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The Doctrine of Election

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



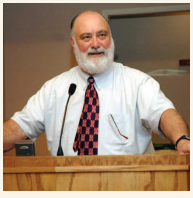
According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.

EPHESIANS 1:4, EXCERPT

What does Scripture teach about God's choosing and the believer's response? John Weaver examines election, grace, and salvation across this series of messages. Readers are invited to consider the biblical grounds of assurance and the place of obedience, humility, and dependence in the Christian life.

"That which God has seen fit to reveal in his word is exactly that which we need."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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The Doctrine of Election

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CHAPTER 1

The Doctrine of Election - 1

SCRIPTURE READING - Ephesians 1:1-14 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, 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, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things

> in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, in 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. That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ, in whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory.

I want to begin a study on one of the most hated and most misunderstood doctrines in Holy Scripture: the doctrine of God's unconditional election. The Word of God makes it very plain that unregenerate men cannot understand this doctrine. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, and therefore they are foolishness unto him."

The sad fact is that not only do unregenerate men fail to understand this doctrine, but many professing Christians will not understand it, either through lack of study or because of heretical distortions and misrepresentations. It is, however, a very clearly elucidated doctrine in the word of God. You may ask, What is election? Simply stated, election has been defined as God's eternal, free and unconditional and irreversible choice of certain persons in Christ to everlasting life.

Definition of Election

For a longer definition, let me read three short paragraphs beginning with paragraph 3 of God's decree from the Philadelphia Confession of Faith: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ to the praise of His glorious grace, others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation to the praise of His glorious justice. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated to

life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, have chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the

creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath by the eternal and most free purpose of his will foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, and effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

The concluding paragraph says, "...the doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending to the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may from the certainty of their effectual calling be assured of their eternal election."

Ephesians 1:1–14 is a doxology of praise to the triune God. In the Greek New Testament, these verses form one sentence. In English Bibles, there is a period only after verse 14; the other divisions are commas, colons, and semicolons.

The Triune Structure of Ephesians 1:1-14

In one swoop of the pen, the mighty Apostle Paul praises the triune God for His work in salvation. This section may be divided into three parts: first, the will of the Father in verses 1 through 6, referring to God's election; secondly, the work of the Son in redemption, verses 7 through 8; and thirdly, the word of the Spirit in salvation, verses 12 through 14. Thus we have the will of the Father, election; the work of the Son, redemption; and the word of the Spirit, salvation. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all mentioned.

In theology, this is referred to as the economical trinity. Everything is out of the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. Paul therefore lays down this clear doctrinal precept and praises God for His work in salvation.

Why Preach Election: God Commands the Whole Counsel

Why should this doctrine be preached and taught? For one simple reason: God has commanded that the whole counsel of God be preached and proclaimed.

If you would turn in your Bibles, holding Ephesians chapter 1, but look first to Acts chapter 20, you will find how the Apostle Paul cleared himself from blood guiltiness. He says in verse 26, "Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am free or that I am pure from the blood of all men." Paul says, "I am pure; I am free from the blood of all men."

No doubt you have heard, as I have heard all my life, that the only way a Christian can be free from the blood of all men is to witness to every single individual; and if you do not witness to every individual, their blood is on your hands. But do you realize that it is humanly and physically impossible to witness to every person you ever see? If I started home from this meeting and witnessed to every person I saw, I never would get home. I could not. I would be seeing people constantly and would never do anything else.

What does the Apostle say? Watch it first in verse 20. Paul is defending his ministry and tells the Ephesian elders, "...and how I've kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house." Paul said, "I held back nothing that was profitable." I hope that rings a bell in your mind concerning another Scripture. For 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable."

If Paul said, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you," it meant that he declared unto them the whole counsel of God. He says, "Wherefore, I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men." Why? "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." The only way that we can be pure from the blood of all men is to preach all of the counsel of God. God has commanded that every doctrine be clearly taught and enunciated.

Someone will object that the doctrine of election is difficult and easily misunderstood. I would answer, all the more reason to preach it, clarify it, elucidate it, and teach it, in order that it might be

understood. Another objection is that the unconverted cannot understand this doctrine. But what if there are unconverted people in the audience? How many doctrines of the Word of God can the unconverted understand apart from the Holy Spirit? The answer is none. “For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them.”

If he understands not one doctrine, and if God is sovereign—and He most certainly is—it means that God can use this doctrine to bless his eyes to be opened, his ears to be opened, and his heart to be converted just as easily as He could use any other doctrine. Therefore, God has very clearly commanded that all of His Word be preached and taught. Now, why preach the doctrine of election?

Election as a Foundational Doctrine

First of all, notice that election is a foundational doctrine. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul lays down the very origin of our salvation: our salvation has its origin in the triune Godhead. Many Bible teachers throughout the years have begun their teaching of systematic theology with a study of the attributes and decrees of God. Calvin, in his Institutes, began with the doctrine of God. Any of the theological books in my office will likewise begin with the study of God. Why? Because that is the foundational doctrine. How can sinners turn to God if they do not know who God is? How can men worship God aright if they do not know who that God is and what he demands?

Acts chapter 15 and verse 18 says, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." In other words, the divine counsel and decree of God are eternal, before the foundation of the world. God knew the end from the beginning because he ordained what the end should be. Nothing has ever caught God by surprise. When we begin to build, we first sit down and draw up our plans so that we may know exactly what goes where; everything is laid out before construction begins. So the divine Architect predestinated everything before a single creature was ever called into existence.

The Word of God tells us that even the hairs of our head are numbered, and that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground apart from God. Many of you have viewed construction work and seen two or

three men running around while four or five others are doing something else. You shake your head and say, "I don't understand how there could ever be a building made out of what's going on over there." This is especially true when you see high-rise buildings with twenty, thirty, or forty stories. Yet God's work is not confusion: the divine Architect ordained all things according to his eternal counsel.

The first thing they will do is go down several hundred feet into the earth, putting in a solid footing and a solid foundation. Although you may look at a building under construction and everything is apparently in confusion, all you need to do is step over to the architect and look at his plan. By looking at those plans or blueprints, you are able to visualize in your mind what the finished product will look like.

Then that which was confused here and confused there suddenly falls into place. So it is with God. Beloved, without an understanding of God's eternal purpose and God's eternal decree, history remains an insoluble enigma. God is not working at random. The gospel has not been sent forth on an uncertain mission. The final conflict and the final outcome between good and evil have not been left indeterminate. How many shall be saved and how many shall be lost has not been left to the will of the creature.

Everything has been infallibly determined and immutably fixed by God, the great and glorious architect, before he ever laid the foundation of this earth. In reality, this is our only hope and comfort. As 2 Timothy 2:19 declares, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

"And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Notice: "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his." John Aris Smith wrote, "...election, having once pitched upon a man, it will find him out and call him home, wherever he be. It calls Zacchaeus out of a cursed Jericho, Abraham out of idolaters, Ur of the Chaldees, Nicodemus and Paul from the college of the Pharisees, Christ sworn enemies Dionysius and Damaris out of superstitious Athens. In whatsoever dunghills God's elect are hid, election will find them out and bring them home."

John Barlow said, "...whom he choosing shall be created, called, justified, sanctified, glorified, because his purpose cannot be altered, his promise cannot be revoked." Let Manasseh repair the high places and rear altars for Baal. Let the prodigal run from his father, drink and swill, and consume his portion. Let Saul make havoc of the saints, put them in prison, and do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth. Yet they shall come to themselves, mourn for their sins, and be saved and converted, for they are elected, beloved of Him who is the same forever.

Were it not thus, what hope could the faithful have to see Babylon ruined, the Roman whore burned, the Jew called, the devil's kingdom destroyed, and Christ perfected? Thus the Apostle wrote, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

Everyone knows that if the foundation is faulty, the building erected upon it cannot be sound. If your understanding of the doctrine of election is faulty, and your conceptions are unscriptural, that throws off all the other doctrine to the degree that you do not understand God's decree of election. To that same degree, you will be wrong in every other doctrine in the Word of God, particularly those relating to God's salvation and the fall of man. Election is therefore a foundational doctrine.

Election as a Difficult Doctrine

Secondly, it is a difficult doctrine, difficult in three areas. First, it is difficult as to our understanding. Men, by nature, simply do not understand spiritual truths. We must be taught them, and the Spirit of God must open our eyes and let us see His truth. We must be taught, as the Word of God says, "here a little, and there a little."

Line upon line, precept upon precept. I am afraid to confess it, but I believe it is the truth: this is a difficult doctrine to our understanding, not because we are incapable of understanding it, but because most people are unwilling to understand it.

I was preaching in Alabama from 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. Many of you know that verse 4 says, “Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.” There are only ten verses in that chapter. I was not

preaching on the doctrine of election; I was preaching from other verses. But since it was such a short chapter, I read all ten verses. After the service, a man came up to me and said, “I don’t think you ought to have read what you read.” I asked, “What is that?” He said, “That verse about election, verse 4.” I said, “Why not? It is in the Word of God, and I am not ashamed of anything in the Word of God. Why can I not read that publicly?”

He said, “Because many people do not understand it.” I said, “What you are trying to tell me is that I should not have read it because you do not understand it. Have you ever had anyone sit down, take the Bible, and go through every verse on the doctrine of election, showing you what it is in the Bible?” He said, “No.” I replied, “The word occurs seventy-three times in the New Testament. If you will come to my room after lunch, we will sit down, and I will take my Bible and go through all seventy-three passages, showing it to you from the Word of God, that by God’s grace you might understand.” He agreed to meet me at my room at two o’clock. I hurried through dinner that Lord’s Day and got to my room. About fifteen minutes to two, the telephone rang. The man said, “Brother Weaver,” and I recognized his voice immediately. He said, “I just wanted to call and let you know that I am not coming to your room, because my mind is already made up, and I do not want to be confused with a bunch of scriptures.” I said, “Dear Brother, it would be best if you stayed there and I got a good nap this afternoon. That way both of us would benefit from this afternoon.”

It is not that we are incapable of understanding the doctrine of election. Usually, it is that we do not want to understand it. So it is difficult as to our understanding. Secondly, it is difficult as to the acceptance of it. The mind of man is loathe to accept such a humbling, flesh-withering doctrine.

If you would turn in your Bible to John chapter 15, I will show you very quickly what our flesh would rather do. In John chapter 15 and verse 16, our Lord says very clearly to His disciples, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." But man by nature wants to say, "God did not choose me, I chose God."

That is why, in the average testimony, you can hear men say, "I am so glad I decided to come to Jesus." That is why you hear

individuals say, "I am so glad that I chose God." No, our Lord said, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain." It is a difficult doctrine, not only in our understanding, but also in our acceptance of it. And then, thirdly, I might add, it is difficult as to the proclamation of it.

Have you ever stopped to meditate how? Do you teach the doctrine of election? Where do you begin? How can you soften the blow of the doctrine? The answer is, you cannot. You are faced with one of two things. You either must obey God and proclaim it exactly the way He has recorded it, or you must disobey God, be quiet, and refuse to proclaim it.

Difficulties are designed to humble us and make us see our need for divine wisdom. In 2 Timothy 2, verse 7, the Apostle Paul told Timothy, "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." Understanding comes from God; it is His gift. But understanding does not come automatically. It comes only as we consider God's truth. Although this is indeed a difficult doctrine, God says it ought to make us cry to Him for understanding as we meditate upon it. Then God will very clearly open our eyes, that we may behold the truth from His Word. It is not only a foundational doctrine; it is indeed a difficult doctrine.

Election as an Important and Blessed Doctrine

Thirdly, election is an important doctrine. Most of us have never really thought about how important election is; in fact, most of us, I am afraid, never even think about it. But consider how important election really is. Apart from divine election—or, to say it another way, if there were no divine election—there would be no Jesus Christ and no divine gospel. If God had not chosen some before the foundation of the world, there never would have been a Jesus Christ to save those individuals, and there never would have been a gospel to proclaim. If God had not chosen some to be saved, none would ever be saved.

There would be no Messiah. And to show you that I did not make that up, consider Romans 9:29: “Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have been as Sodom, and been made like unto

Gomorrah." If God had not chosen some, we would have been as Sodom and made like Gomorrah. If God had not reserved to himself a remnant, none would be saved; all would be destroyed.

This doctrine is important because without it there would be no salvation. In Ephesians 1:3, Paul says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Every blessing that you and I have is in Christ. If there were no election, there would be no Christ; if there were no Christ, there would be no blessings. This doctrine is extremely important.

Beloved, until and unless you grasp and comprehend, in some degree, the doctrine of God's election, you will never really worship and thank God as you ought for your salvation. You will always take your salvation for granted and believe, in some sense, that God owed it to you. But when, by the grace of God, your eyes are opened and you see, as Paul plainly teaches, that God did not owe you anything but damnation and destruction, you will bow before God and worship at his throne and thank him that, in his infinite grace, he chose you, one who was unworthy in

Election Is a Blessed Doctrine

You are yourself and deserved of nothing but hell. It is a very important doctrine. We cannot have any concept of salvation apart from it.

Fourthly, let me point out that it is a blessed doctrine. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him."

I hope you notice the connection there. He talks about all the blessings that are in Christ, and then says these blessings are, in verse 4, "according as he hath chosen us." In other words, our blessings are uniquely linked to our election. You see, beloved, God is not like man. God does not draw a bow at a venture. Everything is sure and everything is settled, and we can only derive comfort and hope from that fact. All of our blessings are uniquely related to our election.

In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 12 and 13, the apostle says, “That they all might be damned who believe not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” He is talking about individuals who receive not the truth. They love wickedness, sin, and ungodliness. He says that they all might be damned who loved not the truth, but they had pleasure in unrighteousness.

But look at the contrast in verse 13: “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.” He is saying, over here are those who receive not the love of the truth; they love sin, wickedness, rebellion, and ungodliness. But thanks be unto God, you love holiness and truth because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation. Every time you find in the Word of God the doctrine of election, it is always found in the context of praise. He says we are bound to give thanks unto God. By the way, that word “bound” is a very strong word.

The Distasteful Doctrine

It means we owe thanks to God for our election. Beloved, we can never understand how much we owe God thanks until we understand election.

Fifthly, I want to point out that it is a distasteful doctrine. It is not only foundational, difficult, important, and blessed; it is a distasteful doctrine. No doctrine is so detested by a proud human nature as this one. One would think that a doctrine so God-honoring and so Christ-exalting would be readily and happily received by men who profess to love Christ. But alas and woe, it is different. As the doctrine of eternal punishment is hated by the unconverted, even so the doctrine of God's unconditional election is loathed and reviled by many professing believers. You begin to proclaim that salvation is by the free grace of God instead of the free will of man, and that even the elect must be made willing to come to Christ.

Election as a Distasteful and Separating Doctrine

The humanist will rail and revile and cry with great indignation. And yet it is the truth. Scripture says, "He came unto his own, and his

own received him not." That is, to those Jews, national Israel, he came, and those Jews received him not. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." He came unto his own, but they received him not. Yet some received him, and some believed. Why did they believe? Why did they receive? "Who were born, not of blood," that is, their ancestry had nothing to do with it, "nor of the will of the flesh," that is, human merits had nothing to do with it; they did not earn it, "nor of the will of men."

Their own will did not have anything to do with it, “but of God.” So you could read it like this: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name, who were born of God.” The only reason anyone ever receives Christ, the only reason anyone ever believes, is because they are born of God.

It is not because they are children of Christians. It is not because they have been church members all their life. It is not because they have human merits, that they are better than someone else. It is not because they have used their will and other people have not used their will. It is simply because of God. Romans chapter 9 and verse 16 makes it plain: “So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” It is not of man; it is of God.

It is a very distasteful doctrine because it abases man. Man will not have the place of abasement; he will have only exaltation. Yet the Scriptures say, concerning even the elect in Psalm 110, verse 3, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” It is God’s power that must make us willing to come to Christ.

The sad thing is that many Baptists and many Protestants agree with the Roman Catholic Church. I told that to one preacher, and he was very angry with me. He came to my office to straighten me out. He pastored a certain Baptist church, and I told him, “Dear brother, you ought, in all honesty, to change the name of your church to such-and-such Roman Catholic Church.” He was horrified. I said, “Because what you have just got through telling me is the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. You’re not Baptist.”

I said, “You have followed the same line that they set forth in the Council of Trent, which is the official position and theology of the Roman Catholic Church.” Let me read one of the anathemas of the Council of Trent: “If anyone should affirm that since the fall of Adam, man’s free will is lost, let him be accursed.” Most Baptists and most Protestants say that man has a free will, and that man must do this and that man must do that—the same theology taught by the Roman Catholic Church. They said, “If any say that man’s free will is lost, let him be accursed.” They were fighting against Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, who were saying boldly and proudly, it is not free will that saves man, but free grace.

You see, the whole argument is this. When it all boils down, who is God? God or man? Who is it that saves, God or man? Who is it that determines the future, God or man? Everybody believes in predestination. There is no argument over that. Everybody believes in it. The only argument is who is doing the predestinating. Does God do it, or does man do it? Most men will deny God's predestination that they might usurp their own predestination in that place. And so the argument comes back: Who is God? God or man? It is a very distasteful doctrine, for it humbles man and puts him in the dust at the throne of God. And then, sixthly, it is indeed a separating doctrine.

What do I mean by that? John 8:47 says, "He that is of God heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." He puts it very plainly: those that are born of God listen to God; those that are not of God refuse to listen to Him.

Look at what the same apostle said in 1 John 4:5-6: "They are of the world. Therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." In verse 5 he says that the world hears these individuals, for they are of the world. But he that is of God hears God's Word, and he that refuses God's Word is not of God. Hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Every man that has been born of God will bow to God's Word. If you have problems with it, it is a very unsettling evidence that you are not genuinely born of God.

Look at John 6:65-66. Even our Lord had this problem. Even our Lord lost disciples because of the Word of God. Notice what He said: "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." Now watch this: "No man can come."

You remember that “can” is a term of ability. He did not say that no man may come, for all are invited. But He did say, “No man can come.” No man has the ability in himself to come savingly to Christ. “No man can come unto me except it hath been given him of my Father.” In the Greek, this is a perfect tense: something that happened in the past with continuing results. In other words, God gave it to the man in his election, and it continues to be. Our Lord is clearly teaching man’s inability to come to Christ savingly and his inability to save himself. Yea, He is teaching the unconditional election of God: if any man is ever saved, God must save him.

What was the result? “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” It is a very separating doctrine. It separates the chaff from the wheat, those who truly love God from those who do not, those who want to bow before the Word of God from those who do not, and the humanists from the Christians.

Election as an Evangelical Doctrine

Lastly, by way of introduction, it is an evangelical doctrine. What do I mean by that? It is a doctrine that produces in us a real evangelical witness when rightly understood. You hear people say, “If I believed in the doctrine of election, I never would witness.” The truth is, if I did not believe it, I would not witness. If it is left up to man, and all men are totally depraved according to the Word of God, there is no reason to witness.

When you understand that God hath chosen some, but has also appointed the means whereby they are called, that is indeed the argument and ground for witnessing.

Consider what God told the Apostle Paul in Acts chapter 18. I like this passage for several reasons, not only because of the theology it teaches, but because it shows me that the Apostle Paul was human. We tend to think that somehow those men were all superhuman. Yet

the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision: “Be not afraid.” In the Greek it says, “Stop being afraid.” The mighty Apostle Paul was afraid. Can anyone imagine Paul being afraid?

Paul was at Corinth, a seaport town. In fact, it had three seaports, with wickedness abounding like you would not believe. There were temples where there were temple prostitutes. It was an ungodly town, and Paul was coming in with a gospel of pure grace. Maybe some began to threaten him; I do not know. But God said, “Stop being afraid.” Evidently Paul was afraid. Then He said, “But speak, and hold not thy peace.” Evidently Paul was refusing to preach because of his fear. So God told Paul, “Stop being afraid, but go ahead and preach.”

“For I am with thee. And no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city.” He said, “Paul, you do the preaching, I’ll do the saving. I’ve got them here, and I’m going to save them through you.” If that will not fortify you to preach, I do not know what will: to know that God does have His own, even in the most wicked and vile cities.

Paul rightly understood this. In 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 10 he said, “I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” Paul had learned his lesson at Corinth: “I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may be saved. Whoever they are, wherever they may be, I’ll endure it for them.”

This is really the only sure ground for evangelists. Adoniram Judson, that great Baptist missionary to Burma, was in Burma for fifteen years without one convert. What kept Judson going was the fact that he knew God had some of his sheep in Burma, and that God in his own time would bring them to repentance and faith.

Adoniram Judson labored for fifteen years without one convert. There is probably not a Baptist church in America today that would support him, for he did not produce. Yet one lady, under a burden for Judson, wrote him and said, "Mr. Judson, is there anything you need over there that you can't get that I could get here and send to you?" Judson wrote back, "Send a communion set." He did not even have a convert. But by the time that communion set got there, he

needed that one and a dozen more like it, for the power of God broke out in one of the greatest awakenings in our world history and came to those Burmese people under the ministry of Adoniram Judson. Thousands were converted. What kept him going was that he knew God had some people in that city.

David Brainerd, missionary to the American Indians, labored for three years without one convert. David Brainerd believed the truth of God's election. One day, while he was preaching through a drunken interpreter to some adult Indians, the power of God fell. Fifty of those male Indians, who had gone through torture, tests of fire, and everything to prove their manhood—that they would not cry and were absolutely men—fell on their faces, weeping and begging God for mercy. What kept Brainerd going was that he knew God had his sheep there, too.

Beloved, this is God's doctrine. May he enable us to bow to it, understand it, and learn to apply it, that we, by the grace of God, may receive comfort, strength, and hope.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ for thy grace and thy mercy. Teach us thy word, O Lord, and we pray for thy elect, whoever and wherever they may be, that thou wouldst convert them by thy grace and draw them to thyself. Help us, O Lord, to love thee with all our hearts and to bow to thy word. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Doctrine of Election - 2

SCRIPTURE READING - Ephesians 1:1-14 (KJV)

Chapter 1, verse 1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, 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. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, in 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. That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ, in whom also ye trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of the glory of his grace."

Introduction and Review

> Some weeks ago we began a study on the biblical doctrine of election. I began by stating that this doctrine is one of the most hated and misunderstood doctrines in the Word of God. It cannot be understood by the unregenerate according to 1 Corinthians 2 and verse 12. And many times it will not be understood by many Christians simply because it has never clearly been taught, and secondly, because they have heard of the perversions and not the true teaching.
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> We gave a simple definition, and that is this: Election, simply stated, has been defined as God's eternal, free, unconditional, and irreversible choice of certain persons in Christ to everlasting life.

In Ephesians chapter 1, we have the great triune God involved in the work of redemption. It can be broken down into three sections: the will of the Father in election, verses 1 through 6; the work of the Son in redemption, verses 7 and 8; and the work of the Spirit in salvation, verses 12 through 14. This passage gives us what is known as the economical Trinity. Everything is out of the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

There are six things concerning the doctrine of election. First, it is a foundational doctrine. You cannot understand the doctrine of salvation, or even the work of the triune God in salvation, without understanding the work of election. This is why the Word of God tells us in 2 Timothy 2:19, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.” It is the very foundation of our comfort and hope.

Second, it is a difficult doctrine. It is difficult to our understanding because it requires us to think and meditate, and it requires divine illumination. It is difficult as to our acceptance because it humbles man and elevates God. Man, by nature, wishes to ascend to the very throne of God. He would rather see God dethroned and himself enthroned than see God have His proper place. It is also difficult as to its proclamation, for where do you begin? The only way to begin is with the Word of God.

Third, it is an important doctrine. Ephesians 1:3 tells us that all our blessings are found because God has chosen us in Jesus Christ. Fourth, it is a very blessed doctrine. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him.” Fifth, it is a distasteful doctrine. Men do not like it.

Sixth, it is a separating doctrine. Our Lord taught it in John 6, especially verses 65 and 66, saying, “No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” The Bible says, “From that time many went back, and walked with him no more.”

The great apostle Paul says, "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they might be saved." When you begin to talk about the doctrine of election, no one who is a Bible-believing Christian will argue that the Bible does not teach election. Everyone who believes the Bible believes that it teaches the doctrine of election.

The Principle of Election: God Chooses

Every believer will acknowledge that. The point of contention is not the doctrine, but who does the electing: Is it God or is it man? The Bible dogmatically asserts the doctrine of election as a biblical principle. Here in Ephesians 1, I want us to see first of all the principle of election. Notice in Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 4: "according as he hath chosen us." That should answer the question: Who does the electing? Very clearly, the Bible says it is God the Father. For in verse 3 he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then in verse 4, "according as he hath chosen us."

The words elect, chose, chosen, and choose occur 73 times in the New Testament. To begin with, I want you to see the doctrine of election by considering those words that do not refer to a soteriological framework, that is, the framework of salvation. You can understand the doctrine of election by looking at the words choose and chosen, first of all, in their non-salvation framework.

Election Implies Preterition

Notice that election always and necessarily involves a reprobation or a preterition. The words reprobation and preterition are synonymous. They simply mean a passing over or an omission from. To choose one necessarily implies that others are passed over, omitted, or left. Look in your Bibles, holding Ephesians 1, to Psalm 78, and remember that these very first verses are in a non-salvation framework. They do not refer to our personal salvation. However, Psalm 78 could certainly refer to it.

I kind of hate to use that term, but I wanted to get across what I was trying to say. I don't really think there are any verses in the Bible that are non-soteriological, that is, that do not relate to salvation, for everything relates to our salvation in one sense of the word. But what I was talking about was primarily our personal salvation.

In Psalm 78:67-68, Scripture says, "Moreover he," referring to God, "refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved." God very plainly chose the tribe of Judah. He chose Jerusalem in which to put and to place his holy name. He chose not the tabernacle of Joseph, that is, the children of Ephraim and Manasseh. It singles out that he chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but you know that our Lord came through the tribe of Judah.

Here is a very choice of one which necessarily implied a passing over of others. In 1 Samuel 17, David is going out to fight Goliath. Saul has armed him with his armor, but David says that he cannot go in Saul's armor, for that armor has not been proved. Notice what he does: "And he," that is David, "took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had even in a script, and a sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine."

The Bible says that David chose five smooth stones out of the brook. David looked at those stones, which his eyes could see, and chose five. All the others were left. Why he chose those stones, I don't know. Probably they fit in his sling better. Maybe one or two were pointed, and he thought he could sink that point deep into the Philistine's brow. But the very fact that he chose five meant that he passed over the others.

This is true in the New Testament as well. In Luke 6:13, "And when it was day, he," our Lord Jesus, "called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." Our Lord called to himself his disciples.

I do not know how many were there, but there were certainly more than twelve. Scripture says that out of that number He chose twelve, which means He passed over the others and designated only these original twelve as the apostles. He chose twelve and passed over the others.

In Luke chapter 14 and verse 7, we read, “And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms, saying unto them.” He was speaking about the Pharisees and how they loved the chief seats and the chief places in the synagogues. These individuals were making a choice. The very fact that they chose what they termed the best meant that they bypassed and left out the rest.

If you look in the book of Acts, chapter 6, verse 5, you find the choosing of what is commonly known as the first deacons: “And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch.” Notice that there was a whole multitude, but out of the whole multitude only seven were chosen. The others were passed over or left.

Then, in Acts chapter 15 and verse 7, Peter said, “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, you know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe.” Peter said that God chose him to open the door

to the Gentiles. He did not choose James or Bartholomew. That means the others were passed over in that particular aspect. One can clearly see from these verses that when one is chosen, others are left.

When you begin to talk about reprobation and preterition, you must remember that reprobation is not an active decree as election is. Election is an active decree in which God literally chooses some to salvation. Reprobation and preterition do not have to be an active decree, for men by nature are already condemned and on their way to hell. All God has to do to condemn a man to hell is absolutely nothing, for the man is already condemned. He merely withholds His grace, the free gifts of repentance and faith.

No man by nature wants repentance or faith. The Word of God tells us clearly that they despise them and will have nothing to do with them. In Luke chapter 19, the very words of the wicked are, "We will not have this man to reign over us." In reprobation and preterition, all God has to do is absolutely nothing.

Answering the Objection of Injustice

Election is an active decree, whereas reprobation and preterition mean that God determines in His own counsel, according to His own will, not to give grace, faith, and repentance to certain creatures. This is one of the chief objections to the doctrine of election. Whenever you talk about election, someone will say, "But that is unjust."

The answer should be obvious: election does not deal with creatures simply as creatures. It deals with creatures as depraved, rebellious, ungodly, wicked, God-defying, Christ-hating sinners. The very fact that any are saved is a miraculous work of grace.

You will remember I quoted Romans 9:29 two weeks ago. That is what the Apostle Paul said as he quoted Isaiah: "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a remnant, we would have been as Sodom and Gomorrah." In other words, if God in His election had not chosen some unto salvation, Paul and Isaiah both state that none would ever be saved. And so the very fact that God chose is a means for praise and admiration.

Now, when you think about election, you cannot think about an arbitrary, sadistic God, because most people try to say that God said, "I'll take this and I'll leave that, and I'll take this and I'll leave that." I do not know the basis on which God chose. The Bible tells you—and we will get to that just a little bit later—that He did it according to the counsel of His will, which means that whatever God did, He did it as it was consummately wise. And by the way, when someone tries to say that this is not just, when you hear about the doctrine of election, my standard response is, "You're right, it's not just."

If we got justice, every one of us would be condemned. It is grace. That is why the Bible speaks in Romans 11 of the election of grace. You know, it is amazing how we always confuse things. Let us suppose that here is a wealthy widow woman. She has raised all of her family and has done a good job. All of her children are well-adjusted, happily married couples, having a good income, and everything is perfectly well. Then her husband is gone, her children are raised, she is rather lonely, and she is well off. She decides that she would like to raise some more children. So she goes to an orphanage, and let us say that there are 130 children in that orphanage.

She looks them over and says, "I tell you what, I believe I can handle three, and I'll take that boy and those two girls." Now, no one would ever think of saying, "What a wicked, ungodly, unjust woman. She left 127." The fact is, she did not have to take any, and the very fact that she chose three was an act of grace. Everyone would say, "What a gracious woman. What a generous woman." Because she chose three, we do not condemn her because she left 127. The very thing is true of God. It is not the fact that God did not choose the whole world. That is a matter of concern to us. The matter that should amaze us is that God chose. He did not have to. And so, that is one of the chief objections.

Three Biblical Statements on God's Election

Now, there are three biblical statements concerning God and his election. The first is this: God has a sovereign right to bestow more grace upon one subject than he does another, especially since grace is unmerited and undeserved favor.

In Matthew chapter 20, our Lord gives the parable of the vineyard. The early workers complained, saying, "These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, who have borne the burden and the heat of the day. But he answered one of them and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong. Didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way, I will give unto this last, even unto the first."

Notice verse 15: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" You never condemn a man because he walks up to you and gives you a hundred-dollar bill. You do not look him in the eye and say, "Well, why didn't you give me a thousand?" You are thankful for the hundred. You recognize that, had he so pleased, he could have given you nothing. It is lawful for him to do what he will with his own.

So our Lord says, according to my grace, I may bestow it upon one and not upon another. I may give one more and one less. It is mine; I may do with it what I will. Romans chapter 9, verses 20 and 21, says, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make of the same lump one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" God says, "That's my right. I can do what I will with my own."

Who is it that will question me for doing it? “Who art thou that repliest against God?” Scripture teaches us that God has a sovereign right to bestow more grace upon one subject than He does upon another. Secondly, Scripture tells us that God has been pleased to exercise that right. In Romans chapter 9, He tells us that He makes one vessel of honor and another of dishonor. He not only has that right; He has been pleased to exercise it in dealing with men.

Consider Psalm 147:19–20: “He shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not so dealt with any nation. As for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.” According to Scripture, God certainly gave more grace and more revelation to the nation of Israel than to any other nation on earth.

He did not give it to the Hittites, the Hivites, the Philistines, or the Jebusites. He gave it to Israel. The Word of God says, “He hath not dealt so with any nation.” In Romans chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, even the mighty Apostle Paul acknowledges this: “What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is there in circumcision? Much in every way, chiefly that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” The advantage that the Jew had over the Gentile was not only that they had the ceremonies of God, but chiefly that they were the nation given the Word of God. God is saying that He is not only sovereign to give His grace as He pleases, bestowing more upon one and less upon another, but that He actually uses that sovereign right. “He hath not so dealt,” says the psalmist, “with any nation.”

That is why our Lord in John 15:16 looked at His disciples and said, “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” Acts 9:15 shows that He has a sovereign right to bestow more grace upon one subject than another. Concerning Saul of Tarsus, who was converted and became the mighty Apostle Paul, the Lord said unto Ananias, “Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.” How many of you have ever witnessed to kings? How many of you have ever witnessed to Israel? Saul was a chosen vessel who had more grace in the fact that he witnessed to all three.

Now, the third statement is this. The first is that God has a sovereign right to bestow more grace upon one. The second is that God actually exercises that right. The third, listen very carefully, is that God has some other reason than saving as many as possible for the way in which He distributes His grace. I am going to show it to you in the Bible. God has some other reason than saving as many as possible for the way in which He distributes His grace.

There is a sign on Highway 341 going to Brunswick that says, “Souls are only gold,” which is really an unbiblical statement. Our only goal as Christians is the glory of God, which would include the salvation of souls. But the Scriptures tell us categorically that God has some other reason than saving as many as possible in the way He distributes His grace.

In Matthew 11:21, our Lord says, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works that were done in you

had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented." If Tyre and Sidon, who were destroyed, had seen the mighty works done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, they would have repented and lived. If God is interested in saving as many as possible, why were those mighty works not done then in Tyre and Sidon? Verse 22 says, "But I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you."

"And thou, Capernaum, who art exalted in heaven, shall be brought down to hell. For if the mighty works which were done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained to this day." God said that if the works done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, Sodom would have repented and lived and been in existence to this day. Why, then, were those works not done in Sodom? Our Lord says, "At the same time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." If these mighty works had been done in those other towns, they would have repented and lived. Why were they not done there? He thanks the Father because He has hidden these great secrets from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes.

Our Lord gives the answer as to why these mighty works were not done in Sodom and Gomorrah and Tyre and Sidon: "Even so, Father, for it seemed good in thy sight." That is the only answer in Scripture. It seemed good in the sight of God.

Look again at Romans chapter 9, verses 22 through 25. I am showing you from Scripture that God has some other reason than saving as many as possible for the way in which He distributes His grace: "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" And he saith also unto Hosea, "I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved."

Notice that God endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. He endures great longsuffering, and allows His

people to suffer long with those who are fitted to destruction. This work is in order that they might be destroyed, and that He might make the riches of His glory known on the vessels of mercy.

The reason God's grace cannot be chiefly concerned with man is that man would then be designated as the best good. But the best good is God, and God can only be concerned chiefly with Himself. If God were chiefly concerned with man, then man would, in reality, be greater than God.

Here is a very plain statement of Holy Scripture. What God has done is this: He has created all things for His glory, and He works all things for His glory. For Proverbs 16:4 says, "The Lord hath made all things for himself." In case anyone did not understand that statement, Scripture continues: "Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." God has made all things for Himself. That is, He even bypasses some individuals with His grace and so fits them for the day of evil—the destruction in the day of wrath.

Have you ever stopped to think that without heaven, if God had damned everyone—which He could have, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God—no one would ever know anything about the grace and mercy of God? But if God saved everybody, then no one would ever know anything about the wrath, justice, and anger of God.

Don McKinney, a preacher friend of mine, made this statement, and I think it is an excellent explanation, the closest I can come to it: "When God in eternity past viewed man as fallen and sinful, rebellious and depraved, the wrath of God arose and said, 'Damn them all!' The love of God arose and said, 'Save them all!' And then the wisdom of God came and said, 'Divide the lump. Let some praise thy grace and some praise thy justice.'" In Romans chapter 9, that is exactly what He said: of the same lump He made some vessels of honor and some vessels of dishonor.

So you see, beloved, God has some other reason than saving as many as possible for the way in which He distributes His grace. Revelation 4:11 declares, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Contrary to what some people

say, man was not created because God was lonely. God cannot be lonely; that would posit a defect in God. The only reason God created us is because it pleased Him to do so. The only reason God saved us is because it pleased Him to do so.

There are four types of election mentioned in the Bible. The first type is known as theocratic, or national, election. Turn to Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 37.

Four Types of Election in the Bible

Notice what Moses says very plainly: "And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt." So God chose the children of Israel. In Deuteronomy 7:6-8, God says, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God. The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people, for you were the fewest of all people." God did not choose them because of something in them, because of something they did or did not do. It was not because of their greatness, their might, their strength, or their works. They did not have any. Why did he do it? Verse 8: "But because the Lord loved you." In other words, he loved you simply because it pleased him to love you. And he chose you, he said.

This is what is known as theocratic, or national, election. You might also jot down Romans 2:28-29 and Romans 9:6. The Word of God tells you that there is still an election among the elect nation, for they are not all of Israel who are of Israel. There is the Israel of God within Israel. So there is national election. Secondly, there is what is known in the Bible as vocational election.

Turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 18. Let's begin reading with verse 1: "The priests, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren. The Lord is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them."

"And this shall be the priest's due from the people, and from them that offer sacrifice, whether it be of ox or sheep, they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The firstfruit also of thy corn, and of thy wine, and of thine oil, and of the first of the fleece of thy sheep thou shalt give to him. For the Lord thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes to stand and minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons forever. And if a Levite come from any of the gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all his desire of his mind in the place which the Lord shall choose, then he shall minister in the name of the Lord his God as all his brethren the Levites do which stand before the Lord."

This speaks of a vocational election. God chose only the tribe of Levites to stand before Him. Not all the children of Israel could serve in the tabernacle or in the temple; only the Levites could do so. And not every Levite was a high priest.

Beloved, if you are going to disparage election and view it as unbiblical—if God does not have a sovereign right to save whom He will—then He does not have the sovereign right to choose whom He will to be His servants. Yet He very undeniably chose the tribe of Levi. None of the other tribes could do it. You remember what happened to several of the kings who tried to usurp the priest's office: they got killed. He rejected Saul and had Saul killed. Uzziah.

What I am saying is that not everyone is a pastor-teacher. Have you ever noticed that not every pastor-teacher is a Charles Haddon Spurgeon? Not everyone is a George Whitefield or a John Calvin. Not everyone is some mighty warrior in the faith. In other words, God has the sovereign right to call whom He will and even to distribute gifts and graces in that vocation.

There was a faction in the Corinthian church simply because they did not understand this. This is another reason why we have our young men preach—not just so the church can determine their gifts, though that is one reason, and not just to give them the opportunity, though that is another reason. This is a third reason: so that we may come to the realization that we are to hear the Word of God and not men. Some may speak more eloquently than others, and some may have better outlines than others. But this was the problem in the

Corinthian church. In 1 Corinthians 3:4, Paul says, “For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos.”

He asks, “Are ye not carnal or fleshly? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” Someone says, “I like Paul. He is more spiritual.” Another says, “I like Apollos. He can really thunder it out.” They were basing their preferences upon the abilities, gifts, and graces God had given certain men.

There were factions in that church, but Paul says, “Even as God hath given to every man.” All that Apollos is, God gave him. All that Paul is, God gave him. All that Sam is, God gave him. All that Weaver is, God gave him. All that Goten is, God gave him. In other words, you are not to look at the man, but at the word that he preaches. That is why he says in 1 Corinthians 4:7, “For who maketh thee to differ one from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”

God has given to every man sovereignly as He wills. If election is not true, if God does not have the right to do with His own as He wills, then I would complain because I am not a Spurgeon or a Whitfield. I would like to be a Spurgeon or a Whitfield, but I can only be John Weaver and exercise the gifts God has given me. There is a vocational election. Thirdly, there is a messianic election. That may shock you, but it is true.

Isaiah 42 presents a messianic election. In verse 1, God says concerning His Christ: “Behold, my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth, I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, for he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.” God calls Christ “My servant” and “My elect.”

First Peter 2:4-6 also speaks of Messianic election: “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable

to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded."

Jesus Christ is called God's elect. Now do you begin to understand why the Scripture says that we are chosen in him? Christ is God's first elect, and the entire body of the redeemed are then chosen in Christ. Thus, there is a messianic election.

Fourthly, there is what we refer to as a soteriological, or an ecclesiastical, election—that is, an election unto salvation, the elect of the Church. The Bible tells you in Ephesians 1:14 that he hath chosen us in Christ. Election is not just into certain vocations. It is true that there is an election of vocations, but there is also an election unto salvation. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, he says: "But we are bound to give thanks always 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."

So there is a theocratic election, a vocational election, a messianic election, and an election unto salvation. What shall we say concerning the principle of the doctrine of election? I have four statements, and I hope that you will come to the same conclusions that I have come to.

First, election is biblical, and honesty in faith accepts it. No man can honestly deny that the Bible teaches election. Secondly, election is logical, and consistency in doctrine requires it.

Concluding Statements on Election

If you believe that God is God, you must believe that He is sovereign. If God is sovereign, He may do exactly as He pleases and answer to no one. That is why David said in Psalm 115, "But our God is in the heaven; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." Once you realize that God is God and not man, you must conclude that election is logical and consistency in doctrine requires it.

Whenever you hear someone say, "I came to Christ," you ought to say, "That's wonderful." The Bible teaches the responsibility of man, and it does teach that sinners come to Christ. But then ask, "Why did you come to Christ?" "I just decided to come to Christ." "What made

you decide to come to Christ?" "I was convicted." "Who convicted you?" "God did." "Why did God convict you and not somebody else?" You keep pushing it back, and when it gets to God, that is as far as you can go.

Thirdly, election is unfathomable, and the depravity of man distorts it. I know you have heard all kinds of things about the doctrine of election. I have had preachers in this town say that Brother Weaver believes God takes some and throws them into heaven while they scream, "I don't want to be saved," and throws others into hell while they cry, "But I want to be godly, I want to be holy." That's malarkey. I don't believe that.

The Bible does not teach it. No one who believes the Bible believes that. Every man who ever wanted to go to heaven is in heaven, and everyone in heaven wanted to go there. Everybody who is ever in hell wanted to go there. In hell is what they wanted and what they deserved. C. S. Lewis, in The Great Divorce, stated: “Heaven is the abode of those that say to God, ‘Thy will be done.’ And hell is the abode of those that God says to them, ‘Thy will be done.’” The fourth statement is this: Election is gracious, and humility must bow to it.

Beloved, when you realize that the only reason you are saved is because it pleased God to save you, it will cause you to melt at God's feet and thank Him for His miraculous grace. Who are you to know the truth? Who are you to be converted? Who are you to be forgiven? Who are you to be saved? Who are you to serve our Lord with multitudes? You have never even heard of grace. Election is scriptural and gracious, and humility bows to it, recognizing that God is all in all.

Our Father, we bow to Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, thankful for Thy grace and mercy. Enable us, Lord, to do everything we can to reach Thy people, whoever they are, wherever they are. Help us understand that Scripture says Thou hast a great multitude, which no man can number, out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation, and hast commanded us to preach the gospel to every creature. Enable us to be obedient, and marvel at God's graciousness in saving any of us. O Lord, receive glory. May we understand from whence our salvation cometh, and magnify the God of all grace, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

The Doctrine of Election - 3

SCRIPTURE READING - Ephesians 1:1-23 (KJV)

Introduction and Review

Ephesians 1, beginning with verse 1:

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.

> That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in 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: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."
>
> We have been studying for the two past Sundays the biblical doctrine of election. You will remember that I told you several truths concerning election: first, election is a foundational doctrine; second, in one sense of the word, it is a very difficult doctrine; third, it is an important doctrine; fourth, it is a blessed doctrine; fifth, it is a distasteful doctrine; sixth, a separating doctrine; and seventh, it is indeed an evangelical doctrine.
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> Then, in the second message, we looked at the first point, the principle of election. I pointed out that as you study the Word of God, every time you see an election, there is also implied and inherent in that a reprobation or a preterition—that is, a passing over or an omission. We pointed out the non-theological, or non-soteriological, uses of the word "chosen" in the Word of God, such as David choosing five smooth stones out of the riverbed.

And so He passed over those others and selected only five. As we studied the soteriological sense of election, we pointed out three great truths. First, God has a sovereign right to bestow more grace upon one creature than another, since grace is unmerited and undeserved favor. God has the sovereign right to give more grace to one than He does another.

The second great truth is that God exercises that right in Holy Scripture. Our Lord Himself said in Matthew chapter 20, "Is thine

eye evil because I am good?" He also said, "Is it not lawful to do with mine own what I will?" He exercises that right, and He does so.

Thirdly, we found from Holy Scripture that God has some other reason than saving as many as possible for the way in which He distributes His grace. We pointed this out from Matthew 11 and other passages.

As we looked at the principle of election, we found four types of election in the Bible. First, there is theocratic, or national, election. Secondly, there is vocational election, where God chose the tribe of Levi and, out of that tribe, certain men to be the high priest. Bezalel was chosen, along with Aholiab, to make certain fabrics of the tabernacle. Even today there is vocational election: certain ones are chosen to be pastor-teachers, and others are not.

Thirdly, there was messianic election. Isaiah 42 speaks of Christ being the elect, and 1 Peter 2 speaks of Christ being the elect. Fourthly, there was soteriological election, election that relates to our salvation. Some have referred to it as ecclesiastical election, the election of the church. Either way, it is soteriological, saving election; it has reference to salvation.

The Person of Election: Chosen in Christ

Now I want to come simply to the second point: the person of election. Having pointed out in Scripture that there is a biblical principle, look at Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 4: "according as he hath chosen us"—there is the principle; now here is the person—"in him." We are chosen in Christ.

What I am going to say this morning, you will have to listen to very carefully and think about. I thought several times before settling on the form in which to present this truth. I almost wanted to say that we are chosen in Christ, close my Bible, and dismiss it, because it is such a deep subject that it boggles the mind when we begin to consider it.

Since we are chosen in Christ, it is evident that we were chosen out of ourselves. We were not chosen because of any merit or anything in ourselves. God did not look down through the ages and foresee that we would believe, and therefore choose us for our

believing. If God had not given us the Spirit and the gift of faith, none would ever have believed.

When Scripture says that we were chosen in Christ, it necessarily implies that Christ was chosen before us. Christ is God's first elect and the head of God's elect. In the order of nature, Christ came first; in the order of time, we were chosen with Him. You could say it this way: in the womb of election, He, the head, came out first, and then we, the members. This truth is typified in every normal childbirth: the head, and then the members. Therefore, the Word of God tells us that Christ is the firstborn of every creature.

Christ as God's Elect in Scripture

Hold Ephesians chapter 1, but turn first to Isaiah chapter 42, and read verses 1 through 4. Then we will see these verses in the New Testament and how they are uniquely applied to Jesus Christ. The Word of God declares: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.”

In Isaiah 42:1, God calls the Messiah, "My servant, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." Matthew 12 shows how this passage uniquely relates to Jesus Christ: "But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; And charged them that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

The Word of God tells us that we are chosen in Christ, and that Christ is God's elect. I have heard individuals say, "There is no reason dabbling in all of these doctrines. Some of them are so hard to understand and some are so difficult. Why do you want to go into all of these doctrines? Why not just simply and merely preach Christ?" That sounds very pious. But you cannot preach Christ aright unless you preach Him in His highest official character and glory. According to the Word of God, Christ's highest official character and glory is that of being the covenant head of God's elect. He is the elect of God. Therefore, one cannot preach Christ aright without preaching the doctrine of election. The Word of God tells us that God loved Christ, and that God loved His own before the foundation of the world.

Since God is love, and since there must be an object for His love, that object must have an existence in order for Him to love. You cannot love a non-entity, that which does not exist. In the mind, decree, and counsel of God from all eternity, God chose and loved Christ, the man Jesus Christ, as the Mediator and the head of the covenant; and in loving Christ, He loved His people whom He gave to Christ.

God's Everlasting Love in Christ

You could say, here is the bridegroom, here is the bride; here is the head, here is the church; here is the head, and here are the members. Christ was the first chosen, and then we, the members. And as God loved Christ, the head, so therefore He loved us, the members.

If you would turn in your Bibles to Jeremiah, chapter 31, and verse 3, the Word of God says, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." The Word of God tells us that God's love to His own is an everlasting love, which means it had no beginning. And because it had no beginning, it has no ending.

There's a little poem, or a little jingle, that goes like this, and yet it's so true: "Yesterday he loved me, today he's just the same. How long will this continue? Forever, praise his name." But He loved us before yesterday.

Our effectual calling, and I'll deal with this later, is the result of our election. He says, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love," because He chose us, because He set His love upon us, "therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

Now if you will look in your Bibles to John 17, you will see that our Lord in His high priestly prayer confesses the same identical truth. In verses 23 and 24, our Lord says, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Our Lord prays that the world may know that God loves His own as He loved Christ. He loved Christ in eternity. Therefore, He loved us, His elect, His own, in eternity. Now verse 24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." If Christ says, "I pray that everyone may know that God loves His own as He loves me," then He goes right around and says, "because you loved me before the foundation of the world."

God's love for his own was before the foundation of the world, but it was in Christ as the head of the elect. The phrase that I am considering here is that we were chosen in Him. The period of our election will be considered later, but this phrase means that, in the council of eternity past, within the triune Godhead—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost—the second person of the Trinity was chosen, was singled out, and was predestinated to be united in the man Christ Jesus. Thus, He possesses two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, yet remains one person. In eternity past, in the counsel and mind of the triune God, Jesus Christ was predestinated and ordained to be the God-man, the mediator, the head of God's covenant people, the very elect of God in whom God delighted.

Reasons Christ Was Chosen

We are so humanistically inclined that we like to think the only reason God sent Christ was for our benefit. God did send Christ for our benefit, but that was not the only reason. God is chiefly concerned with Himself. Because God is the highest good, the

chiefest good, God is God, and God is perfect, for God to be concerned with less than Himself would be ungodly. He is concerned with us in Christ.

May I give you scripturally three other reasons why Christ was predestinated, other than the benefit of His people? If you question that Christ was predestinated, foreordained, and foredetermined to suffer for His people, look in your Bible to Acts chapter 2. In Acts 2:23, Peter declares— and if you doubt that, look at verse 22—

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

Christ came according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. In Acts chapter 4, beginning with verse 26, we see the same truth concerning Christ: "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." The only thing that happened to our Lord was what God had determined before the world ever began.

Christ was predestined to suffer exactly as He suffered for the benefit of His people. Matthew 1:21 says, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." But that is not the only reason Christ was set up as the God-man, the mediator, and the head of the covenant.

Here are three of them. Number one, He was chosen for God Himself to delight in, far more and infinitely above all creatures. Being united to the second person, the man Christ Jesus was exalted to a closer union and communion with God. He was chosen, first of all, for God to delight in. Jehovah God Himself, in Zechariah chapter 13 and verse 7, says, "Behold the man who is my fellow." The word fellow means equal. God the Father says of the man Christ Jesus, the

God-man, "Behold the man who is my equal." Behold the man who is very God of very God. Yea, God incarnate, God manifest in the flesh. In Christ Jesus there was an intimate union and communion between Him and the Father and the Spirit. It is impossible to explain in one sense of the word, but the union between the Father and the man Christ Jesus was far greater than that between husband and wife.

Husband and wife are merely one flesh. It is far greater than that even of the church and Christ, for that is one spirit. Yea, the man Christ Jesus was very God of very God, God incarnate, and He said of the Father that the Father was in Him and He was in the Father. Yea, He said, "I and my Father are one." And so He was chosen, first of all, for God the Father to delight in. That is why in Isaiah 42, verse 1, He said, "Behold my elect in whom my soul delighteth."

Secondly, Christ was chosen that God might behold the image of Himself and all of His perfections in a creature, so that His excellencies are seen in Christ as in no other. Christ did truly have a human nature. Everything that makes up a man was the man Christ Jesus. Everything that makes up God, He was as well, for He is God and man in one. Christ was chosen that God might behold His image of Himself in all of His perfections in the God-man, Christ Jesus.

Speaking of Christ, Hebrews says, “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Notice, “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” Someone says, “But I want to know what God is like. I want to know how does God look.” All I can say is, with our Lord, “Thomas, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” For Christ is the express image of the Father, and the brightness of His glory.

There have been holy men on this earth—Brainerds and Edwards and Calvins and Whitefields—but all of the saintliest saints and all of the holiest of men could never equal one of the excellencies and perfections that are in Jesus Christ. Here, all of the perfections of the Father were found in the God-man, Christ Jesus. By the union of the man Christ Jesus with the everlasting Son of God, the whole fullness

of the Godhead would dwell personally in Him, He being the very image of the invisible God.

Colossians 1:15 says, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” Verse 19 says, “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” Chapter 2:9 says, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Christ was chosen by God not only for His own delights, and not only so that the perfections and beauties of God Himself might be manifest in a created nature, but also that the very fullness of the Godhead might dwell in Him.

Christ's Eternal Appointment in Proverbs 8

Now, beloved, we come to ground which is most difficult and yet most beneficial to your soul and mine, if we would contemplate it in light of the fact that Christ is the chief of God's elect. We were chosen in him. He was chosen before us.

It is hard for us to use the language of Scripture at times because we cannot think the way God thinks. For instance, we talk about the decrees of God. Yet every time Scripture speaks of the decrees of God, it is decree, singular.

“I will declare the decree!” God knows everything completely, totally, perfectly, and instantaneously. All God has to do is decree one decree, and in that one decree everything that has ever happened and ever will happen is included. You and I think successively. We say this, and then this, and then this. God does not think like that, for He is God. He has it all; He knows it all. There is one decree.

You and I must think successively, so let me show you that, in the mind of God, Christ was set up as the head of His elect, and we were therefore chosen in Him. One of the names in Scripture for Christ is the wisdom of God. In Proverbs chapter 8, wisdom is personified, and here is a plain passage referring to our Lord Jesus Christ, to His mediatorship, His incarnation, and His being the covenant Head of His elect people.

In Proverbs chapter 8 and verse 22, He makes this statement: “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his

works of old.” Let me point out several things. Number one, the word “in” is not in the Hebrew. The word “beginning” should be understood as “first” or “chief.” Literally, he is saying, “The Lord possessed me, the beginning of his way,” or “the chief, or the first of his way.”

This also teaches us of His eternal existence as the God-man in the mind, counsel, and decree of the Father. Our Redeemer came forth from the womb of a decree from eternity before He came out of the womb of the Virgin in time. He was hidden in the will of God, in secret, in a decree, before He was made manifest in flesh as Redeemer. He was a Lamb slain decreedly before the foundation of the world, before He ever became a Lamb slain in time historically in the world. He is saying, “The Lord possessed me. I am the chief of his way. I am the firstborn. I am the beginning.” Then, in verse 23: “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.”

The word "set up" means literally anointed and appointed. Christ is saying, "I was appointed to be the mediator. I was appointed the head of God's elect. I was appointed the head of the covenant people before the world was." He continues in verse 24: "When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world." You know what the highest part of the dust of the world is? It is not Mount Everest. What are you and I made of? Dust. We are the highest part of the dust of the world. Before man was made, before creation was made, Christ was set up, ordained, and appointed.

Notice verse 27: "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth." In other words, our mediator, the head of the covenant, was already established from eternity. Verse 28 continues: "When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him."

"As one brought up with him." Christ was chosen for the Father to delight in: "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."

In eternity past, in the mind and decree of God, before God the Son became incarnate in time, Christ had an existence in the counsel and decree of God. It was so sure, perfect, complete, and steadfast that God counted it as already having happened. Christ, the perfect man, united with deity—the God-man—had an existence in the mind of God. As mediator and head of His people, Christ was daily, or eternally, the delight of the Father. He rejoiced before the Father because the Father chose Him to be the Head, to be incarnate, to suffer, to die, to be raised from the dead, and to be exalted. He rejoiced before the Father.

He said, “And my delights were with the sons of men.” That is, I was delighted in those whom the Father gave me to be mine. Here you have the Father delighted in the Son, the Son rejoicing before the Father, the Father giving the Son a people, and the Son delighting in them. For in John 17 he says, “They were thine, and thou gavest them to me.”

Stephen Charnock, one of the old Puritans, wrote: “Christ was first elected as head and mediator and as the cornerstone to bear up the whole building. For the act of the Father's election in Christ supposeth him first chosen to this mediatory work, and to be the head of the elect part of the world. After this election of Christ, others were predestinated to be conformed unto his image. In other words, to Christ as mediator, and taking human nature, not to Christ barely considered as God. This conformity being specially intended in election, Christ was in the purpose of the Father, the first exemplar and copy of it. One foot of the compass of grace stood in Christ as the center, while the other walked about the circumference, pointing one here and another there, to draw a line, as it were, between every one of those points and Christ.”

The Lamb's Book of Life

The Father, being the prime cause of the election of some out of the mass of mankind, was the prime cause of the election of Christ to bring them to the enjoyment of that to which they were elected. Is it likely that God, in founding an everlasting kingdom, should consult about the members before He did about the Head? Christ was registered at the top of the book of election, and His members after Him. It is called, therefore, the book of the Lamb. Is it possible, or is it likely, that God should consult concerning the members of the body before He did the Head?

This is exactly what Ephesians 1 is telling us. He elected and chose the Head first, and then the members. One foot of the compass of grace stood in Christ, and the other walked about the circumference, picking out one here and one there; and every one that it picked out, it drew a straight line to Jesus Christ. We were chosen in Christ.

It is called, therefore, the Lamb's Book of Life. Revelation 13:8 says, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." So here is where we get the Lamb's Book of Life. This expression, "book of life," has its roots way back in Isaiah 4:3, where the chosen remnant are referred to as "every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." God's eternal act of election is spoken of as writing the names of His chosen ones in the book of life.

This figure teaches us several things: the book of life and writing names in the book of life. I believe I have pointed this out before; if I have not, let me emphasize it again. There is an unscriptural song sung by many churches: "There's a new name written down in glory, and it's mine, oh yes, it's mine." There are no new names written down in glory. All of them have been written before the foundation of the world. What does this teach us? It teaches us three things when it speaks of the Lamb's Book of Life.

First, the Lamb's Book of Life speaks of the exact knowledge that God has of all His elect, His particular remembrance for them, and His delight in them. Let me ask you a question. Does it not delight you when you meet someone and a week, two, three, or four weeks

later, perhaps several months later, they see you and say, “Well, you’re Dean Strickland. I remember you”? You are flattered and pleased that they remember you. Sometimes, when you want to be sure that you do not forget a name, you write it down and make sure that you remember it. So, when Scripture speaks of the Lamb’s Book of Life, it speaks of the exact knowledge that the Lord has of every one of His own.

In 2 Timothy, chapter 2, and verse 19, we read: “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.” The Lamb’s Book of Life speaks of the knowledge that God has of all of His elect. It simply points out the fact of this exact knowledge of God. Secondly, the Book of Life teaches us that God’s eternal election is of particular persons, and that their names are definitely recorded by Him.

Now, if that ought to grab you, I do not know if it ever affects you the way it does me or not, but stop and think: before the world ever was, before a star was ever hung in space, before the sun ever shone, before the moon ever shined, before there was a particle of dust, before there was anything, God said, “Bill Wolf, Bobby Smith”—personally, He put your name in a book.

Our Lord told the seventy in Luke, chapter 10, and verse 20, “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not.” They had come back rejoicing that Satan was being destroyed before them and that they had power over all the enemies. In other words, do not rejoice simply because you are having personal victory. Do not simply rejoice because the enemies of God are being defeated.

It is right to rejoice in some of these things, but Christ said, “Not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” Paul says in Philippians 4:3, “And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.” There are particular names of particular people written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Thirdly, the book of life teaches us that those who are written there are absolutely sure, secure, and safe, and their names shall

never be blotted out. In Revelation 3:5, God says, “I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.” Yet the explanation usually given concerning election is so unbiblical that most folks say, “Well, everybody’s name is written in the book of life. And then when you reject Christ, God blots it out.”

God does not blot out those in the book of life. Those names were written in that book before the foundation of the world. They are the ones He gave to Christ, the ones for whom Christ came and suffered, bled, and died. Christ said it Himself, and the prophet Isaiah penned it in Isaiah 53: “He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” For everyone for whom He died, He shall see them and be satisfied.

Can you imagine what the Father would say to the Son if the Son said, “Father, here’s one that I died for that’s absolutely and eternally lost; where is he?” Would the Father say, “I blotted his name out”? But the Son would say, “We had a covenant. You agreed to give me those for whom I suffered and bled and died. You agreed to pardon and forgive them.” Can you see what blasphemous theology that would be? You would have a mutable God, not an immutable God; an unholy and unjust God, not a holy and just God.

The Lamb’s Book of Life means that everyone whose name is written there is safe and secure. It is called the Lamb’s Book of Life for two reasons. First, because the Lamb’s name heads it. This was what the whole message was about, because He is the first of God’s elect. The first name in the New Testament is Jesus Christ: Matthew 1:1, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

Secondly, it is called the Lamb's Book of Life because Christ is the root, and believers are the branches, and we receive our life and our substance from Him. It is called the Lamb's Book of Life, and His name heads it.

Christ as the Head of the Book

Hebrews 10:7, quoting from the book of Psalms, says, "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." In the Old Testament, in Psalm 40:7, the Hebrew word

is indeed "volume." But when you come to the Greek New Testament, the Greek word is not the word for volume. It is kephalē, which means "head." Kephalē is used seventy-six other times in the New Testament, and seventy-six times it is translated "head." Our translators translated the word "head" as "volume" here. Literally, what he is saying is, "Then said I, Lo, I come in the head of the book."

"It is written of me to do thy will, O God." When Christ says He is the head of the book, He is confessing that He is God's first elect, that He is the covenant Head of His people. Christ the Head knows whose names are written therein, for He is indeed at the head of that book.

Applications and Marks of Election

Let me make a couple of applications to what I have just said. When the Word of God teaches us that we are chosen in Christ, it means this: for anyone to despise the doctrine of election is to despise Christ, for Christ is God's elect. Individuals whose attitude is, "Well, I don't want anything to do with election," are literally saying, "I don't want anything to do with Christ!" For Christ is God's elect. No one can preach Christ without preaching election.

Someone will ask, "You talked about the Lamb's Book of Life, and I will deal with this later on as we study the doctrine of election. But you say, how do I know whether or not my name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life?" For one thing, you cannot get a ladder and crawl to heaven and look and see. But there are ways that one can know whether or not his name is in the Book of Life. I will not go into detail, but let me say this.

All of those whose names have been written in the book of life experience several things according to the Word of God. First, they are brought to see their inward corruption, pollution, vileness, and utter depravity. They despair of themselves, realizing that their works, righteousness, merits, and good deeds cannot in any wise justify them. They are absolutely helpless.

Secondly, they are brought to see that Christ is the only salvation, and that He must be foremost and first in their hearts and lives.

Thirdly, they are brought to believe only in Christ, trust only in Him, and rest their souls completely upon Christ.

A man was asked concerning the doctrine of election, "Do you know that you are one of God's elect?" He answered, "Most definitely." When asked how he knew, he said, "Because, in time and in history, I was brought to despair of myself and to trust completely and totally in Jesus Christ." The man replied, "Suppose that you end up in hell." He answered, "If I end up in hell, I'll end up trusting completely and totally in Jesus Christ, and no man can go to hell doing that."

Fourthly, those who are in the Lamb's Book of Life are brought to see the preciousness of Jesus Christ. Peter said, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." He is not precious to everyone else. The world hates Him, despises Him, casts His name out, takes His name in vain, curses Him, and treads Him under their feet. But to you who believe, He is precious. You have come to find that He is the wisdom of God.

Fifthly, those whose names are written therein are brought to desire to live for Him and glorify Him more than anything else in the world. Therefore the apostle wrote, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God." We are chosen in Christ that we might be holy and without blame in this world. Shall we pray?

Father, we do ask now Thy blessing upon this study. Help us to realize in some small, minute way the greatness of Jesus Christ: that He is the covenant head and we are the members; that we were chosen in Him, and without Christ there would be no salvation, without Christ there would be nothing of our own redemption. O Lord, we glory only in Christ. He is the God-Man. He is the Mediator. He is the Savior. His name is truly Jesus, and we call Him Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, Lord of Glory, the Amen and the Amen, the Incarnate God, the Wisdom and the Righteousness of God, and we rest our souls in Him and upon Him. We confess all that we are and have is because of Christ our Lord. Bless us, we pray in Thy name.

Save Thine elect, whoever and wherever they may be, and bring them to Thyself in Thine own time. Use us, Lord, to pray and to

preach and proclaim Thy truth and to reach them by Thy grace, we ask. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 4

The Doctrine of Election - 4

Introduction and Review

We saw those who were chosen to be the high priest, and those alone. Thirdly, we saw a messianic election, that is, the election of Jesus Christ to be the God-man, the mediator, and the redeemer. Fourthly, we pointed out a soteriological election, that is, an election unto salvation. Last week we looked at the person of election, where verse 4 tells us, “according as he hath chosen us in him.” “He hath chosen us” is the principle; “in him” is the person.

G. S. Bishop wrote concerning the doctrine of election: “The reason why anyone believes in election is that he finds it in the Bible. No man could ever imagine such a doctrine, for it is in itself contrary to the thinking and the wishes of the human heart. Everyone at first opposes the doctrine, and it is only after many struggles under the working of the Spirit of God that we are able to receive it. A perfect acquiescence in this doctrine, an absolute lying still and adoring wonder at the footstool of God’s sovereignty, is the last attainment of the sanctified soul in this life, as it is the beginning of heaven.

"The reason why anyone believes in election is just this, and only this, that God has made it known. Had the Bible been a counterfeit, it never could have contained the doctrine of election, for men are too averse or opposed to such a thought to give it expression, much more to give it prominence."

Bishop is right when he says that the only reason anyone ever believes in the doctrine of election is because it is found in the Bible. If the Bible had been a counterfeit, men would never have penned it, because man by nature opposes this doctrine. He went on to say that, in order to receive it, we must bow to the Word of God.

In the book of James, we are told to lay aside all our superfluity of naughtiness and receive the engrafted word with meekness, which is able to save our soul. Do you realize that the first duty of man is to receive the Word of God, not to understand it? You are to receive it if it is recorded in the Word of God. God will give you understanding in His time as you study His Word. But you do not say, "I do not understand it; therefore I will not receive it." When a man says, "I don't understand it; therefore I don't believe it," he is simply saying, "I am making the Word of God bow to my intellect." If my intellect cannot understand it, then I refuse it.

When you realize that, if it is in the Word of God, you are to receive it whether you understand it or not, then you are making your intellect bow to the Word of God, and you say, "I receive it." It is God's Word, and I will beseech God for understanding and beg Him to give that to me in due time. Our first responsibility to truth, therefore, is to receive it, whether we understand it or not. The purpose of showing you the truth of God is that you may receive it and also that you may understand it.

The Period of Election: Before the Foundation of the World

Having looked at the principle of election—"God hath chosen us"—and the person of election—"God hath chosen us in him"—we come to the period of election. If you look in verse 4, the Bible says, "...according as he hath chosen us in him," and then gives the period: "...before the foundation of the world."

This phrase expresses most definitely the fact that election is not a temporal matter. Election did not occur in time; rather, it occurred in eternity. Election is a finished fact. God is not, quote unquote, electing people today. His election was an eternal act, the Word of God tells us, and it was before the foundation of the world. It did not occur in time, and it is not occurring in time.

The Bible tells you in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth." "In the beginning," that is, God created time. God created the heaven, that is, space, and the earth, matter. Time, space, and matter are created things. When the apostle says that we were chosen before the foundation of the world, he is saying that we were chosen before there was time, before there was space, before there was matter; that is, we were chosen from all eternity.

To verify this, the Bible shows that, usually—and not just usually, but every time—you find the expression "before the foundation" or "the foundation of the world," it is referring to the created universe. If we were chosen before the foundation of the world, we were chosen in eternity before time ever had a being.

Holding Ephesians 1, look first in your Bibles to Job 38. Job had been wanting to speak with God. He felt that he had been wronged and was suffering wrongfully, but Job did not know what was going on. He had been wanting a daysman, someone to go between he and God.

And so finally, God reveals Himself to Job and tells him, in essence, "Job, you've been wanting to talk to Me; now come on, gird up the loins of your mind. I'm going to ask you some questions, and you see if you can answer them."

So in Job 38, beginning with verse 1, we read this: "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 'Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?'" "Gird up now the loins like a man, and I will demand of thee, and answer thou me." "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding."

He says, "Job, if you want to talk to Me, you've got to have some background. You must have some understanding. Job, where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Verse 5: "...who hath

laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest, or who hath stretched the line upon it, whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the cornerstone thereof?" Job, where were you when I created the universe, when I hung it upon nothing?

And so the very fact that he talks in verse 4 about the foundations of the earth, he is referring to the creation of time, space, and matter. He says, "Job, where were you then?" Well, of course, Job did not even have a being. He did not have an existence. You cannot argue with God.

If you will turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 48 in verse 13. The fact that I'm pointing out is just that the foundations of the earth refer to the beginning of time, space, and matter. In Isaiah chapter 48, beginning with verse 13: "My hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth," says God, "and my right hand hath spanned the heavens." "When I call unto them, they stand up together." God is referring to the foundation of the earth and the spanning of the heavens. It is He that has laid it, it is He that has made it, and no other. And God said, "When I call unto them, they stand up together." In other words, God created time, space, and matter.

Then if you will look at Isaiah 51 and verse 13: "...and forgettest the Lord thy Maker that hath stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and has feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy, and where is the fury of the oppressor?" And so in verse 13, once again, there is the declaration that God laid the foundation of the earth—time, space, and matter. Then in verse 16 of the same chapter: "...and I have put my words in thy mouth."

"And I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, 'Thou art my people.'" Every time you find that expression, it refers to creation. So when the Word of God tells us in Ephesians chapter 1, verse 4, that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, it refers to the fact that we were chosen not in time, but in eternity. There is no such thing as a temporal election or an election in time.

No Temporal Election

If you will look in Revelation 17 and verse 8, the statement is very clearly set forth in the Word of God: "The beast that thou sawest was and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder," whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Here the Bible refers to those who are the elect, those who are chosen, as the ones who have their names written in the Lamb's book of life from before the foundation of the world. This explodes the ungodly and unbiblical theory that everyone's name is written in the Lamb's book, and that only when he rejects Christ is his name marked out. That verse does not say that. The Bible says those will worship the beast whose names were not written in the book of life. They never were there. They were not there and were marked out; they never were there to begin with.

There is no such thing as an election in time. I stress this because so many people have heard and been taught erroneously that when a person is converted in time, in history, he then becomes an elect of God. The fact is, if he had never been an elect of God, he would never have been converted in time and in history.

One of my dear friends, who now lives in one of the extreme northern states, had a father-in-law who was a preacher. He himself is a preacher, and he and his wife came to see the doctrine of God's sovereign grace. His father-in-law literally never forgave him or his daughter for embracing the doctrine of grace. Every time he had the opportunity to rub it in, he tried to do so. He was in a meeting, and there were four professions of faith in that particular meeting.

He called my friend, his son-in-law, and his daughter, and said very sarcastically, “Praise God, four more just got elected.” Yet the statement is plainly contradicted by Scripture: “whose names were written in the book from the foundation of the world.” There is no such thing as an election in time.

If election is not in time, it must be in eternity. If election is eternal, you had absolutely nothing to do with it. It was not your choice, merit, works, or desires. It was something completely outside

of you; it was an act of God. That is why Ephesians 1:4 says, "He, God, hath chosen us in Him from the foundation of the world." God is the author of our election.

Practically everyone here has heard the four tapes by John Riesinger on the doctrine of election. If you have not heard them, I urge you to hear them. He points out that one of the most absurd and comical illustrations of election is this: "Election is easily explained. God voted for me, the devil voted against me, and then I broke the deciding vote."

There are several things wrong with that. First, when the election was held, the devil was not a registered voter. Second, you certainly did not vote, because you were of non-age; you were, in fact, a non-person. It was before you were ever created. The two great theological errors are that this illustration makes God and Satan equal—that God acts and then the devil, equally powerful, checkmates Him—and that it makes man more powerful than either God or Satan, able to overthrow the work of God.

Scriptural Proof of Eternal Election

No, the Bible tells us that our election was before the foundation of the world. Now I want to show you specific Scriptures relating to that. Turn, if you would please, to Psalm 90, verses 1 and 2. We are going to go from the general to the specific: Psalm 90, verses 1 and 2.

This is the psalm of Moses. I do not suppose that too many people ever really look at these first two verses, and yet these two verses teach the doctrine of election: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

He said, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations," and then, "you are from everlasting to everlasting." Now remember, whatever God does is immutable. God changes not. If God has been our dwelling place in time and in history, it means and necessarily infers that God was our dwelling place in eternity past. That is why he said, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Lord,

you change not. You are our dwelling place in time and in history only because you were our dwelling place in eternity.

Matthew chapter 25 and verse 34 once again gives us a passage very clearly stating that heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people: “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, ‘Come ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Our Lord specifically says it was prepared for you, that is, individually, from before the foundation of the world. Before God ever flung a star in space, before he ever hung the world upon nothing, before he ever created matter, before he ever created time, heaven was prepared for a prepared people.

Titus chapter 1, verses 1 and 2, simply shows that our election and our salvation are from eternity: “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, in hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” To whom did he promise eternal life before the world began? The answer comes back only to those whom he chose before the foundation of the world. He calls it in verse 1 “the faith of God’s elect.” He promised them salvation before the foundation of the world; verse 3 says, “but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching.” In other words, he promised it before the world, and what transpires in time and history is nothing but the manifestation, the reality of that promise coming to pass.

One other passage is 2 Timothy 1:8–9, one of the clearest and most specific passages in the Word of God on this subject. Paul says, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.” Then notice what he says concerning our salvation: God “who have saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began.”

If God gave it to us in Christ before the world began, He chose us in Christ before the world began. Our salvation, our effectual calling, is not according to our works. It is not according to our believing,

our repenting, or anything we do. It is according to God's purpose and God's grace, which he gave to us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Very clearly, the Word of God tells us that the period of election is in eternity.

Now look back in your Bibles to Ephesians 1. I hope you understand the phrase "before the foundation of the world": our election was in eternity past and not in time. God is not electing people today. His works were finished, in that sense, from before the foundation of the world.

The Purpose of Election: Holiness

But not only do verses 4 and 5 give us the period of election; they also give us its purpose. He says, "according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him." What holiness is the author referring to? Is he referring to the imperfect holiness of this life, or to the perfect holiness in heaven? I believe both.

First, he is referring to that perfect holiness which you and I will have before God in heaven, a holiness of absolutely flawless perfection. We should be holy and without blame—that is, without spot—and totally, completely perfect. Our Lord said in Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." In 1 Peter 1:16, he says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Romans chapter 8 and verse 29 tells us that God purposed in our election and calling that we should be conformed to the image of His dear Son. As His dear Son is perfectly, totally, completely, and absolutely holy, so, by the grace of God, one purpose in our election is that we shall be conformed to the image of His Son, perfectly holy in eternity by the grace of God.

It also refers to our evangelical holiness in time. In Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 24, the Bible tells us that we are to follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. God is telling us that we must have evangelical holiness in this life, as imperfect as it may be. If we do not have evangelical, obedient holiness in this life, then we shall never have perfect holiness in the next life.

Holiness is the image of God upon the soul, which makes us capable of communion with Him. If we are not holy here, we shall not be holy there. If you will not have holiness in this life, you shall never see God in the next life. For the Bible said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The fact that you and I want to be holy, endeavor to be holy, pray for holiness, and are obedient to the Word of God, which is our holiness, evidences that God is preparing us for perfect holiness in the world to come.

I still remember hearing what Robert Lee Harper said as we talked outside the house. He was weeping as he said, "I don't know whether I'm saved or not," but he said, "One thing for sure, I want to be holy. I want to please God. I don't want anything to do with sin."

I said to him, "Brother, I'll tell you right now: if God hadn't already converted you, you wouldn't be having that attitude, I can assure you." An unconverted man does not want anything to do with holiness or righteousness. All he wants is sin and self.

The Purpose of Election: Adoption as Sons

The very fact that we long after holiness and desire to be holy evidences that God has purposed in our election that we be holy. In verse 5, He tells us that God has also purposed in our election that we should be His son. Now, the two words in verse 4, "in love," actually go with verse 5 according to the Greek construction.

There is a comma after “before him” in the Greek, so it should read, “in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” You see, beloved, it is holiness that fits us for heaven, and it is adoption that gives us the right to the glory of heaven.

Please do not confuse regeneration and adoption, and do not think of the biblical doctrine of adoption the way we think of adoption today. Today, we go and adopt a child, and he becomes our own child by adoption. The Bible doctrine of adoption does not mean that. We become God’s children by nature through regeneration. In regeneration we are given the nature of God’s children. It is adoption, however, that gives us the rights and

privileges of God's children. In other words, regeneration gives us the nature of God's children; adoption gives us the rights, the high prerogatives, and the blessings that are ours by virtue of our union with Jesus Christ. It is a legal right to enjoy all the blessings of God, both now and in eternity.

If you would turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 8 and look with me at verse 17, most people have never caught the force of this verse. If you understand the biblical doctrine of election, you will understand its force: "And if children, then heirs." We are children by regeneration; God gives us the nature of a godly child. "And if children, then heirs." If you are a child, then you have a legal right to inherit what belongs to the family. "If we are children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. If so be that we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him."

We are heirs of God. Everything that is in the family becomes ours—joint heirs with Jesus Christ. That is, we rule with Him, reign with Him, and possess with Him. Everything that He has becomes ours. We have a right to it and a privilege to be in that family. Now do you begin to see what John the Apostle meant in 1 John chapter 3 and verse 1 when he said, "What manner of love hath the Father bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God?" It is not just that God has taken some old reprobate, some old sinner, saved him, and made him holy and godly. Yes, that is a miracle of miracles in itself, but it is also that God has taken some old sinner, wicked and drunkard as he may be, saved him and made him holy, and given him all the privileges and possessions belonging to the royal family of God, and in eternity.

The Purpose of Election: Salvation Through Means

And so God purposed in our election not only that we should be holy and without blame, but that we should be his sons with all of the privileges and all of the rights.

Thirdly, God purposed in our election that we should be saved. The Bible says very clearly in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you," that is,

election to salvation "through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth."

Election is the basis, or foundation, of salvation, but it is not salvation in itself. Election is unto salvation. It does not negate prayer, nullify repentance, destroy faith, or do away with preaching and biblical evangelism. Someone may say, "Well, if he's one of God's elect, he's going to be saved whether he does anything or not." Beloved, listen: election is not salvation; it is unto salvation. No man has ever been saved apart from repentance and faith.

In other words, election is not a tool or doctrine for you to sit down and do absolutely nothing. Election motivates us to make our calling and election sure. It is the very foundation of the fact that we know that God will have mercy on sinners, for he has not only ordained the end, but the means to reach that end.

Notice again the passage in 2 Thessalonians, verse 13: "But we're bound to thank God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." He did not stop there. That is the end, but here is the means: "Through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, verse 14, whereunto he calls you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And so election is unto salvation. God has not only ordained the end, but the means to reach that end. Election does not destroy preaching, repentance, or faith. Everyone that is an elect of God must in time and history repent and believe the gospel, and they shall by the grace of God.

The Purpose of Election: For Christ

Fourthly, Colossians chapter 1 and verse 16 teaches that God's purpose in our election is that we should be for Christ.

We should be for Christ. Colossians 1:16 says, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by him and for him.” Did you notice that? All things were created by him.

Ephesians 1:5 says, “In love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” The word “to” can be translated “for”: “in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ for himself.” As I considered this, my own heart was stirred to think that God chose me, called me, made me holy, and saved me only for Christ.

In John 17:2, our Lord says, “As thou hast given him,” the Son of Man, “power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to ...as many as thou hast given me.” We were given to and for Christ. In verse 6, He says, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me,” and they “kept thy word.” We were given to and for Christ.

Verse 9 says, “I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.” He continues, “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one.” In verse 12: “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. Those that thou gavest to me I have kept, and none of them is lost.” They were given to and for Christ.

In verse 24, He says, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.”

Beloved, I do not know about you, but that buckles my mind, and yet thrills my soul. Can it be? You may put your name there: I. Can it be that you were predestinated, created, justified, called, converted just for Christ? That you were chosen to be His, to accrue to His treasure? That you were chosen to be His alone.

You were chosen to love and to be loved by Christ; chosen to please Him, to honor Him, to adore Him, to worship Him, to bow before Him, and to serve Him. What a high and holy calling: God chose us to be Christ's.

I believe that thought will be one of the greatest helps to deter us from sin. God did not choose us to sin; He chose us for Christ, to be

holy and to be godly. When the world beckons us with all of its allurements, we may smile and say, "I was chosen for Christ, not for the world." When Satan tries to seduce us into sin, we may say, "I was chosen for Christ, and not for the world, and not for Satan."

Applications

The first application is this: if you understand this doctrine, it ought to make us strive and long for holiness. God chose us that we should be holy and without blame before Him. We ought to endeavor after godly obedience in every area of our life, and we ought to beseech God to make us holy daily.

But secondly, if you understand what I preached, it should make us pray, preach, and proclaim the Word of God. We know not who God's elect are. Yet the Word of God tells us that there is a great multitude which no man can number, out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. We know that there are many, whoever and wherever they are, and our responsibility is to preach the Word.

I heard a man say one time—and he thought he was right in saying it; in one sense of the word he was, but in another sense he was wrong. Someone was accusing him simply because he believed the biblical doctrine of election. "If I believed that, all I would do is preach to God's elect." Well, he said, "I'll tell you what you do. If you will go out throughout the entire world and put a little red dot on the forehead of all of God's elect, and only God's elect," he said, "then I'll preach only to them."

What he was trying to say is that no one knows who they are or where they are, and therefore he is to preach to every creature. But the fact is, if you could do that—which you cannot—the Word of God still commands us to preach the gospel to every creature, whether they hear or whether they do not hear. That's beside the point. We are to preach the Word of God. And if you understand it, beloved, it will make you pray that God would call His elect, whoever and wherever they may be. The third application is this.

Since we were chosen for Him, how it should make us rejoice, and yet rejoice with all humility. When I begin to think that before the world was ever created, God, who knows all things, who determines

all things, who is all God, knew exactly what I would do. For He determined the day I would be born, the day I would die, everything; even the hairs of my head are numbered.

God knew everything before He ever created me, and yet, He set His heart upon me and loved me. How it should make us rejoice that God chose us, even though He knew exactly what we were and what we would do and how we have sinned against Him. If God loved us then, how much more does He love us now in Christ, having washed our sins in His blood? This is a doctrine that calls us to thank God for so great a love and so great a salvation.

Our Father, we bow to Thee, and our hearts are stirred simply by the magnificence of Thy grace. To think that, in Thy mind we had a being before the world was ever made, and You chose, knowing who we were and what we were, and yet You set Your heart upon us and said, "He is mine." Enable us to love Thee more. Enable us to be more holy and to be more godly. Enable us, Lord, to live for Christ, for we are His and He is ours. O Lord, we pray that Thou would save Thine elect, whoever and wherever they may be. We pray for the conversion of sinners. O God, we ask Thee to move according to Thy mighty power. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

The Doctrine of Election - 5

Chapter 1, verse 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, 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, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. For in he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his own good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him. In 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, that we should be to the

praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ. In whom also ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, whom also after ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory.

Review of Previous Points on Election

For several weeks now we have considered Ephesians chapter 1 on the biblical doctrine of election. After having given a message concerning the introductory statements concerning this biblical doctrine, we began by pointing out, number one, the principle of election. God does have an elect. In fact, the Bible says very clearly in Romans chapter 8, who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect. And Matthew tells us that God shall send his angels and shall gather his elect. We then looked at the principle, showing that whenever there was a choice, necessarily implied there was a reprobation or a preterition. That simply means a passing over or an omission. So when God chose some, it means necessarily that he omitted or passed over others. Having shown you that truth from non-soteriological verses in the Bible, we looked at some of those verses which did indeed relate to salvation. However, I pointed out that there were four types of election in the Bible. There was that election which is known as theocratic election or national election.

Secondly, there is a vocational election, where the tribe of Levi was chosen to be the servants of the Lord. Thirdly, there was a messianic election. Christ was chosen to be the God-man, the mediator, and the redeemer. Fourthly, there was a soteriological election, that is, an election unto salvation, or, as we know it, an ecclesiastical election.

Secondly, we looked at the person of election, for verse 4 tells us, "...according as he hath chosen us in him." Our election was in Christ, and Christ was God's first elect. In fact, the Word of God tells us that His name is at the head of the book of life. He said, "...at the head of the book it is written of me." This is why it is called the Lamb's book of life. We were chosen in Christ.

Thirdly, in verse 4, we looked at the period of election. The Bible tells us that it was before the foundation of the world. There is no

such thing as a temporal election or an election in time. Election is a finished act. It happened in eternity past, before the world ever began. Contrary to the song that is sung very often today, there are no new names written down in glory. The Word of God says clearly that their names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life from before the foundation of the world: Revelation 17 and verse 8.

Fourthly, we looked at the purpose of election. Verse 4 tells us that one purpose was that we should be holy and without blame before Him. Verse 5 tells us another purpose: that we were to be His sons, that is, His adopted sons, having all the privileges and rights of the heirs of God. We were elected in order that we might be saved. Election is not salvation; it is the basis and foundation. But 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 13, says very clearly that it is unto salvation. Finally, we were elected for Christ. We are to be His.

The fifth point is the procedure in election. Ephesians 1:5 says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will."

In all matters pertaining to theology, and in all matters pertaining to God, we are limited and confined to God's written revelation, the Bible, concerning Himself and His works. When you consider the doctrine of election, you cannot base your theology upon the deductions and reasonings of men. Neither can you base what you know concerning God's doctrine of election upon what is known as general revelation, that is, the created universe. It is true that the created universe may tell you there is an all-powerful being, someone who created the world, but it can tell you absolutely nothing about that being. It cannot tell you that He is holy or merciful. It cannot tell you the way He moves, the way He acts, or the reason He acts.

The Procedure in Election: According to the Good Pleasure of His Will

We are confined to God's written revelation concerning Himself. We do not have all the answers that we may want, but we do have all the answers that we need. That which God has seen fit to reveal in His Word is exactly that which we need. Our minds can conjure up many questions and hypothetical situations: What if this, and what if that?

Still, we are limited and bound to the Word of God. God has chosen to reveal some things to us, and some things He has chosen not to reveal to us.

Hold Ephesians chapter 1, but turn to Deuteronomy chapter 29 and verse 29. The Bible says, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." This verse very clearly tells us that there is a secretive will in God and a revealed will that He has given to us. You and I have our responsibility, duty, and obligation from God's revealed will, the Bible. Those things that He has not revealed belong unto Him. Our duty is not based upon God's secretive will; our duty is based upon God's revealed will.

Consider an illustration of this in the doctrine of election. Someone who is unconverted says, "I do not know whether I am elect. Since I do not know whether I am elect, I am simply going to do nothing, because no one can know whether he is elect." But that person is basing his responsibility upon God's secret will. God says that our responsibility is based upon His revealed will, and His revealed will is that we repent and believe the gospel.

When it comes to the doctrine of election, there are things God has revealed very clearly and dogmatically in His Word. There are also things concerning election that God has not revealed; He has reserved those things to Himself.

Look back in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 5. The Bible tells you very clearly in verse 4 that He chose us, and in verse 5 that He predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will.

The first question that usually comes to mind when election is discussed is, How did God choose? What was the basis of His choosing? Many answer that God chose certain ones based on foreseen faith. In other words, God foresaw that they would believe and therefore chose them to believe.

The first thing wrong with that is that it would not be an election; it would be a ratification. God would not be electing or choosing anyone. He would merely be ratifying their choice.

Second, the Word of God tells us that none can believe, nor will believe, unless God gives them His gift of faith. Everyone can quote Ephesians 2:8–9: “For by grace are you saved through faith. And that, not of yourselves, it faith, is the gift of God.” Therefore, saying that God foresaw who would believe and chose them would make it a ratification, not an election; it would say that men possess the ability to believe in themselves, denying the Word of God. Third, turn in your Bibles to 2 Thessalonians 3:2. Here is a verse.

That will very clearly, I believe, solve this riddle. I read in the newspaper this past week where a preacher was saying, “All men have faith. All you have to do is exercise it in the right way.” In other words, I am sitting down in this chair. Before I sat down, I believed that chair would hold me, and therefore, by faith, I sat down in it. They say that, just as you had faith that the chair would hold you, you need to take that faith and exercise it for Jesus Christ.

But the Bible distinguishes between ordinary faith and supernatural saving faith. In 2 Thessalonians 3:2, Paul says, “And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men,” for all men have not faith. They do not have the faith. Not all men have the faith. In Titus 1:1, this special supernatural saving faith is called the faith of God's elect. Thus, when people discuss the basis of God's choosing and say that He looked down, saw who would believe, and therefore chose them to believe, that is denying the inability of man. It makes God's election a ratification, not an election, and says that faith is not the gift of God.

No. The Bible does not say or teach that God foresaw who would believe and therefore chose them. Noah doesn't teach that. What was the procedure in election? It is very plain. Ephesians 1:5 says that the basis, or ground, of election is “according to the good pleasure of his will.”

God's Self-Sufficiency and the Pleasure of His Will

Beloved, I am wrestling this morning, because I do not know how to communicate that statement. Picture with me, for a moment, the Almighty God: self-sufficient, self-contained, ever-blissful, dwelling in eternity past, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, whom no man can approach. Here is that almighty, omnipotent God,

deliberating, as it were, with Himself as to whether He should make any creature. If He made them, should He save them or damn them? Should He design His Son to be the Mediator, to receive our nature, and in time and history actually redeem us to Himself? Here is God dwelling in eternity.

The very fact that He did deliberate and decide to create was merely according to the good pleasure of His will. The very fact that He did decide to save was according to the good pleasure of His will. The very fact that he did sin Christ was according to the good pleasure of his will. In other words, God needed nothing and needed no one. God is independent, self-sufficient, self-contained, the only wise God. He needed not that external glory that is brought to him by us. People say the reason God created and saved anybody was that we might praise Him and bless Him. But if you think that, turn in your Bibles to Nehemiah chapter 9, verse 5. Notice carefully what Nehemiah says.

The Levites—Jeshua, Cadmeum, Bani, Hashebniah, Cherubiah, Harijah, Shebaniah, and Pethaniah—said, "Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever, and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise." In other words, our blessing and our praise add nothing to God. God did not need our external praise. God did not need our external blessings. God is self-contained, God is self-sufficient, and God is ever blessed in Himself.

It is true, according to the Word of God, that God chose to create. It is true that God chose to save. It is true that God has ordained that men bless His holy name. But there is a big difference between God's intrinsic or inherent self and God's revealed and manifested self. You and I may either honor or dishonor God according to His manifested self. But we cannot add to, nor hurt, nor do one thing to God as He is in and of Himself. For He is God.

God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer. Our Lord lived a perfect, holy, sinless life. But all of the goodness and all of the perfection of Jesus Christ added nothing to God. His life praised the Father in His manifestated glory, but it added nothing to His person. In Psalm 16, verse 2, the psalmist speaks prophetically of Christ: "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord."

Notice what Christ says: "...my goodness extendeth not to thee." In other words, it adds nothing to the nature, to the being, or to the essence of God. To whom does Christ's goodness extend? Verse 3 says, "...but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight." In other words, man can add nothing to God. The very fact that Christ came, the perfect man, and all of His perfection added nothing to God.

It did add, thanks be His holy name, something to the saints. It gave them a perfect righteousness, a perfect holiness, and a perfect standing before God. But God is ever blessed in Himself. The Bible says that God proceeded in election according to the good pleasure. There was nothing that made God decide to choose anybody other than the good pleasure of His will.

Biblical Evidence for God's Pleasure as the Basis

It pleased him to do it. It is very difficult to try to expound a phrase with another phrase that says exactly the same thing, but this is the very being and nature of God. David says in Psalm 115:3, "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."

Why did God choose whom he chose? The answer is, it pleased him to do it. Why did God choose any? The answer is, it pleased him to do it.

In Matthew 11:20, our Lord begins to upbraid these cities wherein his mighty works were done because they repented not. He said that if the mighty works which had been done in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ash. He said that if the mighty works which had been done in Capernaum had been done in Gomorrah, then Sodom would have repented long ago. The question would reasonably be raised, then: Why were not those mighty works done there?

Our Lord says in verse 25, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Then, in verse 26: "Even so, Father, for it seemed good in thy sight." At that same time, Jesus answered and said these things. They were hidden from the

wise and prudent and revealed unto babes because it seemed good in his sight.

When Ephesians 1:5 speaks of “the good pleasure of his will,” the Greek word is eudokia. In Matthew 11:26, it is the same word: “Even so, Father, for it pleased thee.” It was pleasant in thy sight. The word good pleasure, or eudokia, means pleasure; it means favor, wish, desire, and satisfaction. It satisfied the Father to do it this way. It pleased the Father to do it this way. It seemed good in his sight.

In Luke 10:21, once again you see the very same Scripture, showing that it is indeed used the same way.

In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so, Father, for it seemed good in thy sight,” or, it pleased thee. In Luke 12:32, we see this same word, eudokia, used again: “Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” It satisfies Him. It pleases Him. He does it according to the good pleasure of His will.

When Scripture affirms that the procedure in election is according to the good pleasure of God's will, it is saying that there was nothing in God that made Him choose anybody other than the good pleasure of His will. There was nothing outside of God that put pressure on Him or forced Him to do it. God did what He did merely because it pleased Him to do it.

To illustrate this point, let me ask you: Why is this universe in existence? Was there something that made God create? Was there something in God that made Him say, “I have to have this”? No. Why, then, is this universe here? The answer is, it pleased God to make it.

Why do we have the sun that rules by day and the moon by night? Why is it not the moon by day and the sun by night? The answer is, it pleased God to make it like that. Why do we have the stars shining at night? It pleased God to make it like that. Why did God create angels? It pleased God to create them. Why did God create some angels in order that they would not fall, and then create some and

allow them to fall? The answer is, it pleased God to do it. Why did God choose any under life? The answer is, it pleased God to do it.

From Pleasure to Purpose to Performance

Why did God choose you? And the answer is, it pleased God to do it. You see, everything that is, is according to the good pleasure of his will. If you would turn in your Bibles to Galatians chapter 1, and since we're talking about the pleasure of God, I want you to notice the testimony that the Apostle Paul gives concerning his own conversion. This is biblical language. Paul says in Galatians 1 and verse 15, But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace. Paul was recognizing the fact that I am what I am merely because of the good pleasure of his will. And when in Ephesians chapter 1 it talks about our election according to the good pleasure of his will, he's saying that the efficient, determinate cause of our election is not one thing in us, but merely the good pleasure of God's will. It pleased him to do it. Now, if you would look in your Bibles, in Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 9, we're talking about the procedure in election.

And very clearly now, very definitely, the Bible says God proceeded according to the good pleasure of his will. Now in verse 9 we read this, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself. Verse 5 tells us that he proceeded according to the good pleasure of his will. But now verse 9 tells us that what was his good pleasure in verse 5 has now become his purpose.

Now the word purpose here literally means to set before oneself. It means to purpose. It means to determine. If you will hold Ephesians 1 and turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 3, and I'm going to point this out just simply because I think it's not only vital, but so very interesting in light of this. The Greek word for purpose, back in Ephesians 1, is protithemi, which means literally to set before oneself to determine the purpose. But in Romans chapter 3 and verse 25, we read this, "...whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Verse 24 says, "...being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth." The word protithemi means, is there

interpreted, set forth. Literally, what Romans 3 and verses 24 and 25 is telling us, that the only reason we have Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, the only reason we have salvation, is because God purposed, God decided, God determined to set Him forth to be our Redeemer.

Had God so chosen, He could have not sent Christ, but He purposed it. He purposed to do it because it pleased Him to do it. Thus, that which is the pleasure of God becomes the purpose of God.

Second Timothy chapter 1 and verse 9 says, "...who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our but according to his own purpose and grace." In other words, that which pleased God, God has now purposed to do. God has saved us and called us, not according to anything else, not according to anything that we have done, but according to His purpose. His purpose was that which He did according to the good pleasure of His will.

Romans 8 and verse 28 is a very familiar passage, but notice what it says: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to purpose." Why did God call you? He purposed to call you. Why did He purpose to call you? The Bible says, because it pleased Him to call you.

Therefore, Romans 9 and verse 11 says, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, but the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." Isn't that amazing? In Ephesians 1, it was according to the good pleasure of His will; now it is His purpose. That which God was pleased to do, He purposed to do. God's pleasure and God's purpose are the same, and these two terms may be used interchangeably. You could say in Romans 8 and verse 28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who recall according to his pleasure." For God's pleasure and God's purpose are the same.

This teaches us the stability and firmness of God's decree of election. In men, I may be pleased to do something, but I may purpose to do something else. Our pleasure and our purpose are not always the same, but with God they are. God said, "I called, I elected, I chose according to my good pleasure." That which pleases Him is

His purpose. It cannot be otherwise with God, for God is the most simple being. God is in absolute control, not only over His creation, but over Himself. He is God. The procedure in election is according to the good pleasure of His will, which is His purpose.

In Ephesians chapter 1, verse 11, Paul says, "...in 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."

In verse 5, it is God's pleasure; in verse 9, His purpose; and in verse 11, He is working all things after the counsel of His own will. The word "worketh" means to work effectually—to actually, literally, bring to pass.

In other words, that which God is pleased to do is that which God purposes to do. And that which God purposes to do, God performs it. He actually brings it to pass according to the counsel of His holy will. You have His determination, referred to as His pleasure and His purpose; then you have the actual bringing of it to pass, the performance of it. He is factually working it out according to His own wise counsel and for His own glory.

The Word of God emphatically states that this is part of the Godhood of God; yea, you might even say it is in the essence or being of God. God alone moves according to His own pleasure. You and I do not move according to our pleasure. We may think we do, but we do not. Most of us move in terms of our creditors, what they want, or the responsibilities we have to them. God moves in terms of no man; He moves only in terms of Himself.

In Isaiah 14:24, the Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass. And as I have purposed, so shall it stand." Notice what God says: What I please, I purpose. What I purpose I bring to pass; it shall stand, it will not fall. "That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him underfoot. Then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed under the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations, for the Lord of hosts hath purpose. And who

shall disannul it? And if hand is stretched out, who shall turn it back?"

In other words, whatever pleases God is His purpose, and whatever God's purpose is, He performs. No man can disannul it. No man can turn it back. Isaiah 46:9-10 is one of the key passages in this chapter, probably in the book of Isaiah: "Remember the former things of old, for I am God and there is none else. I am God and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." God says, "I do what pleases me. What I please, I purpose. What I purpose, I perform."

Therefore, when we speak of the procedure, basis, foundation, or ground of election, it was merely the good pleasure of God.

God did what he did. God chose whom he chose simply because it pleased him to do it. He was under no obligation to choose anyone, create anyone, or save anyone. What he did was an act of his free, independent, all-wise, and holy will. He moved according to his own good pleasure.

You could say that God's choice in election is neither a thing of necessity, on the one hand—that is, God was not forced to choose—nor of caprice or arbitrariness, on the other hand, but a thing of freedom and thought. Further, the reasons for that election do not lie in the objects themselves, but are intrinsic to the divine mind and the free determination of the divine will. God did what he did because he is God. David said, "Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."

Therefore, Paul quotes Moses in Romans 9: "For God said, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." So then, it is not of him that runneth, nor of him that willeth, but of God that showeth mercy. God said, "I did what I did because I'm God, and I'm accountable to no one." The procedure in election is according to his good pleasure.

If you and I understand that the cause of our election was merely the good pleasure of God, how ought that to make us praise him for his grace to us? The amazing thing is that you and I will ascribe this

blessing, this trait, this act to ourselves, but deny it to God. You and I are free to choose, but God's not free to choose. Isn't that amazing?

The words of our Lord are these, in Matthew 20 and verse 15: “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?” God said, “I can do what I want to do; I'm God.” The very fact that God is God is that he does what it pleases him to do. How we should thank God in grace and in mercy according to the good pleasure of his will.

To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. In 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. That we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ; whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

For the last several weeks we have been studying the biblical doctrine of election. After an introductory message, I pointed out in verse 4 the principle of election: “according as He hath chosen us.” In the Word of God there are at least four types of election: a theocratic or national election, a vocational election, a messianic election, and a soteriological or ecclesiastical election, that is, an election unto salvation.

Secondly, in verse 4, we considered the person of election, for the Bible says that we are chosen in Him. Christ Jesus is God's first elect; His name is at the head of the book of life. Then we were chosen in Him. Thirdly, we looked at the period of election, for the Bible says that we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

Fourthly, we looked at the purposes of election. First, they are that we should be holy and without blame before Him.

The Perception of Election

In verse five, we saw that we should be His sons. The Word of God told us that He elected us so that we should be saved. Fourthly, He chose us so that we should be for Christ. Fifthly, we covered the procedure of election and pointed out in verse five that we were chosen according to the good pleasure of His will. That which was termed the good pleasure of His will in verse nine is called His purpose. Then, in verse eleven, the Bible tells us that which He purposed, He performed. The procedure in election was not according to our merits, nor according to anything in us, but merely according to the good pleasure of the will of God.

The Perception of Election: Objective and Subjective

Today we come to the sixth point: the perception of election. One of the most practical, and yet one of the great, problems of election is perceiving our election. Every time you begin to talk about election, someone asks, How do we know whether or not we are one of God's elect? How can anyone know absolutely and for sure that he is a chosen one of God? They will not argue the fact that Scripture definitely says, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?” God does have an elect.

But how can we discern? How do we perceive? How do we know that we are one of God's elect? In 2 Corinthians 13:5, notice what the Apostle Paul commands: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” Notice the admonition: examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Having commanded you to examine yourself and to prove yourself, he then asks, “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” In other words, a person who is truly converted, a person who is truly one of God's elect, ought to know whether or not he is such. If you look in your Bibles at 2 Peter 1:10, Peter says exactly the same truth.

The Perception of Election

"Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Notice that he commands you to give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Evidently, it is possible to know whether or not, for sure, you are one of God's elect. Peter says that you are to give diligence to make your calling and election sure. If you are still not convinced that it is possible to know, read 1 Thessalonians 1:4, where the apostle Paul wrote those Thessalonian Christians, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." In other words, he says, "I know for a fact that you Christians are the elect of God."

We begin, then, trying to expound this one point: the perception of election. According to Ephesians chapter 1, there are at least two ways that one may perceive our election. One of these ways is objective, and the other is subjective.

By that I mean this: one way in which we perceive our election is outside of us, and the other way is inside of us. The objective way pertains to all of God's elect in general. The particular, or subjective, way is that which happens to each of God's elect individually.

What are those two ways? If you look in verses 6 through 8, the first way is that we may know there is an elect people based on the work of the Son for us. Verse 6 says, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." The first way that one may know for sure that there is an election of grace is based on the work of the Son for us. The incarnation and mission of Jesus Christ prove undeniably that there is an election.

The second way that we may know—and this is the one in which most people would be interested—is the work of the Spirit in us, in verses 12 through 14: "That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, under the praise of his glory."

There are two ways: one objective and one subjective. The objective way is the work of the Son for us; the subjective way is the work of the Spirit in us. First, consider the objective way, the work of the Son for us. The Bible tells us plainly in Ephesians chapter 1 that, as it was the purpose of the Father to elect, so it is the purchase of the Son that redeems the elect.

Objective Perception: The Work of the Son

Verse 4 says, "...according as he hath chosen us in him." Then verse 6 says, "...to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Verse 7 says, "...in whom." Notice that verse 6 says, "...wherein," and verse 7 says, "...in whom."

The work of Jesus Christ is completely outside of us. You and I do not experience the work of Jesus Christ for us, nor do we feel it. We believe it. It is something outside of us; it is a fact, and it is a true fact whether individuals believe it or not. Christ did come and die and suffer for his people. Here, then, is an objective fact, something outside of us; yet it is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that implies and necessarily manifests an election of grace.

Turn first to 1 John chapter 4. We want to see how this is taught, not only in Ephesians, but in other passages. In 1 John 4, beginning with verse 9, notice the word manifested: “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love. Not that we love God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Here is a perception of God's great love to His own. The manifestation of it is that He sent His Son. The person and work of Jesus Christ declares and announces that there is an election of grace, for Christ came for His people; yea, He was sent by God the Father. God says that this is a manifestation of His love.

Now look at 1 John chapter 3 and verse 16, and underline the word perceive, because this is what we are discussing: the perception of election. “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Notice the word perceive: hereby understand we, comprehend we, apprehend we. We perceive that God loved His own with an everlasting love; yea, we perceive that He does have His own.

He laid down His life for us in the person of Jesus Christ. Here, then, is the perception of election. You may perceive that there is an election based on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Having pointed that out, turn back to Ephesians chapter 1 and work through this passage so that you may see that this is clearly taught. In the first fourteen verses you have the work of the Father, the work of the Son, and the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Father is election; the work of the Son is redemption. Beginning in verse 9, and working back, he says: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."

A mystery is that which cannot be comprehended without an explanation. But the Word of God says that He has made known unto us the mystery of His will. Who, then, are the us who understand the mystery of the will of God? Look back in verse 8: "wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." The us who understands the mystery of the will of God is the same us to whom He has abounded in wisdom and prudence; that is, He has given us an understanding that we may understand that mystery.

Who, then, are the us to whom He has given wisdom and prudence? Look back in verse 7: "in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." The us that understands the mystery is the same us that has received wisdom and prudence. According to verse 7, it is the same us that has been redeemed according to the riches of His grace.

Who is the us that has been redeemed according to the riches of His grace? Look back in verse 6: "To the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." The ones that understand the mystery of His grace, or the mystery of His will, are the same ones who have received wisdom and prudence. They are the same ones who have received redemption according to the riches of His grace, and the same ones who have been made acceptable in the Beloved.

Who are the ones that have been made acceptable in the Beloved? Look in verse 5: "Having predestinated us under the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of

his will." The ones made acceptable in the Beloved are the same ones—the same us—who have been predestinated under the adoption of children.

Follow it back: those who understand the mystery of God's will have received wisdom and prudence. They have been redeemed by Christ according to the riches of His grace. They have been made acceptable in the Beloved. Yea, they have been predestinated unto the adoption of children. Who are they that have been predestinated unto the adoption of children, predestinated to be accepted in His Beloved, redeemed by the Son, and received wisdom and prudence I understand the mystery of his will? Look in verse 4: "according as he hath chosen us in him, the elect." Here it is worked all the way back: here is the election from the Father and redemption in the Son. Listen very carefully, beloved: the work of Jesus Christ manifests that there is an election of Christ.

For had there not been an election, Jesus Christ would never have come. It is His work on the cross that redeems the elect of God and reconciles us unto God. Jesus Christ manifests that there is an election.

The Bible says in 1 John chapter 4, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son." One of the names of Jesus Christ most notable and numerous in Scripture is the sent one. How many times does He say, "The Father hath sent me"? Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 1 says, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." The word apostle means the sent one. Jesus Christ delighted in calling Himself the sent one.

If Christ Jesus had not been sent by God the Father, He would not have come on His own. Had He come on His own, He would have been in rebellion against the Father, and that would be utterly and completely blasphemous even to think or suggest. No. The very fact that Jesus Christ came proves that He was sent by the Father to do a certain work for a certain group of people. That is why He said in John 17, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine." The fact that Jesus Christ has come, suffered, and died proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is an election of grace.

Now turn to John chapter 10. This is perhaps the most pictorial and practical chapter illustrating this truth clearly. If you had difficulty following me in Ephesians 1, John 10 ought to make it clearer. Beginning with verse 3: “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”

Jesus said, “I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.” The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd, and the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

He said, “I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” He has been given a sheep, and He has come to lay down His life for the sheep—not the goats, but the sheep. His work evidences the fact that He has a sheepfold, that He has a people.

“But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth a wolf cometh, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth him, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” Then He says, “I am the good shepherd, and I know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.” He has repeated that twice.

He continues, “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold”—that is, they are not of the Jewish nation—“them also I must bring.” Notice the assurance: “And they shall hear my voice. And there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” Our Lord is saying, “I have been given a people. I have come to lay down my life for those people. And I will certainly bring those people into this one fold.” There shall be one fold and one shepherd.

But someone may say, “Don’t you know that everybody is the sheep of the Good Shepherd? Everyone is a sheep.” No, I do not know that. For when you look at verse 25, our Lord looks at these Pharisees and says, “I told you and ye believe not.”

“The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.” Notice verse 26: “But you believe not, because you are not of my sheep. As I said unto you, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” He looked at the Pharisees and said, “The reason you don't believe me is you are not of my sheep.” You are not of the elect. Had you been one of His sheep, you would have believed.

What our Lord is saying is that His work of redemption and reconciliation manifests the fact that there is a sheepfold, that there is a people, and that there is an elect. Once again, the work of our Lord is clearly set forth in John chapter 11. Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, “You know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.”

“And this spake he not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.” The Holy Spirit is pointing this out: He inspired this prophecy. “And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”

As our Lord said, “I already have a sheepfold, and I come to lay down my life for those sheep.” He already has children, and the Bible is saying that Caiaphas prophesied that He should die not for that nation only, but that He might gather together in one all of His children that were scattered abroad. They were already His children. They were His children by election, and He came to bring them to God through the sacrifice of Himself. They were already His sheep in John 10; He came to lay down His life for them.

In Acts 15:14, Simeon declared, “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.” Notice the words, “to take out of them”: there is an election even among the Gentiles. There is a choice, and this choice was to be a people for his name. “And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written,

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up."

Jesus Christ is the great David. He is the true King of Kings and the true Lord of Lords. The Word of God tells us, once again, that the work of Jesus Christ manifests the fact that God indeed does have a people.

One may perceive that there is an election of grace because of the person and work of Jesus Christ. He may not immediately perceive that he is one of those elects, but he knows that there is an election, because the Bible says in Revelation 7:9-10 that there is a great number, which no man can number, out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. Our Lord came, the Word of God says very clearly, to lay down his life for the sheep. The first way we know that there is an election is based on the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is objective; it is outside of us. We have nothing to do with it, but it manifests, and thereby we may perceive that there is indeed an election.

Subjective Perception: The Work of the Spirit

Secondly, the second way that we may know individually and particularly that we are God's elect is because of the work of the Spirit in us. In Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 12, the Bible says that we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ. "In whom also ye trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our redemption unto the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory."

Election is the chief work of the Father. Redemption is the chief work of the Son. The application of that redemption is the chief work of the Holy Spirit. It is the application of redemption of Christ by the Spirit of God that assures us not only of our individual redemption in Christ, but also assures us of our individual election by the Father. What I am trying to say is this: it is our effectual calling; it is our supernatural conversion which testifies to the fact that we are one of God's elect.

Calling and election are inseparably connected. Peter says in 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 10, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” Notice that he said, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” Calling and election are inseparable. How can I make my election sure? I cannot climb to heaven and look in the Lamb's Book of Life and see if my name is there.

I do not know the secretive will of God. I do not know the secret purpose of God. But when you make sure that you have been effectually called by God, when you make sure that you are really and truly, powerfully and supernaturally one of God's people, at the same time you are making sure that you are one of God's elect. For if you can discern the mighty work of God in your life, then you may also discern that you are one of God's elect, for that mighty work of God only occurs in the life of God's elect.

Consider 1 Corinthians chapter 1, where chosen and calling may be interchanged and used synonymously. Verse 23 says, “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness.”

Preaching is the outward call. It lays the duty and responsibility on all to repent and believe. Yet when the Word of God is preached, the Jews stumble over it, and the Greeks think it is absolute foolishness. But verse 24 says, “But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

There is a general outward call, which men by nature refuse, reject, and despise, just like the Jews who consider Christ a stumblingblock and the Greeks who consider Him foolishness. But there is also an inward, efficacious, powerful, supernatural saving call. By this call, men no longer view Jesus Christ as a stumblingblock or foolishness; rather, they see Him as the very power of God and the wisdom of God—yea, God incarnate—and they fall down and worship Him.

The distinction is between these two calls. Verse 23 presents the outward, general call; verse 24 presents the inward, efficacious call. Paul says, “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them

which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." They are called in such a way that they no longer consider Christ foolishness, but wisdom; no longer a stumblingblock, but the power of God.

Then verse 25 says, "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." Calling is based on choosing: "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

"And these things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to things that are, bring to naught things that are, but no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made in us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

What is he saying? He is saying that our calling is based on God's election. When we know that we have been called powerfully to Jesus Christ, we view Jesus no longer as a stumbling block or foolishness. We see in him the wisdom, power, and glory of God, and we worship and serve him. When you know that you have been called and view Christ like that, then you know that you are one of God's elect.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, look at verses 13 and 14 together. The inward, supernatural, saving call is the evidence of our election: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation." There is God's choice; there is God's election. But God, who ordained the end, also ordains the means to reach that end. He chose us unto salvation "through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth."

Then verse 14 says, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." He chose you;

therefore, he called you. Had you not been chosen, you would not have been called. He told you; therefore, he called you.

I was preaching in Illinois, dealing, if I remember correctly, with 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. Of course, chapter 1, verse 4 says, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." After the service, people were speaking to me, and I noticed a woman standing to one side, weeping. I really wanted to speak to her, but I was besieged by people, and I thought, well, maybe she'll just wait.

And sure enough, she waited until everyone was out of the building except her. Then she came to me and said, "I've just got to talk to you." She was almost out of control with weeping. She said, "I want to be a Christian so badly. I want to be holy. I want to be obedient. I want to be godly. I want to honor God more than anything in the world."

I said, "Well, what's your problem?" She said, "My problem is, I just don't know whether I'm one of God's elect or not." I said, "Dear lady, if you weren't, you wouldn't be concerned about honoring God, I can assure you right now. You wouldn't be concerned about living holy and living godly. You wouldn't be concerned about wanting to do what's biblical and right."

I took her and showed her these very verses: "For those whom he chose, he called." I said, "If you've been called unto God powerfully by the gospel, you may rest assured you are God's elect, for he only calls those whom he chooses."

Romans 8:30 says, "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." It is the same group. What God is saying is this: if you have been called, you know that you have been predestinated, or chosen. If God has powerfully called you, he has justified you. If he has justified you, you may rest assured he shall glorify you. Although our glorification is in the future, it is so certain and sure that Romans 8:30 speaks of it in the past tense. Those whom he predestinated, he called. It is so positive that he shall call everyone whom he has predestinated. Those whom he called, he justified; so positive is it that it is in the past tense.

Those whom he justified, he glorified, so positive is it that it is in the past tense, as if it has already happened. And it is the same group. There it is: our calling is based on our election.

If you want one other passage, turn to 1 Thessalonians, chapter 1, the passage I have quoted several times, and look with me at verse 4: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." Paul says, "I know that you are the elect of God." Well, Paul, I have a question to ask you: How do you know for sure that these Thessalonians are the elect of God? How do you know it? He explains in verses 5, 6, and 7 how he knows that they are the elect of God. He says, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only."

It was not just the oratory of the preacher. It was not merely proclamation. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sakes; and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia."

Paul says, "I know you are God's elect," and the way he knows it is because there was a powerful, effectual conversion in their lives to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They not only professed faith, but actually became followers of the apostles and of the Lord. They were examples to all those in Macedonia and Achaia, showing that they were God's people and obedient unto Him. He calls us; therefore, he says, "I know that you are the elect of God."

And so, beloved, it is our calling that evidences the fact that we are one of God's elect. It is not our belief in the doctrine of election that evidences the fact that we are God's elect. We need not go up to an individual and ask, "Are you one of God's elect?" Rather, we should ask, "Have you been powerfully and effectually called to God through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit?" If they have been called, they are God's elect. If they have not been called, they are not God's elect.

For you remember our Lord said in John 6 and verse 44, "No man can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me drawing." Then in John 6, verse 65, he said, "No man can come unto me except that it hath already been given unto him of my Father." So the

question is not, Are you one of God's elect? The question is, Have you been powerfully converted to Christ by the Holy Spirit? Have you been converted? Then you may rest assured that you are one of God's elect, for that powerful, effectual call only comes to his elect.

It is vain and fruitless for you and I to try to figure out who is God's elect and who is not God's elect, because the only way that you and I may ascertain whether an individual is God's elect is when he is converted. If a man is unconverted, the only thing that we can say is, We don't know.

CHAPTER 6

The Doctrine of Election - 6

SCRIPTURE READING - Ephesians 1:1-14 (KJV)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, 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, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth,

> even in him. In 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, that we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Review of Previous Points on Election

> For the last several weeks, in fact for the last month, we have been studying the biblical doctrine of election. Let me very briefly point out the points that we covered in order that you might follow along with the conclusion today. First of all, in verse 4, we pointed out the principle of election. For there it says, "according as he hath chosen us." And then I showed you several passages from the word of God which pointed out very clearly that God is the author of election. There are four types of election in the Bible. There is that which is known as theocratic or national election. There is, secondly, that which is known as vocational election, where God chose some to be Levites or priests, as today He chooses some to be pastor-teachers. And then, thirdly, there is a messianic election, where Christ was chosen to be the God-man, the mediator. And, fourthly, there is the soteriological or ecclesiastical election, which is an election unto salvation. But then we not only saw the principle of election, but secondly, in verse 4, the person of election.

The Bible says, “according as he hath chosen us in him,” that our election was in Christ Jesus, the eternal God-man in the mind of God. We were chosen not in ourselves, not for ourselves, not according to what we have done or what we have not done, but in Christ.

Thirdly, we viewed the period of election. The Bible says that we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world. Fourthly, we looked at the purposes of election. First, verse 4 tells us that God chose us that we should be holy and without blame. Verse 5 tells us

that He chose us that we should be His sons. Second Thessalonians 2, verse 13, tells us that God chose us in order that we might be saved. The Bible also tells us that God chose us for Christ in Colossians 1, verse 16, and Ephesians 1, verse 5.

Fifthly, we looked at the procedure of election, for verse 5 tells us that God chose according to the good pleasure of His will. That which is designated as the good pleasure of His will in verse 5 is called His purpose in verse 9, for that which pleases God He purposes to do. That which God purposes to do in verse 11 is called the performance of His will: "to his purpose, who worketh all things after the counsel of his will." The word "worketh" is energeo, which means to work effectually, to bring to pass. Thus, that which pleases God, God purposes to do; and that which God purposes to do, He brings to pass in time according to the counsel of His holy will.

We began looking at the perception in election. Since the Bible clearly teaches the doctrine of election, how can anyone know whether or not he is one of God's elect? The Bible tells us very clearly that there are two ways by which one may discern the election of God: first, an objective way, and secondly, a subjective way. Ephesians chapter 1, verses 6 through 8, speaks of the person and work of Jesus Christ. This is the objective way by which we may discern the election of grace.

Objective and Subjective Perception of Election

That means it is outside of us. It is not something experienced by us. The person and work of Jesus Christ is completely external to us. We do not experience it, feel it, or sense it, but by faith we believe it and discern it. Our Lord Himself said in John 10, "I lay down my life for the sheep." In John 17, He said that the people given Him by the Father were those for whom He came and laid down His life. That is the objective way: the work of the Son for us.

The subjective way is the work of the Spirit in us. This is found in verses 12 through 14, where we are convicted and, by the power of Almighty God, believe unto the saving of our souls. Although we may discern from the work of the Son for us that there is an election of grace, we do not discern that we are among those elect until the Spirit of God applies the redemption of the Son of God to our hearts.

John Owen, the Puritan scholar, said, "...the sole way of God's appointment whereby we may come to an apprehension of an interest in election is by the fruits of it in our own souls, nor is it lawful for us to inquire into it or after it in any other way." In other words, the only lawful, biblical way that we may inquire whether we are one of God's elect is by the fruits of election in our own souls. We may discern this by the fruit of election—that is, our effectual calling and its attendant results: obedience and a holy life.

The Necessity of Fruits for Personal Assurance

A. W. Pink wrote, "Until I believe and obey the gospel, I am under no obligation to believe that Christ died for me in particular."

The Word of God says very clearly that the message you and I are to preach is that Christ died for sinners. You never find the apostles going around telling individuals, "Christ died for you." They said, "Christ died for sinners."

What Pink is saying is, "Until I believe and obey the gospel, I am under no obligation to believe that Christ died for me particularly. But having done so, that is, having obeyed and believed the gospel, I am warranted to enjoy that assurance that Christ did die for me in particular. In like manner, I am required to believe the doctrine of election upon my first hearing of it, because it is clearly revealed in the Bible. But as for my own personal election, I cannot scripturally believe it, nor am I obligated to believe it in any otherwise, but as God reveals it to me by its effects." Everyone must believe the doctrine of election, for it is clearly revealed in the Bible. But we may only know that we are personally God's elect as we see the fruits and results of that election in our life.

"No man may justly disbelieve in or deny his election until he be in a condition whereby it is impossible for the effects of election to be wrought in him." No man may be able to believe his election until the fruits are in him. On the other hand, he cannot justly disbelieve that he is an elect of God until he is in the position that the fruits of election cannot be worked in him. The only position in which it is utterly impossible for the fruits of election to be worked in a man is when he is dead. In other words, there is hope right up until death.

"While he is an unholy man, he may have no evidence that he is elect, so he can have none that he is not elected while it is possible for him to be made holy. Thus, whether men are elected or no, it is not that which God calls us immediately to be conversant about, but rather faith, obedience, and holiness. That is what is required from us." We do not sit around saying, "I wonder if so-and-so is an elect; I wonder if so-and-so is not an elect."

He said it is impossible for us to know. The only way one may know that he is elect is whether the fruits of election are in him. If someone does not have that fruit of election in him, all he may know is, "I don't know whether I am or not, and I shall not know until I be in the place where it is impossible for the fruits of election to be in me."

And so, that which God calls us to is faith and obedience. Since the Word of God makes it very clear that the fruit of our election is effectual calling, how does one discern whether or not he has been savingly brought to Jesus Christ? I trust that you know I am using the word effectual in a very discriminating manner. There is a general call which goes unto all, but there is an effectual call which is saving and actually brings a person into saving faith in Jesus Christ. Today I am giving what is known as a general call.

The Distinction Between General and Effectual Calling

I am preaching to all men indiscriminately. I preach to sinners, I preach to men wherever they may be, and I declare unto them their responsibilities, duties, and obligations before God. But only the Holy Spirit of God can make that general call an effectual call—that is, work in these men saving faith and thus actually bring them to Jesus Christ.

If you would turn in your Bibles, holding Ephesians 1, please. Chapter 1: I want you to notice with me in this passage a particular name that is ascribed to the people of God. Most everyone can tell you that in the Bible men are called Christians. In the Bible they are called saints when they believe.

But there is another term that is used frequently to designate those who are genuine children of God. The Bible says in Romans 1:6, "...among whom also ye are the called of Jesus Christ." In other words, the called ones is a name, a title, to designate those individuals who are genuine Christians. They have believed and they have been called under grace. Paul designates them as the called ones. That is, they are called in a unique and special manner so as to have believed in Jesus Christ.

If you would look in your Bibles to the book of Jude, chapter 1 and verse 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." Here he designates the people of God in three particular areas. Number one, they are the sanctified by God the Father. Number two, they are preserved ones in Jesus Christ.

And third, they are the called ones. I hope that you are noticing that this is not merely the general call he is talking about. In the general call, everyone is called and everyone is invited. But here, in Jude 1 and verse 1, the called ones are identical to the preserved in Jesus Christ, and the preserved in Jesus Christ are identical to those sanctified by God the Father. Here, then, is a peculiar group of people designated as the sanctified ones, the preserved ones, yea, the called ones. They are called in such a way that they savingly believe in Jesus Christ. If you look in Revelation chapter 17 and verse 14, once again you will see this designation given very clearly: "These 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." So here the Word of God says that the saints are designated as the faithful ones. They are designated as the chosen ones. They are designated as the called ones.

Two passages designate very clearly the distinction between the general call and what is known in the Bible as the effectual call. We have looked at 2 Thessalonians 2:13 in light of our personal election unto salvation. We read verse 13 in order that we may follow the context and then make the point in verse 14: "But we are bound to give thanks always 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 gospel." God has not only ordained the end; He has also appointed the means to that end. He has chosen us to salvation, and the appropriate means are also appointed: the sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. But notice verse 14: "Whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ." Here is a calling that results in the actual obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul said He chose you and appointed effectual means. Since He appointed the means, He actually called you in such a way that the result was that you obtained the glory that is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, in 1 Peter 2:9-10, we see it once again. Peter says, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of him," watch it, "who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Here is a call that comes in such a way that it actually translates you out of darkness into light. Peter explains it by saying, "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." He called you in such a way that He actually brought you from darkness and put you in the light.

The Evidences of Effectual Calling

You were not a people, but now you are a people. You had not obtained mercy, but now you have obtained mercy. The call actually converted you and made you a child of the living God. Here the Word of God tells us that our effectual calling is the fruit of our election.

First Evidence: An Enlightened Mind

Having pointed that out clearly from Scripture, you may still ask, How do I know that I have been effectually called by God? In trying to bring this down to what I would call an irreducible minimum, I came up with three leading thoughts. There are many other things that could be said, but I believe these three evidences are very prominent in Scripture. If these three be in your heart, in some

degree, and in your life, you may discern whether or not you have been savingly called unto Jesus Christ.

What are those three things? First, an enlightened mind; secondly, a subdued will; and thirdly, a renewed affection. First, let us consider an enlightened mind.

When God begins to convict a man, the very first thing that happens is that his thoughts begin to trouble him. You remember that Nebuchadnezzar wrote, “I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest and flourishing in my palace, and the thoughts of my head, they troubled me. And I had sorrow.” He called Daniel, the prophet of God, who interpreted exactly what God was going to do. Later, Nebuchadnezzar trembled and acknowledged the Most High God of Heaven, that He alone is Lord of glory, and that He alone is worthy of honor, praise, and glory.

But it all started with Nebuchadnezzar’s thoughts. When a sinner begins to be convicted by the Holy Spirit of God, his thoughts begin to trouble him. What if I die? What if I go to hell? What if I stand before a holy God? How can I believe? How can I repent? Where do I turn? What do I do? All kinds of thoughts come upon his mind, and they trouble him. He does not know what to do.

He knows that he is in a position of great danger, in a place of great horror and trouble, yet he literally does not know what to do. His mind has no rest. Biblically, in one sense of the word, salvation is a matter of the mind. Solomon the wise man said in Proverbs 23, verse 7, “as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Salvation, in one sense of the word, is changing a man’s line of thinking. He no longer thinks humanistically and autonomously, but submits his mind to the Word of God and learns to think biblically and godly.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 2, beginning with verse 11, the Word of God declares, "For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man?" Man, by his own capabilities, can only know the things of man. The apostle continues, "...even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." The only one who can reveal the depth of the knowledge and the things of God is the Holy Spirit of God.

The apostle says, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth," but "which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." The only way that we may understand the things of God is to be taught by the Spirit of God.

To make it very plain that no man has the ability to comprehend this in and of himself, he says in verse 14, "But the natural man," that is, the unsaved man, the man by nature, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." In other words, "can" is a term of ability. Man does not have the ability on his own to receive the things of God. When a man begins to be convicted and enlightened in his mind, it must undoubtedly be the work of the Holy Spirit as it pertains to the things of God.

When the Holy Spirit of God enlightens our minds, usually He does so in two areas. Number one, He enlightens us to our sin. Number two, He enlightens us as to our Savior. We must remember and readily confess that by nature we do not like to confess or admit to our depravity.

You may find someone whom the world would call a moral man, or someone whom the world would call a reprobate and a brave man, and begin to talk to him about sin. Usually he will say, "Well, yes, I've done one or two things bad in my life. But you must remember that not everyone is perfect, and there's a little bad in all of us." When we confess or admit our sinnerhood by nature, it is always with the understanding that there are people worse than I am, and that the only thing I do is because a little bad is in me. But when the Holy Spirit of God begins to convict a man and show him that he is a sinner, He does not leave him saying, "Well, no man is perfect." Rather, his mind is exercised, and he is convinced by the Holy Spirit of God that he is the worst sinner who has ever lived. He realizes that he has violated the law of God, shamed the Son of God, abused the privileges of God, and done despite to the Spirit of Grace.

He begins to cry out, "Woe is me," as Isaiah did. "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

Woe is me, I am a terrible, wicked, vile sinner." When men are convicted by the Holy Spirit of God, they throw off all pretenses, hypocrisy, and cover, and cry out in shame, "I am a sinner of sinners." And, beloved, they are not ashamed to admit to others that they are sinners, although they are ashamed before God that they sin so violently and flagrantly in His eyes.

You remember the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee said, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men, even as that publican standing over there. Lord, I fast twice a week. I do this. I do that. I do this." But the publican would not even lift his eyes toward heaven. He smote himself on the breast and said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Here is a man who has been convicted by the Holy Spirit and enlightened. He knows that he is wicked, that he is wrong, and that he has violated the law of God. Just like the Apostle Paul, he says, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”

Beloved, Paul thought he was the worst sinner who ever lived, and every man who has been convicted by the Holy Spirit, whose mind has been enlightened to the reality and awfulness of sin, senses the same thing: “I am the worst man who has ever lived. I am the chief of sinners.” All too often, you and I think sin is something funny, something to play with, something to dally about with. We never see the awfulness, wretchedness, and wickedness of our sins until God reveals them to us.

Our Lord’s words to the Pharisees show this very truth. They thought they were holy and godly. They had an outward keeping of the law, but not a spiritual keeping of the law. “And it came to pass as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”

“But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to

repentance.” Our Lord has no offer of salvation for a self-righteous man and no offers of mercy for a hypocrite. He offers mercy and salvation to sinners who know that they are not whole, sin sick, wicked, wretched, and hopeless. He holds for hope only for the hopeless and mercy only for those who are wicked, ungodly, and helpless in and of themselves. “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”

You and I have the greatest message for sinners that we could ever find. But the fact is, most folks do not want to admit or confess that they are sinners, wicked, ungodly, and undone. So many times Satan will tempt the sinner and say, "You are too wicked, too ungodly, you sin too much, you are too flagrant, you are too vile." Oh dear, the more wicked you are, the more you need the Savior, for that is the kind He came to seek and to save. You had better pray that God will teach you exactly what that means.

The Holy Spirit not only enlightens our minds to our sin, but also to our Savior. Once the Holy Spirit gets you lost, you realize that somebody must find you. Having seen himself lost, a man cries and begs for mercy. Then the Holy Spirit graciously opens his eyes, that he might see Jesus Christ, the only hope of sin.

There is a vast difference between viewing Jesus Christ savingly and viewing Jesus Christ academically or intelligently. So many people say, "I know that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. I know that He lived, I know that He died, and I know that God raised Him from the dead." They are viewing Christ with a historical frame of mind. They believe those facts and have intelligently comprehended that someone lived on this earth, called Himself the Son of God, died, arose, and went to heaven.

But saving faith, although it is a matter of the mind, is more than an academic acceptation of certain facts. James said in James chapter 2 and verse 19, "Thou believest that there is one God? Thou doest well. The devils also believe and tremble."

James is saying that mere intellectual or historic faith is not saving faith. Believing in one God and believing in one Christ academically saves no one, for even the devils believe and tremble. When the Holy Spirit of God opens our eyes to Jesus Christ, we do

not view Him as an example, a martyr, or a mere historical figure who walked upon this earth. When the Holy Spirit enlightens our minds to the glory of Christ, we behold Him as the Lord of Glory.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18, the Apostle says, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.” Ungodly, unconverted, reprobate men think the preaching of Jesus Christ is mere foolishness. “But unto them who are saved, it is the power of God.” The concepts are different: “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”

“For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.”

There is the general call, the open declaration of Christ. By nature, the Greeks see this as foolishness and the Jews stumble over Him. But verse 24 says, “But unto them who are called,” that is, effectually called, “But unto them who are called, who view Christ differently, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and Christ the wisdom of God.” A man enlightened as to the person of Christ sees not merely a historical figure, but in Christ the very power, wisdom, and glory of God; and in grace and mercy he falls and worships Him as the Lord of Glory.

He does not sit around with some academic exercise, going through mental gymnastics. When old Thomas had said in unbelief, “I will not believe unless I can take my finger and put it through his hand, and take my hand and put it through his side,” the Lord revealed Himself to Thomas and said, “Thomas, take your finger and stick it in my hand. Take your hand and stick it in my side. It is I.”

"Be not faithless, but believing." But you never read where Thomas stuck his finger or reached his hand. All he did was fall on his face and say, "My Lord and my God." The man that sees Jesus Christ does as promised. He falls on his face and says, "My Lord and

my God." He does not view Jesus Christ as a byword or as a fire escape, but sees Him as He is: God incarnate, the Lord of glory.

In Acts chapter 9, Saul of Tarsus was converted by God. Saul himself confesses this in Galatians 1:15, when he says, "But when it pleased God, who called me by His grace." Before his conversion, the Apostle Paul was known as Saul of Tarsus. He hated Christ and Christians. He tried to destroy them, and he had letters from the high priest going to Damascus that, if he found any of this way, he might bring them down and throw them into the dungeons in Jerusalem.

But verse 3 says, "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus. And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Saul had no idea who Jesus Christ was. He thought Jesus Christ was an imposter. But on that Damascus road, when God knocked him from his horse and he fell down blinded by that great light, he cried out, "Who art thou, Lord?" The word Lord means boss, owner, master, sovereign. He was saying, "I don't know who you are, but I do know this. If you will tell me who you are, I will acknowledge you as my Lord and my sovereign." Then our Lord said, "I am Jesus."

There was the enlightenment. The mind that had viewed Jesus Christ as simply an imposter and a heretic now viewed Him as the Lord of Glory with an enlightened mind. But notice, secondly, not only must there be an enlightened mind; there must be a subdued will.

Second Evidence: A Subdued Will

Is it not amazing that this is exactly what we find in Acts chapter 9? Not only must the mind be enlightened, but that rebellious, autonomous, self-seeking will must be captured and subdued. Saul of Tarsus did many things against Jesus of Nazareth and His people. He had his own way and his own will; he did what Saul wanted to do. But when God enlightened his mind, he cried out, “Who art thou,

Lord?" The Lord revealed to him, "I am Jesus." Then, in verse 6, "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" In other words, his will had been subdued. He would no longer be rebellious Saul, rebelling against God and doing those things hateful and displeasing to Him. Now he would submit to the Word of God and to his Lord. He would obey Him in every area of his life.

There is a big difference between a subdued will and a subjected will. A subdued will does what is pleasing to God because of the work of grace and out of love to our Lord. A subjected will does right out of fear and judgment. In 1 Kings chapter 21, you will see exactly what this means. Ahab was one of the most ungodly, wicked men who ever lived. He had Jezebel for his wife, and she stirred him up to great sins and wickedness. Yet even Ahab learned that he could not fight against God continually.

In 1 Kings chapter 21, beginning with verse 23, Elijah prophesied against Ahab and Jezebel: "And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dog shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dog shall eat, and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat. But there was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up."

"And he did very abominably in following idols according to all things as did the Amorites whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel." And it came to pass when Ahab heard Elijah's words—that the dogs would lick his blood and the birds would eat the bodies of those of him that fell in the field—"that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring evil upon his house."

Now notice, Ahab was not a converted man. Ahab knew that God was fixing to clean his plow, and he humbled himself and subjected himself to God out of fear of judgment. But give Ahab a few years, and God cleans his plow because of his wickedness and rebellion, and the dogs lick his blood.

There is a vast difference between a man who is subdued and serves God out of love, grace, and mercy, and one who is simply in fear and subjects himself lest the judgment of God come upon him. Only those who have an enlightened mind and a subdued will can honestly and truly pray with our Lord, “Not my will, but thine, be done.”

One of the great tests as to whether or not our wills have been subdued is when the will of God crosses our wills. What do we prefer? What do we want more? Will we, like the ungodly and the reprobates, say, “I don’t care what God says. I want what I want and I want it now”? Or will we say like old Samuel, or Eli of old, rather, “It is the Lord. Let him do what pleaseth him”?

Those who have been effectually called do not selfishly demand their wills and their ways. Rather, they desire the way and the will of God, and they are willingly obedient and submissive to it. They have learned to say with our Lord in John 4:34, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.” They rejoice in the will of God. Only those who by grace have had their wills subdued can testify that they have been savingly called by God.

But thirdly, not only must there be a subdued will and an enlightened mind; there must be a renewed affection.

Third Evidence: Renewed Affections

Look at the life of the man named Saul of Tarsus and his conversion. Acts chapter 9, verses 1 and 2, says that he was “yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.” Saul hated Christians and despised them. His very breath was nothing but threatenings and slaughter. But in chapter 9, verse 18, we read, “And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.”

That is, he identified himself with the people of God. “And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then went Saul certain days with the disciples who were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which call on this name in Jerusalem? And came hither for

that intent that he might bring them bound in the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving that Jesus is very Christ."

Here is now a renewed affection. This was a man who hated Christ and hated the disciples, but he not only identified himself with Christ and with the disciples; he stayed with them, learned from them, and worshipped with them. He himself preached that Jesus is the Christ, the very Son of God.

Colossians chapter 3, beginning with verse 1, shows how our Lord commands this: "If ye then be risen with Christ," that is, if you are truly converted, "seek those things which are above where Christ is on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above and not on things of the earth, for ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ and God." If you are truly converted, your affection will be placed where God says it is to be placed—not on the things of this earth, but in reality on the things of God.

Those who formerly despised the Word of God find now that they love the Word of God. Those who formerly would not frequent the house of God now long to be where God is publicly preached and worshipped. Those who formerly despised Christians and would have nothing to do with them find that they prefer their company to the company of the ungodly.

This is manifested clearly in 1 John 3: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

Notice: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." In other words, there is a renewed affection. We now love the things of God and the people of God and desire to be with them more than anything else in the world. First John 5:2-3 says, "For this we know, that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love

of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

When God effectually draws a man to Himself, He not only enlightens the mind and subdues the will, but renews the affections. The converted, effectually drawn man loves those things that are holy, godly, and pleasing to God. Many of you can view your own past life. Before your conversion, you loved to fish on Sunday, to party, and to do everything contrary to God and holiness. But now that you have been converted, you long to be in the house of God, to hear the Word of God, and to be with the people of God. The things of this world literally have no taste in your mouth at all; yea, you despise them. God says we know that we love Him when we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous unto us.

Applications and Exhortation

Some of the fruits of our effectual calling would be a praying heart. The Word of God says in Luke chapter 18, "Shall not God hear His elect who cry unto Him day and night?" God gives all of His people a praying heart. We may also point out the obedient and holy life. Basically, one may discern whether or not he has been savingly called by asking himself these questions.

Has his mind been enlightened as to his sin—the wickedness, awfulness, and depravity of it—and the justice of God's wrath upon him? Has his mind been enlightened as to the Savior Jesus Christ, our only hope and only redemption? Has his will been subdued? Do we willingly, lovingly, obediently, and submissively long to do that which God commands, or do we do what we do out of fear or because it is expected of us? Do we love the things of God, and do we love the people of God? These things make up an effectual call.

Let me give you these three applications. First, when you examine your own heart, understand that these three things must be together in your life. God does not give an enlightened mind and leave it at that, nor a subdued will and leave it at that, nor a renewed affection and leave it at that. All three go together. Why?

Because salvation is a whole and complete salvation. It comprises and covers the entirety of man. When God saves a man, He does not

merely just save part of the man. He does not just save half or a third of the man. He saves the total man. Therefore, when God convicts a man, there must be an enlightened mind, a subdued will, and a renewed affection. All of this must be. God does not justify someone and then not sanctify them, nor does God sanctify someone and not justify them; rather, justification and sanctification go together. Those whom God declares to be righteous, He makes righteous. Those whom God teaches and brings to His Son, He teaches thoroughly and brings them to bow to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, although every true Christian will have all of what I spoke on this morning—that is, an enlightened mind, a subdued will, and a renewed affection—yet not every Christian will have these to the same degree. Do you not remember that our Lord said of that good ground in Matthew 13, that good seed, some brought forth thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred? What are you saying? Are there some men who are genuinely Christians, and you can just see, in every area of their life, the work of Almighty God? There are others who are genuine Christians, in whom you can see some fruit, but not as much as in the other. But what He is saying is, where there is life, there is fruit. It may be merely thirtyfold. It may be a gracious sixtyfold, or it may be a bountiful hundredfold. But there is fruit. In the life of every true believer, in some degree, one may discern an enlightened mind, a subdued will, and a renewed affection.

You may understand this in light of what I preached this morning. The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 13 and verse 5 said essentially the same thing: "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith or not. Know ye not that Christ dwelleth in you except you be reprobates." Here in 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 10, Peter says, "Wherefore the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things you shall never fail." This is the way that we perceive our election.

We cannot climb up into heaven and look in the Lamb's book of life to see if our names are written therein. But what Peter says is this: if you make sure that you have been called, you are then making sure of your election, for calling is the fruit of election. Those whom He predestinated, Romans 8 says, He also called; those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also

glorified. If you are effectually called by God, you may assuredly deduce that you are God's.

For those whom He chooses, He calls to Himself. How do we give diligence to make our calling and election sure? By asking ourselves biblically and honestly: Have our minds been enlightened? Have our wills been subdued? Have our affections been renewed? Are we the people of God in light, or are we still those who walk in darkness? May God help us to perceive not only our election, but, as Peter and Paul commanded, to make our calling and election sure.

Our Father, we bow to Thee in the name of Jesus Christ and thank Thee for Thy truth. We know that Thou art God, and besides Thee there is none other. We thank Thee that Thou hast chosen whom Thou hast chosen, and that, according to Thy word, it is a great number which no man can number, out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. Yet, Lord, we must confess with the Apostle Paul that, except the Lord of the Sabbath had left us a remnant, we should have been as Sodom and Gomorrah. Had You not chosen some, O Lord, none would ever be converted.

Thank You, Lord, for Your gracious, bountiful, merciful act in choosing sinners unto salvation. Thank You for ordaining the means: that we repent of our sins and believe the gospel. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit of God, who gives us faith and repentance and enables us to embrace and come to Jesus Christ savingly. We pray for the conversion of sinners. Draw to Thyself whomsoever Thou wilt, and be pleased, O Lord, for Thine own name's sake, to do this. Grant us grace and mercy. In Christ's name we ask it. Amen.

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