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God's Elect

The Chosen Generation

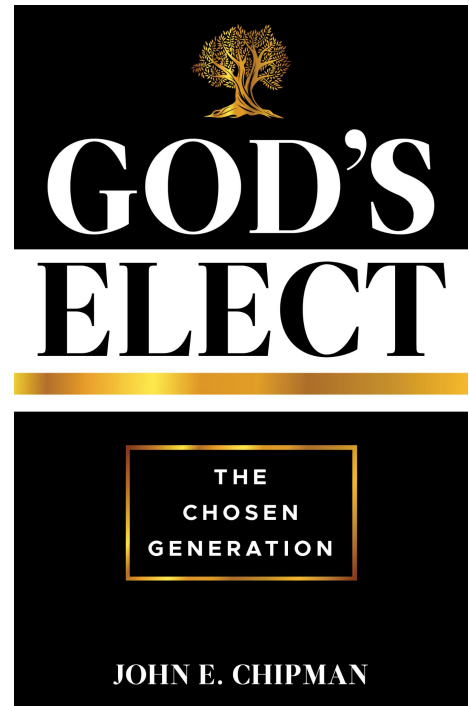
God's Elect offers a message of hope for all Christians who worry about whether they, or their loved ones, have been chosen by God.

The biblical doctrines of election and predestination generate much passion and emotional intensity among Christians. Most theologians have determined that these are doctrines filled with mystery, tension, and paradox which will never be resolved.

Author John E. Chipman disagrees.

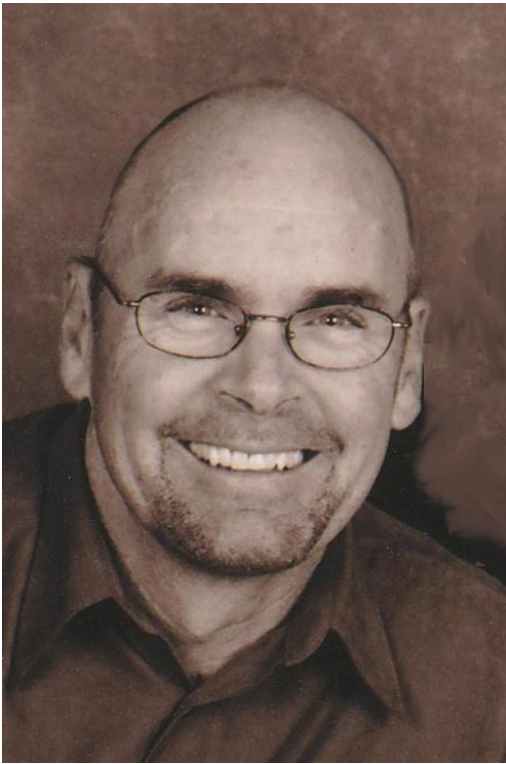
He provides a fresh, biblical viewpoint regarding the perplexing doctrine of election that has the potential to kindle a rethinking of the way Christians view and talk about God's purpose of election in the New Testament. In *God's Elect*, Chipman presents a truth that is neither Calvinistic nor Arminian—a truth that is simply, well, biblical.

This book makes no claim to be deeply philosophical or scholarly. The arguments are intentionally simple, yet profoundly biblical. If you feel like you are caught in an ever-darkening doctrinal bog of election and predestination, and you sense that you have lost God somewhere along the way, then you will want to read *God's Elect*. In its pages, you will find a path that leads back to the sunlight, back to solid ground, and back to the true God of the Bible.



For more info please contact media@deeperiverbooks.com

About the Author



John E. Chipman has earned and utilized a master of architecture degree, taught high school Spanish, and played in a jazz/rock band. He currently teaches at The Spoken Word Christian Church in Southern California. John and his wife, Nancy, a beautiful and talented artist, have one adopted child, who, coincidentally, is also married to a beautiful and talented artist.

Having studied architecture, music, art, math, and foreign languages at nine different colleges and universities, John Chipman's bio sounds like it describes someone who either could not decide what he wanted to be when he grew up or is intrigued and inspired by a variety of academic and intellectual challenges. He confesses to being guilty on both counts.

Through all his academic and business pursuits, John has come to realize that glorifying God by reflecting God's grace to others is the real business of life.

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What Others are Saying About *God's Elect*

God's Elect is a wonderful book that challenges the constructs of both Calvinist and Arminian theologies that have existed for centuries. It has been masterfully written and will force the reader to consider an alternative approach to resolving the inherent challenges within both schools of thought. After serving in ministry with Pastor John Chipman for nearly a decade, I have been fortunate to witness his sincere faith in God and his extreme diligence in researching this matter. His ideas are thought provoking and will cause the reader to examine God's sovereignty, contrasted with our human free will, through a different set of lenses.

—**Bob Cote, Senior Pastor, The Spoken Word Christian Church**

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Suggested Interview Questions for John E. Chipman, Author of *God's Elect*

Q: You disagree with the majority of theologians, who believe that the doctrine of election is an unsolvable mystery. How did centuries of theologians get it wrong?

A: If we base our understanding of the doctrine of election on the premise that “the elect” of the New Testament is just another name for all true Christians, it will create contradictions. Yet, since all agree that the Bible cannot contradict itself, many Bible scholars have chosen to chalk these contradictions up to “mystery,” or “tension,” or “paradox”—things that we mere humans just cannot understand. They simply shrug their shoulders rather than question the premise itself.

Q: If the elect of the New Testament is not a reference to all true Christians, who are the elect?

A: The more appropriate question is, “Who *were* the elect?” I propose that the elect of the New Testament were a unique group of first-generation Christians, contemporaries of the apostles, Jews and Gentiles, chosen and tasked by God with launching the early church. When we mistakenly believe that New Testament election is normative and insert ourselves into the first-century references of the elect, we not only create contradictions—we deny God’s clever, church-launching strategy and inadvertently turn what was unique and divine into something common and unexceptional.

Q: How do you see the elect in the New Testament as distinct from today’s Christian?

A: There are many examples, but an obvious one is the amazing receptivity to the gospel we see in the early church that we don’t typically experience today. The average Christian today has heard the gospel seventeen times before they accept it with a true Christian faith. Yet, what we encounter in the New Testament writings are people who seemed to be divinely predisposed to believe the crazy and completely unbelievable story about a God who became a man. Such a response has the unmistakable imprimatur of God all over it.

Q: What is at the heart of the ongoing, centuries-old debate between Calvinists and Arminians regarding the doctrine of election?

A: Two very different answers to the questions of who can become a Christian and how. The Calvinists believe that not everyone has been enabled by God to believe in Jesus, and it is God who chooses. The non-Calvinist/Arminian believes that other verses reveal that everyone is able to believe in Jesus. Both camps

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provide plenty of passages to support their understanding. However, if we correctly distinguish and appreciate the unique work that God did in the apostles, in the early church, and in today's Christians, the debate and issue of divine election in the New Testament becomes completely irrelevant to today.

Q: You say “the god of Calvinism is not the God of the Bible.” How would you defend that statement?

A: The apostle Paul provides a really good picture of the true God, a God who's always close at hand and accessible to everyone. By contrast, the Calvinists propose a god who is the exact opposite of Paul's God, who has intentionally hidden himself from the vast majority of people, thereby ensuring their spiritual failure. The God that Paul describes is a God of love and grace and mercy. The Calvinist's god seems capricious, vindictive, and cruel. Personally, I don't know how to reconcile those two diametrically opposed pictures of God.

Q: How would you respond to someone who believes they are chosen as one of God's elect?

A: “Tradition” is a powerful force. The things we have been taught for years in Sunday School or from the pulpit become so embedded in our minds that it is difficult to logically evaluate, without prejudice, anything new. But what I propose in the book is not new; it's exactly what the apostles believed and taught. There's a danger in believing that we are chosen by God—somehow, favored by God—while others are not. In the book, I try to emphasize the tremendous blessings that are ours as Christians—just garden-variety, non-elect Christians. We're free, forgiven, and blessed. Do we really need to be any more special than that?

Q: You explain in the book that your journey to understand the doctrine of election became a very personal struggle. What role did it play in your life?

A: In the book, I briefly detail how my son was facing a possible 25-years-to-life sentence in state prison. During that time, my wife and I began volunteering to conduct church services for the inmates in the local jails. I started to struggle with the teaching of our Reformed/Calvinistic church. “Can I tell the inmates that God loves them? Can I tell them Jesus died for them?” I thought. Of course, in the back of my mind were the questions, “Does God love my son? Did Jesus die for my son?” This led me to discover an understanding of the doctrine of election that I did not find in any of the mountains of resources I studied, but seemed crystal-clear in Scripture.

Q: What do you hope people take away from this book?

A: The New Testament doctrine of election has no direct implication for us as modern-day Christians. So we can stop fretting about whether or not we, or our loved ones, are chosen, and we can get back to what we're called to do: simply worship and adore the true God.

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