^{ESV} [2 Thessalonians 2:13](#) But 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. ¹⁴ To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. ^{ESV} [Acts 13:48](#) ...and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.
- d. ^{ESV} [Romans 8:28](#) And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
- e. ^{ESV} [2 Timothy 1:9](#) who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...

- f. ^{ESV} **Matthew 24:22** “And 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.”²³ Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

36. Accordingly we reject as an anti-Scriptural error the doctrine that not alone the grace of God and the merit of Christ are the cause of the election of grace, but that God has, in addition, found or regarded something good in us which prompted or caused Him to elect us, this being variously designated as “good works,” “right conduct,” “proper self-determination,” “refraining from willful resistance,” etc. Nor does Holy Scripture know of an election “by foreseen faith,” “in view of faith,” as though the faith of the elect were to be placed before their election; but according to Scripture the faith which the elect have in time belongs to the spiritual blessings with which God has endowed them by His eternal election. For Scripture teaches **Acts 13:48**: “And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed.” Our Lutheran Confession also testifies (Triglot, p. 1065, Paragraph 8; M. p. 705): “The eternal election of God however, not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps, and promotes our salvation and what pertains thereto; and upon this our salvation is so founded that “the gates of hell cannot prevail against it,” **Matt. 16:18**, as is written **John 10:28**: ‘Neither shall any man pluck My sheep out of My hand’; and again, **Acts 13:48**: ‘And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.’”

37. But as earnestly as we maintain that there is an election of grace, or a predestination to salvation, so decidedly do we teach, on the other hand, that there is no election of wrath, or predestination to damnation. Scripture plainly reveals the truth that the love of God for the world of lost sinners is universal, that is, that it embraces all men without exception, that Christ has fully reconciled all men unto God, and that God earnestly desires to bring all men to faith, to preserve them therein, and thus to save them, as Scripture testifies, **1 Tim. 2:4**: “God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” No man is lost because God has predestined him to eternal damnation. -- Eternal election is a cause why the elect are brought to faith in time, **Acts 13:48**; but election is not a cause why men remain unbelievers when they hear the Word of God. The reason assigned by Scripture for this sad fact is that these men judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life, putting the Word of God from them and obstinately resisting the Holy Ghost, whose earnest will it is to bring also them to repentance and faith by means of the Word, **Act 13:46; 7:51; Matt. 23:37.**

- g. ^{ESV} **Acts 13:46** And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.”
- h. ^{ESV} **Acts 7:51** “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.”
- i. ^{ESV} **Matthew 23:37** “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!”

38. To be sure, it is necessary to observe the Scriptural distinction between the election of grace and the universal will of grace. This universal gracious will of God embraces all men; the election of grace, however, does not embrace all, but only a definite number, whom “God has from the beginning chosen to salvation,” **2 Thess. 2:13**, the “remnant,” the “seed” which “the Lord left,” **Rom. 9:27-29**, the “election,” **Rom. 11:7**; and while the universal will of grace is frustrated in the case of most men, **Matt. 22:14; Luke 7:30**, the election of grace attains its end with all whom it embraces, **Rom. 8:28-30 [d.]**. Scripture, however, while distinguishing between the universal will of grace and the election of grace, does not place the two in opposition to each other. On the contrary, it teaches that the grace dealing with those who are lost is altogether earnest and fully efficacious for conversion. Blind reason indeed declares these two truths to be contradictory; but we impose silence on our reason. The seeming disharmony will disappear in the light of heaven, **1 Cor. 13:12**.

- j. ^{ESV} **Matthew 22:14** “For many are called, but few are chosen.”
- k. ^{ESV} **Luke 7:30** ...the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.
- l. ^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 13:12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

39. Furthermore, by election of grace, Scripture does not mean that one part of God’s counsel of salvation according to which He will receive into heaven those who persevere in faith unto the end, but, on the contrary, Scripture means this, that God, before the foundation of the world, from pure grace, because of the redemption of Christ, has chosen for His own a definite number of persons out of the corrupt mass and has determined to bring them through Word and Sacrament, to faith and salvation.

40. Christians can and should be assured of their eternal election. This is evident from the fact that Scripture addresses them as the chosen ones and comforts them with their election,