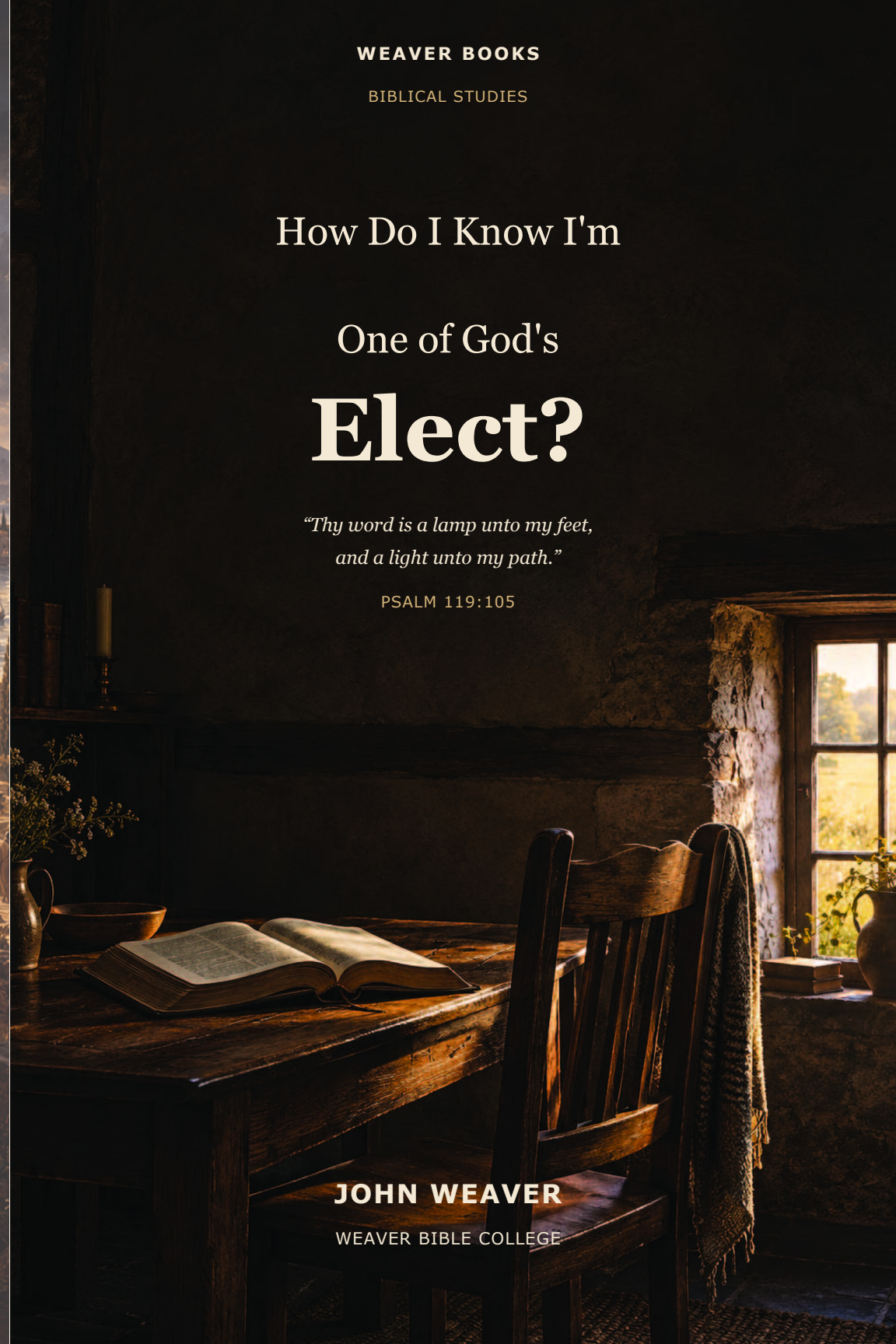
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How Do I Know I'm One of God's Elect?

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

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

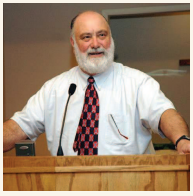
Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

JOHN 6:37, EXCERPT

How can a believer know that God's gracious work is real? John Weaver considers coming to Christ, reception of truth, the Spirit's work, and persevering faith. These messages treat assurance as a scriptural question and encourage readers to look to Christ and His promises rather than to speculation about God's hidden purposes.

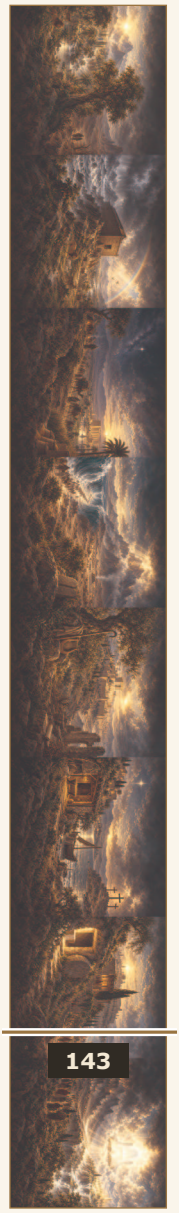
"One of the ways you know that you are God's elect, and that you have been given to Jesus Christ, is that you have come to Him in repentance and faith."

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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New Testament Studies

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How Do I Know I'm One of God's Elect?

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CHAPTER 1

How Do I Know I'm One of God's Elect? - 1

Introduction: The Question of Election

The title of the message is, “How Do I Know That I Am One of God’s Elect?” Look in John 17, beginning with verse 1:

“These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”

I have been asked this question multiple times during my ministry. It may be put straightforwardly, just like the title of the message: “How do I know that I am one of God’s elect?” Or it may be rephrased: “How could I know that I am one that has been given to Jesus Christ?” Regardless of how the question is phrased, it deserves an answer, and it deserves a biblical answer as well.

Usually, when we begin to think about doctrine that we do not comprehend or understand, we do not even think things through rationally. Years ago, I was preaching in New Orleans, Louisiana. After service one night, a lady came up to me, absolutely weeping. She was dismayed, distraught, and disturbed. I asked her what the problem was. Weeping, she said, “Well, I just do not know whether or not I’m one of God’s elect.” I looked at her and said, “Well, ma’am, may I ask you some questions?” She said, “Yes.” I said, “Well, here’s some of the questions I want to ask you.”

“Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you want to be holy? Do you want to be obedient? Do you want to honor the Lord Jesus Christ in every area of your life?” She responded, “Yes,” to each question. So I asked, “Do you believe that man is totally depraved? Do you believe there’s no good thing in any person? Like the Apostle Paul, when he said, ‘I know that in me and my flesh dwelleth no good thing.’ Do you believe that by nature the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked?” She said, “Yes.” I asked, “Do you believe that the carnal mind is enmity against God, just like the Bible says?” She said, “Well, yes, I believe that.”

Then I asked her, “If you were not one of God’s elect, why would you want to love Jesus Christ? Why would you want to be obedient? Why would you want to honor God in everything?” In other words, if you were not one of God’s elect, you would not even be concerned over this issue. You would be fulfilling the desires of your heart, and flesh, and mind, and wickedness. Clearly, when we begin to think about these things, we need to learn to think biblically, but also rationally as well. The lady went away rejoicing in the fact that, yes, she was indeed a child of God by faith.

Biblical Exhortation to Examine Oneself

Now the Bible tells you in 2 Corinthians 13 and verse 5, “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?” The Apostle Paul said that, unless you are a reprobate, you should know whether or not Jesus Christ is in you. The way you know that is by examining yourself, but it is not introspection. You examine yourself according to the Word of God.

The Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1 and verse 10 said, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” Note what he said: “give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” Pay attention to this fact. The Apostle Paul made an astounding statement in 1 Thessalonians 1 and verse 4. He wrote to the Thessalonican Christians, “Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

Now stop and think about that. Paul wrote to these Thessalonian Christians, “you know that you're God's elect,” and Paul was saying, “I know that you're God's elect.” So the question has to be asked: How did Paul know that these people were God's elect? How did they know that they were God's elect? Obviously, they did not have a ladder that ascended into heaven, climb up that ladder, and look in the Lamb's Book of Life to find their names written in it. Obviously, that did not happen. Yet at the same time, they knew that they were God's elect, and so did the Apostle Paul.

The Pervasiveness of Election in Scripture

When you consider the doctrine of election, so many people do not even want to think about it. In fact, there are Christians who even deny the doctrine of election. Interestingly, the word elect or its equivalent occurs 73 times just in the New Testament. That does not count the Old Testament. If you are going to deny the doctrine of election, then you have to deny at least 73 passages that exist in the New Testament.

Would you deny the doctrine of election at the same time you deny the Old Testament, national Israel, the Levitical priesthood, and even the Lord Jesus Christ? How in the world could I make such statements? I want you to consider several points.

First of all, you must understand that we have one Bible, not two. I hear so many people say, “Well, I'm a New Testament Christian.” That implies somehow that the Old Testament is worthless and not any good. No, we are biblical Christians. You cannot separate the Old Testament and the New Testament. You've heard the old adage that the new is in the old concealed, and the old is in the new revealed. What that adage means is very simple: You cannot understand the Old Testament without the New Testament, neither can you

understand the New Testament without the Old Testament. We have 66 books in the Bible, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament, and we have one Bible, not two. The doctrine of election is consistently taught in both Testaments.

National Election: God Chose Israel

Now, let me begin by sharing this with you. I just made the statement that if you deny the doctrine of election, you deny national Israel, the Levitical priesthood, Jesus Christ, and His salvation. How can I say that? First of all, you have to consider that there is, or was, what I am going to call a national election. God chose the nation Israel. He did not choose the Philistines, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, or the Egyptians. He chose Israel.

Listen to Deuteronomy 7 and verse 6: “For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God. The Lord thy God has chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all the people that are upon the face of the earth.” So God said to national Israel, “I chose you.” His choice is undeniable.

But although the nation Israel was chosen, that does not mean that every person in that nation was saved. It does not mean that every person was a Christian, if you and I would use that terminology. Notice in Romans 9, beginning at verse 6, the Apostle Paul says, “Not as though the word of God had taken on effect, for they are not all Israel which are of Israel.”

Just because you have Israel as a nation, that does not mean that every Israelite is a true Israelite. If you do not understand the statement, “for they are not all Israel which are of Israel,” he explains it further in verse 7. He says, “neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, But in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Just because someone is a physical descendant of Abraham does not make them a true Israelite.

If you do not understand verse 7, he clarifies it even farther in verse 8. He says, “that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” Just because someone is a fleshly descendant of Abraham does not mean anything, because God’s children are the

children of promise and they are counted for the seed. Isaac was the child of promise, and he was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Keep Romans 9 in mind, and look in your Bibles to the book of Galatians, chapter 3. Notice verse 16: Galatians 3 and verse 16. Look what the Scripture says.

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not unto seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ." The promises were given to the true seed of Abraham, and the true seed of Abraham was Jesus Christ. The promises were made to Abraham and his seed, singular, not to seeds as of many, that is, the physical descendants, but to one, which is Christ.

Galatians 3:29 makes this statement: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." How do you get to be Abraham's seed? Only by being in Jesus Christ. You receive the promises in Christ because Jesus Christ is the true seed of Abraham. That is why Matthew 1:1 begins, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Jesus Christ is the true seed of David, and He is also the true seed of Abraham.

Romans 9 shows very clearly how these things are tied together. If you deny the doctrine of election, you are also denying the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation. If there is no such thing as election and God did not choose the nation Israel, how do you explain Romans 9:3? The apostle says, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Jesus Christ came through the nation of Israel. To deny that national election is to deny all the promises, all the covenants, and Jesus Christ Himself.

Vocational Election: God Chose the Levites

There is a national election. Secondly, there is a vocational election. Although God chose Israel to be His people, He did not choose all of

them to be His priests. He chose only the tribe of Levi. Through Levi they were to be His ministers. Through the nation His covenantal blessings and curses would come, but He chose the tribe of Levi. Numbers 3:6 says, “Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.” God only chose the Levites to be His priests.

There were some Israelites who did not like that. You remember, Korah was a Levite himself. He united with Dathan and Abiram, sons of Reuben, and they tried to usurp the priesthood in Numbers chapter 16. When they told Moses, “You take too much upon yourself,” he fell on his face. God said to Moses, “You tell those people to get their censers and come before Me tomorrow, and I’ll let them know whom I have chosen.” So 250 princes came with their censers, and God sent fire from heaven and consumed them all. Then the earth opened up and swallowed Dathan, Abiram, and Korah alive into the pit.

So obviously, God had what you and I would call sticks, and each tribe was inscribed upon a stick. They were laid up before the Lord, and the next day it was the tribe of Levi that sprouted and had borne almonds. He said, “This is whom I have chosen.”

The point I’m trying to make is this: God said in Deuteronomy 21:5, “And the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for them hath the Lord thy God chosen to minister unto him and to bless his name forever.” So God chose the tribe of Levi. The same truth applies today. I know that there are professional preachers.

Messianic Election

I've met some preachers that are mama called and daddy sent. But that does not belie the fact that God still has men whom He Himself called. In Mark 3, verses 13 and 14, the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ went up into a mountain and calleth unto Himself whom He would. And He ordained twelve that they should be with Him and that He should send them forth to preach the gospel.

Our Lord called whom He would, and the same is true today. God sovereignly calls certain individuals to preach and to teach His Word. If you deny vocational election, at the same time you're going

to deny that God calls preachers today, because it is a vocation. That is why He said in Ephesians chapter 4 that we are to walk worthy according to the vocation that we've been called.

Not only is there a national election and a vocational election; there is a messianic election. Jesus Christ is called God's elect. Isaiah 42, the first four verses, refers to Jesus Christ. In fact, this passage is applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Messianic Election: Jesus Christ as God's Elect

Isaiah 42, verse 1: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, and 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 isle shall wait for his law."

In verse 1, God refers to Jesus Christ, the Messiah: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect." Just as God sovereignly called the Israelites to be His peculiar people and nation, and the Levites to be His priests and servants, God has sovereignly called the Lord Jesus Christ, His elect, to be our surety, our substitute, our sacrifice, our Redeemer, and our Savior.

So you have a national election, a vocational election, a messianic election, and, fourthly, you also have a soteriological election, or a personal election. The word soteriology simply refers to salvation. That means an election unto salvation. I probably need to make this clear: election is not salvation; election is unto salvation.

Soteriological Election: Personal Election unto Salvation

In John 15:16, Jesus Christ said to His disciples, “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” Now, we are going to see this exemplified. I want you to see it first in Ephesians 1, and then we will go to 2 Thessalonians. In Ephesians 1, beginning with verse 3, the Bible 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. According as He," that is, God the Father, "hath chosen us in Him," that is, in Jesus Christ, "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, when He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

Look again at verse 4. Look what the Bible says very clearly: "According as He..." Who is the He? Look in verse 3. Verse 3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus, "according as He, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." God chose us in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world.

Now, look in your Bibles to 2 Thessalonians. Notice, if you would, chapter 2. Let us begin reading there with verse 13. Look what the Apostle Paul says: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord. Why? Why are we bound to give thanks? Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. For unto He called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Note the clear statement: "because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."

Personal Election

That is a soteriological election, a personal election. In Romans 9, verse 11, we are talking about the children of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Esau. The Bible says, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." It was said unto her, "The elder shall serve the younger," and as it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Notice again that the children were not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, so that the purpose of God according to election might stand. It is not of works, but of him that calleth. Romans 11:5 says, "Even so then at this present time also there is a

remnant according to the election of grace." There is an election, and it is an election of grace.

Arthur W. Pink wrote: "He not only chose you before you chose Him, and He loved you before you had any love for Him, but He acted upon you before you acted toward Him. He had to speak the quickening Word before you could come forth from your spiritual grave, open your blind eyes ere you were able to see your lost condition, Change your heart before you were disposed to seek Him, and draw you ere you came near to Him."

"Thus you have no ground for boasting, nothing for which you can take any credit unto yourselves. All the glory of your salvation belongs alone unto the Lord." Anyone who denies the doctrine of election actually denies the Old and New Testament: the election of Israel, the election of the Levitical priesthood, the election of the modern-day ministry, the election of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and consequently, the election unto salvation.

With that in mind, go back to John 17. We will look at this chapter in general today and be more specific next Lord's Day, Lord willing. Concentrate on verses one, two, and three. "These words spake Jesus and lifted up His eyes to heaven." John 17 is the high priestly prayer of our Lord. He is praying as our great high priest, lifting up His eyes to heaven and saying, "Father, the hour is come."

The Limiting Phrase 'As Many As' in John 17:2

"Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

First of all, eternal life is not something that you get when you die. Eternal life is a personal, intimate relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. If you don't have eternal life before you die, you're not going to have it when you die. Eternal life is a personal relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. What will eternity be? An increase of that relationship. So if you despise the

relationship now, you would really hate it in eternity, I can assure you.

But look in verse 2: "as thou hast given Him," that is Jesus Christ, "power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him." Jesus Christ has power over all flesh. He is absolute. He is sovereign. Here's an interesting question: Could Jesus Christ save everyone? The answer would be potentially yes, because He's God. But the Bible says that although He has power over all flesh, He's going to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given unto Him.

So this phrase, "as many as," is a limiting phrase. Let me put it to you very plainly: Universalism is not true. Unitarianism is not true. We know for a fact that not everyone is going to be saved. How do we know that? Matthew 25:46 says of those on the left hand, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." If you believe Jesus Christ, there are some who are not saved. What did our Lord tell the Pharisees in John 10:27? "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep."

This phrase, "as many as," is used in the Bible with limitation. I want to show you how this phrase is used in the Bible. Every time we see this phrase, it will have a limitation to it. John 1:10 through 13 illustrates that truth.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came into His own, and His own 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." John 1, verses 10-13. Verse 13 says, "...which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Now, look at verse 12: "...but as many as received him." The Bible says He was in the world, yet the world knew Him not. He came into His own, and His own received Him not. To whom did He give the power to become the sons of God? The answer is, to as many as received Him. There is a limitation. His own did not receive Him. The world did not receive Him. But some did receive Him. That was a limited number, and to them and them alone He gave the power to become the sons of God.

Now, turn in your Bibles to Acts 2, beginning with verses 38 and 39. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For this promise is unto you and to your children. Watch. And to all that are far off, here's the qualification, here's the limitation, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Now, who is going to repent and be baptized? Who is going to receive the promise of the Holy Ghost? Only as many as the Lord our God shall call. It's always a limitation.

Acts 3:24 says, “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken have likewise foretold these days.” Did all the prophets foretell these days? No, only those from Samuel that followed after. Not all the people spoke of these things, but only those prophets who came from Samuel. In other words, there is always a limitation.

Acts 4:6 says, “And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.” Was everybody in Jerusalem related to the high priest? Of course not. Not everybody is related to me, and not everybody is related to you. The Bible says, “and as many as were the kindred of the high priest.” That means only his family were gathered together at Jerusalem.

Acts 5:34–39 records that Gamaliel, a Pharisee and doctor of the law, had a reputation among all the people. He commanded the apostles to be put forth briefly and warned the council to take heed concerning what they intended to do with such men. He recalled Theudas, who boasted himself to be somebody, whom about four hundred men joined, and who was slain; “and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to naught.” After this, he recalled Judas of Galilee in the days of taxing, who drew away much people, but perished, and “all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.” Gamaliel therefore said, “refrain from these men, and let them alone. For if this counsel of this work be of men, it will come to naught.”

"But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest haply you be found even to fight against God." Go back and notice verse 36. He

says, "...for before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be someone, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves, who was slain," talking about Theudas, "and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered." Who were the "as many as"? They were close to four hundred. It was not everybody; it was a limitation. Then, in verse 37, "Judas of Galilee, he rose up and drew away much people after him. He also perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed." Not everybody followed Judas. In other words, there is a limitation.

In Acts chapter 10, we see the conversion of Cornelius the centurion, the Roman soldier to whom God said, "You send to Joppa to the house of one Simon the Tanner, and get Simon Peter to come and tell you the words that you need to hear." Cornelius sent his men to bring Peter. Acts 10:23 says, "Then called he them in," that is, Peter, "lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him." Peter went with the men Cornelius had sent, and certain brethren from Joppa went with Peter. Verse 45 says, "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."

In verse 23, it says, "certain brethren," while verse 45 says, "as many as came with Peter." Acts 11:12 tells us who these "as many as" were: "And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house." The certain brethren, the "as many as," were six. Not everybody went with Peter, and not everybody went into Cornelius's house—only these six.

Acts 13:47 says, "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Who believed at the preaching of Paul? As many as were ordained to eternal life. In other words, that is a limited number. Not everybody was converted when Paul preached. Look at what happened in Acts chapter 17. Only a few were converted. Look at Alexander the coppersmith, who hated the Apostle Paul. Not

everybody was saved when Paul preached. But when you get to verse 48, the Bible says, "...as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

The Eternal Covenant and the Father's Gift to the Son

Every time you see this phrase, "...as many as," it is a limitation. In verse 2 of John 17, "...as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Who are the "as many as" that the Son is going to give eternal life unto?

Hebrews 13:20-21 gives another answer: "Now the God of peace had brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

The Abrahamic covenant, the Noahic covenant, and the Davidic covenant were all just shadows and types that stemmed from this everlasting covenant, or this eternal covenant. If something is everlasting or eternal, it had no beginning and it has no ending. So what in the world is this everlasting or this eternal covenant?

The everlasting and eternal covenant is the covenant that was entered into between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in eternity past before the world was ever created. In that covenant, God the Father gave to Jesus Christ an inheritance. He gave Him a people. God knew that that people would sin, and rebel and be wicked. But He gave those people to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ in this eternal covenant agreed to become their surety, their substitute, their sacrifice, and to bring them back to God the Father. And God the Holy Spirit agreed that He would convict and convert those for whom Jesus died and those for whom the Father had given to Jesus Christ.

This is that eternal covenant. In John 17:2, our Lord says, “as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” 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 have kept Thy Word." In verse 9: "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine."

Note what Jesus Christ has said: "I pray for them. I pray for them. I'm not praying for those of the world. I'm praying for those which Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine." In verse 11 He says, "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." Verse 12 says, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. Those that thou gavest me, I have kept."

"and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." In 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 lovest Me before the foundation of the world."

When you read John 17, our Lord is praying for those whom the Father has given unto Him. It is an undeniable fact that God the Father gave to God the Son an inheritance of people from before the foundation of the world. He prays for them.

He states this over and over in this chapter. There are other passages as well. In John 6:37, our Lord says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me I will no wise cast out." He repeats it: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me I will no wise cast out."

In John 10, notice verse 26, where He told the Pharisees they were not His sheep: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." Then, in verse 27, He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Notice that He said, "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all." I thought about this one morning. I had not thought of it in a long time. Years ago, I was coming home from a meeting, traveling

alone late at night. It was probably twelve or one o'clock, and I had the radio on in the car, trying to stay awake. Finally, I found some preaching on the radio. A black preacher was preaching from John 10:27–30.

I have never forgotten what he said. I can still remember the old, gruff voice in which he spoke. He said, "Now, will you be saved? You're in the hand of the Son of God, and He is in the hand of God the Father." He said, "Jesus Christ said, if you're in His hand, He ain't going to pluck you out of His hand. And God the Holy Spirit, He ain't going to pluck you out of His hand. And God the Father, He ain't going to pluck you out of His hand."

And then He said this: "And come to think of it, them's the only three that can do any plucking anyhow." That was the truth. But He said, "My Father which gave them Me is greater than all. And no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." So, who are the elect? The elect are those whom God the Father gave to Jesus Christ from before the foundation of the world.

Practical Counsel: Flee to Christ

Let me try to make some applications because I want to get your thinking right. I've heard people say, "Well, I just don't like the doctrine of election." You may not like it, but it's in the Bible. "Well, I don't understand it." You may not understand it, but it's in the Bible. Let me give you one illustration.

Lester Roloff has been dead for many years. I knew him and was in meetings with him. He came to our church when I was a young preacher, and I drove him around in the car. Lester Roloff was not a scholar, but he could bless your heart when he preached. He was very practical. He really couldn't sing, but every time he sang, it'd break my heart. He was real and genuine.

I was listening to his family altar program one time, and he was dealing with Ephesians chapter 1. I thought to myself, this is going to be interesting. When he got to verse 4, where the Bible says that God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, do you know what Lester Roloff said? He said, "Folks, I'll be honest. I don't understand the doctrine of election. But it's in the Bible, and I

believe it, and I bow to it. Whatever God says is right." He went on. At least he did not deny it, for which I'm really thankful.

When someone says, "Well, I just don't like that doctrine," think about this: If God had not chosen some to be saved, none would be saved. Do you know what Isaiah 1 and verse 9 says? "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom and we should have been like Gomorrah." If God had not spared some, He said, we'd all have been destroyed.

In Romans 9, the Apostle Paul quotes this same verse in verse 29: "And as Isaiah said before, except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom and had been made like unto Gomorrah." The truth of the matter is that we're all wicked, we're all depraved, we're all rebellious, and we're all sinful. So here's my question: How many deserve to be saved? None. None. The very fact that God saves any is an act of mercy and grace.

Let me try to give you an illustration that might shed some light on this. Alice and I have grown children, grown grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Suppose I looked at Alice and said, "You know, all of our children are grown and married. Our grandkids are grown, gone, and married. It's kind of lonely. I'll tell you what let's do. Let's adopt three children." I can see Steve rolling right now at our age. But suppose we adopt three children. We go down the street to an orphanage with a hundred children in it. Alice and I choose three of those children, adopt them, bring them home, supply all their needs, and raise them for Jesus Christ.

How many people are going to look at us and say, "You dirty, stupid, ignorant, reprobates. You left 97 children in that orphanage"? No. You know what they are going to say? "Look at those gracious people. They did not owe those children anything. They were not obligated to adopt anybody. They were not obligated to rescue anybody. But they did." We recognize the graciousness of that family in rescuing those three children. Do you understand? God was not obligated to save anybody.

The very fact that He does is nothing but pure, absolute grace. Someone is going to say, "Oh, but Brother Weaver, that means that some people do not have a chance to be saved." The last time I read

my Bible, I think the Bible tells me that salvation is by grace, not by chance. Chance does not enter into it. Fate does not enter into it. Accidents do not enter into it. God does not save anybody accidentally. He saves them on purpose. It is not by chance; it is by grace.

So if you are lost, if you are unsaved, or if you have lost and unsaved loved ones, I will give you some biblical counsel. Do not sit back and mourn over the doctrine of election. Turn in your Bibles to 2 Kings 7.

Next Sunday, Lord willing, I am going to show you from John 17 how you can discern for a fact that you are one of God's elect. Until then, think about this. In 2 Kings 7, the Syrians had attacked Samaria, and Samaria was surrounded. The people inside the city were starving to death. Read chapters 6 and 7. They were not only eating doves' dung; they were killing and eating their own children.

Outside the city walls sat four lepers. They could not go inside the city and normally survived on scraps and garbage thrown over the wall or discarded. Look in 2 Kings 7, verse 3: "And there were four leprous men at the entering into the gate, and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city and we shall die there."

"And if we sit here, we die also. Now, therefore, come, let us fall unto the host of the Syrians. If they save us alive, we shall live, but if they kill us, we shall but die."

What God had done, unbeknown to them, was cause the Syrians to hear a roar, a loud noise. The Syrians said, "Oh no, oh no. The king of Samaria has hired the Hittites and the Egyptians against us." They got up and fled, leaving all their food, weapons, and money. When the lepers arrived, they found all this food and gold.

But look at verse 4: "If we enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also." "Now, therefore, come and let us fall into the hosts of the Syrians. If they save us alive, we shall live. And if they kill us, we shall but die."

They reasoned, "If we sit here outside the wall, we are going to die. If we go into the city, we are going to die. If we go to the Syrians

and they kill us, we cannot be any more dead than we already would be. It may be they would save us alive."

Here is the point. Suppose that you are lost, unsaved, and you flee to Jesus Christ, begging Him to save you, but He looks you in the eyes and says, "No way! Absolutely not." You could not be any more lost than you already are, any more condemned than you already are, or any more on your way to destruction than you already are.

In John 6:37, our Lord said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." If you came to Jesus Christ in repentance, faith, and submission to Him, asking for His grace and mercy, He said, "I will not cast you out." When He saves you, you will go your way rejoicing, thanking God that you were given to the Son by the Father. All that the Father giveth Him shall come to Him.

One of the ways you know that you are God's elect, and that you have been given to Jesus Christ, is that you have come to Him in repentance and faith. Therefore, you can say, "Thank God for the doctrine of election," because if God had not chosen some to be saved, none would be saved. The best counsel anyone could ever receive is to fall before the Lord Jesus Christ and ask for His grace, mercy, and salvation.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your Word and Your truth. We ask that You would be pleased to open our eyes and grant us understanding. Help us to rejoice in Thy Word and receive it with gladness of heart. May we rejoice that Thou didst choose us in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world and gave us unto Him. We are His, and we are to love Him, serve Him, and honor Him. Help us to do that. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

How Do I Know I'm One of God's Elect? - 2

Introduction and Review

In John chapter 17, we are dealing with other verses in this chapter, but these are the primary verses that we used last week. Notice verse 1: “These words spake Jesus and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

The title of the message is, “How Do I Know That I’m One of God’s Elect?” The very question postulates the doctrine of election. I find it absolutely amusing that some who reject this doctrine, or say they do not believe it, are constantly and continually fighting against it. My thought would be, if you don’t believe it, why in the world are you going to fight against it anyhow? But they do.

Years ago I was preaching in Alabama, and an older man came up to me after Sunday morning service. That Sunday I had preached on 1 Thessalonians 1. There are only ten verses in 1 Thessalonians 1. My text was verse 3, and then verses 7–10 as they explained verse 3. Since it was a small chapter, I read the entire chapter. Verse 4 simply says, "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God." I did not preach on that verse; I just read it because it was in the Bible.

After the service, the older gentleman told me that I should not have read that verse. I laughed and asked, "Why should I not read it? It's in the Bible." He said, "Some people don't understand the doctrine of election and it upsets them." I said, "What you're telling me is that you don't understand the doctrine of election and you're upset." He answered, "Yes." I told him that there are 73 verses in the New Testament that speak of the doctrine of election, and invited him to meet me in my motel room at two o'clock that afternoon. I would sit down with him, go over all 73 verses, and try to give him some understanding so that he would not get upset the next time he read about election in the Bible.

He said, "Fine." I hurried through my dinner, ran to the motel room, and sat there making sure I had all 73 verses down so that I could show him when he arrived. My phone rang about fifteen minutes before two. It was the fellow who was supposed to meet me at two o'clock. He said, "Pastor, I'm not going to meet with you at two o'clock." I asked, "Really? Why?"

He gave me these exact words, which I have never forgotten: "Because my mind is made up and I do not want you confusing me with a bunch of Scriptures." There is something very dishonest about someone who is so dishonest with Scripture and who cannot look upon Scripture honestly. You might not agree or understand, but at least you can be honest with Scripture. I have trained a number of young men for the ministry.

Years ago, I had a Bible Institute where I taught on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights, anywhere from two to four hours a night. A church not too far away did not have a pastor and needed pulpit supply, so they contacted me. I sent one of my young men to preach there on Sunday. When he arrived, a visiting pastor who was looking for a church had also shown up. Since they had already

asked my young man to preach, they asked the visiting pastor to teach Sunday school.

The church did not use quarterlies or anything else; they simply used the Bible. That Sunday, the chapter for Sunday school was 1 Thessalonians 1, and the young man I sent sat in the class. He told me on Monday morning, “Pastor, you will never, ever believe this. That pastor read verse 1 and commented on it, read verse 2 and commented on it, read verse 3 and commented on it, read verse 5 and commented on it, all the way down through verse 10.” He not only did not comment on verse 4; he would not even read verse 4. There is something wrong with someone like that. You may not understand or like it, but you can still be honest with Scripture.

Last week I dealt with the doctrine of election in general. There is no way in the world that you can really and truly discuss this doctrine in just an hour's time. Years ago I preached a whole series—eight to ten hours, I think—on this doctrine. You cannot do justice in an hour to something that takes eight to ten hours.

But I did try to show you from John 17:2, when the Bible says, “thou has given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as,” that “as many as” is a limiting phrase. We looked at several passages in the Bible and showed that it was always a limiting phrase. I also showed you last week that there is in the Bible a national election, a vocational election, a messianic election, and also a soteriological, or personal, election, which we will look at for a moment today.

Let me remind you what I said about verse 3, where our Lord says, “And this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God in Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” Eternal life is not simply living forever. Eternal life is a personal, intimate relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

You do not get eternal life when you die. If you do not possess eternal life before you die, you are not going to have it when you die. When He says in John 17:3, “that they might know Thee,” the word “know” is the Greek word ginosko. It literally means to perceive, to know, to understand, and to acquire a personal knowledge. This word is used in the Bible as a word of intimacy because it refers to

sexual intercourse between a husband and wife: “Adam knew his wife and she conceived and bare a child.”

In Amos chapter 3 and verse 2, God is speaking to Israel: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” What did He mean? Obviously, He knew of all the other families, for He created them, and He certainly knew of their wickedness, for He judged them. But when He said, “You only have I known,” He was saying, “You only have I revealed Myself unto.”

It was to Israel that He gave the covenants and the law. They had the adoption, they had the promises, they had all of this. They were the only nation on the face of the earth with which God was personally intimate, and they were to have a relationship with Him.

Thankfully, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the one who came and showed us and taught us the reality and the fullness of salvation as well. It is very clear from Scripture that there is a biblical doctrine of election. It is also clear from Scripture that God gave us to Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world. So the question that I asked last week was this: “How do I know that I’m one of God’s elect? How do I know that I’ve been given to Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world?”

Election is not salvation. Election is unto salvation. Election may be the foundation, the basis, of salvation, but it is not salvation in and of itself. Look in 2 Timothy, chapter 2, beginning with verses 9 and 10. Paul says, “Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” He said, “I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may obtain salvation.” Election may be unto salvation, but it is not salvation.

Now consider 2 Timothy, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10. The Bible says, “Who hath 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 to us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” When did God give us grace? Before the foundation of the world. How did He give us grace? He gave it to us in Christ Jesus, in that eternal

covenant. But look at verse 10: “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” That is Jesus Christ in that great salvation and that grace, now made manifest by His appearing. So, election is unto salvation.

The First Evidence: Revelation and Reception

First Evidence: Revelation and Reception

When you look back in John 17, consider the question, “How do I know that I’m one of God’s elect?” Remember that John 17 is the high priestly prayer of our Lord. He is praying to His Father, and He is praying for His people.

Look in verse 6. Here is the first evidence, the first way you know whether or not you are one of God’s elect. Our Lord said, “I have manifested thy name unto men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were and thou gavest them me.” And they have kept thy word.

Note carefully: the first evidence is revelation and reception. Revelation and reception. He says, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me,” and then, in the latter part of verse 6, “and they have kept my word.” He has not only revealed the Father; we have also received the words.

The word “manifested” is the Greek word phaneroo. It literally means that which is revealed, manifested, declared, made thoroughly known, and recognized.

Now look at two passages. The first one is Matthew 11, Matthew 11 and verse 27, and then we will go back to John chapter 1. Our Lord said, “All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father. Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” The very first evidence is revelation and reception.

The only one who really knows the Father is the Son, and the one who really knows the Son is the Father. It takes the revelation of God the Father to reveal the Son, and the revelation of God the Son to reveal the Father. No man can know without this divine revelation.

"No man knoweth the Son, but the Father. Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

In John chapter 1 and verse 18, our Lord says the same thing, just a little differently: "No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Salvation is revelation. It is only God the Son that is able to reveal and declare God the Father, and only God the Father that is able to reveal and declare God the Son.

Remember that passage in Matthew chapter 16, where Jesus Christ asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" And they answered and said, "Some say that thou art Elias, or Jeremiah, or John the Baptist, or one of the prophets." But Jesus looked at them and said, "But whom say ye that I am?" And that is when Simon Peter made this great confession, and he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Our Lord answered Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven." How did Peter know that Jesus Christ was the Messiah? How did he know that He was the Son of God? Was it because he was smarter than anyone else and had figured it out by himself? No. The Father revealed it unto him.

In John 17:6, our Lord says, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world." The manifestation of the name is the manifestation of the person and all that he is. When He says, "I have manifested thy name," He is not merely saying, Here is a proper name for God. He is saying, Here are the attributes of God, the character of God, His law, His will, His grace, and His mercy. God is known by His name. His name reveals who He is in all of His attributes and all of His perfections.

It is true that there is some light we have by virtue of creation. Psalm 19 and Romans 1 tell us that. There is enough light in creation to condemn you, but not enough light to convert you. There is also some light through the law of Moses in the sacrificial system. But those sacrifices did not save. Read Hebrews 8, 9, and 10, and you will find that out.

It is not by the blood of bulls and goats that we are purged, but by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 1:17 says, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Clearly, there was grace in the Old Testament, for Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Clearly, there is truth in the Old Testament, because everything that God says is truth. But the apex of truth and the apex of grace, the very height, the highest of heights, came to us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The fullness of that revelation was not only revealed by Jesus Christ; it was received by those who heard the Word and kept the Word. One of the greatest evidences that we are God’s elect, that we have been given to Jesus Christ from before the foundation of the world, is that we keep His Word. We are obedient. The word “kept” is a very interesting word, tereo, and it literally means to keep, to observe, to hold fast, to attend to carefully, to guard, and to obey.

This is the truth our Lord revealed in John 8, verses 30 and 32: “As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said he to those Jews who believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” If we continue in His Word, then we are truly His disciples. There is a revelation and there is a reception of that revelation.

Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord. Why? Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.” That is a soteriological election. That is a personal election. Paul said to these Thessalonican Christians, “We are bound to thank God for you. Why? Because God has chosen you to salvation.” But note how God chose them: “through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth.” Election may be the foundation, but when there is a revelation, there is a reception of that revelation.

Then, if you look at verse 14, it makes it even plainer: “Wherein He called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” So what did God do? God chose them. Jesus Christ purchased their salvation, and the Holy Spirit applied that salvation. He regenerated them, convicted them, converted them, and called them through the gospel. Clearly, then, there is a revelation and there is a reception.

Now go back in your Bibles to John 17. Look at verses 6 through 8 and watch this. John 17, verse 6: “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 have kept thy word.” “Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. Now look, for I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”

God says, through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that if we have received the revelation of God, then we know that we are one of God’s elect, for God has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. He reveals Himself to us, and we receive His Word. Let me put it to you very plainly: God’s elect are not faithless. They believe. They believe in His Word, in Jesus Christ, and that God the Father sent Jesus Christ to be our surety, our substitute, and our sacrifice. We believe that He came from the Father, was sent by the Father, and that He ascended and went back to the Father.

Second Evidence: Preservation and Perseverance

There is a revelation and there is a reception. First, we may know that we are God’s elect if we have received the revelation of God in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His Word. Secondly, we may know that we are God’s elect because those who are God’s elect are preserved and persevere. Look in verse 11. Our Lord prays: “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,” note that, “keep through thine own name those that thou whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in my name. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.” Note that we have been preserved in Jesus Christ. Now skip down to verse 14: “…I have given them thy word, and the world hateth them.”

Because they're not of the world, even as I'm not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but thou shouldest keep them or preserve them from evil.

Now, let me just make a statement, and I'll show it to you from Scripture. God's elect are preserved. I like to point out that it is not the word "pickled." You pickle with brine and vinegar, but you preserve with honey and sugar.

Look in your Bibles to Jude 1 and verse 1, the little book right before the book of Revelation, only one chapter. "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." We are preserved.

You remember I quoted this passage last week in John 10, verses 27 and 30. Our Lord said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." That means we are preserved.

In 2 Timothy 4, verse 18, the Apostle Paul said, "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." Paul said, "I'm assured that I'm going to be preserved to his heavenly kingdom."

Here is the question: Since we already know that God's elect are preserved, how do we know whether or not we are God's elect, and how do we know that we are preserved? The answer is very simple: Those whom God preserves He enables and empowers to persevere. That is, we continue in the faith, continue in repentance, and continue to believe the Scripture. We do not leave the faith.

We do not deny the Scriptures. We do not turn from the truth. We do not cease believing. We do not cease repenting. We continue to hold fast all that God has given us in His Word. As Job said in Job 17:9, “the righteous shall hold on to his way, and he that have clean hands shall get stronger and stronger.” That simply means this: we do not quit. We do not give in. We do not give up. We do not give out. We do not fall. We do not fail. We continue to persevere in the faith, and our preservation in Jesus Christ is made evident by His enabling us to persevere.

So how do I know I am one of God's elect? First of all, by receiving the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Number two, because God preserves us, and in that preservation He enables us to persevere. That does not mean that we are never going to fall. Certainly we are going to fall, but we are not going to stand or lie down in that fall. We will get up. The righteous man, the Bible says, falls down seven times and rises every time. In other words, we are not going to stay down; we will persevere. The truth of the matter is this: if you are not persevering in the faith, you have no evidence that God has preserved you. Do not separate that which God has joined together. He has joined together preservation and perseverance, revelation and reception.

Third Evidence: Sanctification and Being Sent

The third evidence that we are God's elect is found in John 17:17-19. Our Lord says, "Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth." God's elect are those who have received a revelation, who are preserved and persevere. But now He tells us, thirdly, that His elect are sanctified and sent.

Sanctification follows justification just like night follows day. All of those whom God justifies by faith, He sanctifies by His Spirit and His Word. It is impossible for someone to be justified and unsanctified. There are many people who claim to be Christians while living unholy, ungodly, and unsanctified lives. The truth is, they are not really Christians. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:9, "Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And then he says, "Be not deceived."

If you believe that those described in these passages are saved, you are deceived. I do not want you to be deceived. Scripture says, "Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." These people are not going to inherit the kingdom of God.

But look at verse 11: "...and such were..." That is past tense. "...such were some of you, but you are washed, you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Those whom God justifies, He sanctifies. If you continue to live as verses 9 and 10 describe, while claiming to be a Christian, you are deceiving yourself.

Look also at Galatians chapter 5, beginning with verse 19: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like." Then Scripture says, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." So God's elect are sanctified people. This does not mean that they are holier than thou, but it does mean that they live holy, godly, and clean lives.

We have been set apart for the Father and sent by the Son. If we are going to be sent by the Son, that means we must be sanctified. One of the ways that we know that we are God's elect is that we live sanctified lives. Hebrews 10:10 says, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." We have been sanctified by the body of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 13:12 says, "Wherefore Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate."

May I remind you of Ephesians 5:26, where he is talking about the church: "That he might sanctify it and cleanse it by the washing of the water by the word." An interesting verse is 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The Apostle Paul was praying for the Thessalonians, and he said, "And I and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly"—that means totally, completely—"and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless under the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." So he said, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

So here is the question: Since God's elect are sanctified, how then are we sanctified? The answer comes back: by the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God. It is the Holy Spirit that enlightens our minds, shows us our sins and our wickednesses, and shows us how contrary we are to the Word of God. As He convicts us and enlightens our minds, He also shows us the truth of God, gives us grace to repent

and turn from those things, and brings our lives into conformity to the Word of God.

But it is not only through the work of the Holy Spirit; it is also through the Word of God, because John 17:17 says, “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” This truth was understood in the Old Testament as well. David understood it, because he said in Psalm 119:9–11, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee. O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

I think it was Dwight L. Moody who had written in the front of his Bible, “Either this book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book.” And that’s the truth.

We are to be sanctified by the Spirit of God and by the Word of God. If we are to be sent into the world as witnesses, then we have to be sanctified witnesses. We cannot give forth a frequent witness to Jesus Christ if we stink like the world and like the flesh. It is impossible. So He says, “You’re sanctified and you’re sent.”

One of my favorite passages, and one from which I have preached numerous times, is 1 Peter 1, verses 13–16: “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought to you by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Now watch verse 14: “As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lust in your ignorance,” nor is he not living like you used to live. “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation or conduct, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.”

Have you ever stopped to think that, as you read the Scripture, Jesus Christ was sanctified and sent by the Father? He died and gave Himself that we might not only be justified, but sanctified. He said in John 17 that He sanctifies us. And just as the Father sent Him into the world, so we are sent into the world.

So how do I know I’m God’s elect? I have received the revelation of God. I am preserved by Him, and that preservation is coming to light by His enabling me to persevere, to continue in faith, and to continue in repentance. Moreover, He is sanctifying me and sending

me. By that I mean that He is enabling me to live more holily and more godly. That does not mean that I am perfect. No man is perfect on this earth. But it does mean that the general tenor of our lives—the general attitude and the general actions of our lives—are lives, attitudes, and actions of holiness, godliness, and obedience. We have received the revelation. We persevere. We are living a sanctified life and living in obedience as He sends us to be His witnesses. Now, fourthly, look back in John chapter 17, because here is the fourth evidence.

Fourth Evidence: Indwelling and Love

The fourth evidence that we are God's elect is that we are indwelled and loved. In verses 24 through 26, our Lord prayed: "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 lovest me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

I want to take the phrase indwelled first. In the latter part of verse 26, He says, "...and I in them." How in the world does Jesus Christ dwell in each of us? The answer is, by His Spirit. In John 14:16, our Lord said, "and I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter." The word Comforter in the Greek is Parakletos. One of the names for the Holy Spirit is the Paraklete. Para is a preposition meaning alongside of, and kaleo means I call, or kletos would be one who is called. So the Comforter is the Paraklete, one called alongside of to help. He said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, one called alongside of to help, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him."

"But you know him for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." Then He says, "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you." How does He come to us and dwell in us? The answer is by His Spirit. Remember, there is one God. The Holy Spirit is God, God the Son is God, and God the Father is God: three persons but one God.

When the Holy Spirit indwells us, so do the Father and the Son. In John 15:26, our Lord says, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeded from the Father, He shall testify of me."

Turn to Romans, chapter 8, and mark this chapter, because we are going to come back here momentarily. Look at verses 14 through 17. First of all, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is a witness with us; He is a witness in us. Romans 8:14 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” We know we are a son of God if we are led by the Spirit of God.

Verse 15 says, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

Go back to verse 15. He says that we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” The word Abba is actually a Hebrew word. Do you know what it actually means? It means Papa: “Whereby we cry, Papa, Father.” Alice can tell you that I used to—and I still do, but especially more so when they were small—delight in my grandchildren calling me Papa. I would all the time get phone calls, especially from my oldest grandson. He would say, “Papa, I need this.” I would say, “Well, have you talked to your mother and father?” He would answer, “Yes, sir.”

“And they told me to call you.” Translation: they won't buy it for me, but Papa will. The point is this: it is a term of endearment, a term of intimacy—Papa—whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” In other words, it is the Holy Spirit who is a witness with us and in us, enabling us to acknowledge God as our Father.

It is just as natural for a child of God to acknowledge God as his Father as it is for an earthly child to acknowledge an earthly man as his father. The Holy Spirit enables us to cry, “Abba, Father.” But that is not all. “Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Oftentimes, He prays for us when we do not even know how to pray or what to pray for. Many times we fall down before God and simply groan, and the Holy Spirit prays in us and for us.

Calvin said, “Paul means the Spirit of God gives us such a testimony that when He is our guide and teacher, our spirit is made assured of the adoption of God. For our mind of its own self, without the preceding testimony of the Spirit, could not convey to us this assurance.” If the Holy Spirit did not give you the liberty and power to acknowledge and call God your Father, you would not be able to do it—not at all.

The Holy Spirit is not only a witness with us or in us; He is also a witness to us. “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us. Wherefore the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us, for after that He had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord.”

"I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." In this context, the witness of the Holy Spirit to us is external and objective because it is a witness to the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is a witness to the Bible, to the revelation of God. The very fact that we have experienced regeneration, conviction and conversion, repentance and faith, and reconciliation evidences that the Holy Spirit is a witness to us, because without Him none of that would have happened. God the Father ordained salvation, God the Son purchased salvation, and God the Holy Spirit applies salvation.

In John 17:26, our Lord said, "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Here is an amazing truth: "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me"—the love that God the Father has for God the Son—"may be in them." Indwelled and loved, has it ever dawned upon you that God loves you just as much and exactly as He loves His Son? He cannot look upon us without looking upon His Son. And He cannot look upon His Son without looking upon us. Why?

Because He is the head and we are the body. He said, “I pray, I pray that the love with thou hast loved me may be in them.” I want to show you just how much God loves His people. I know that He loved us enough to send the Lord Jesus Christ. But go back in your Bibles to Romans 8, and look at verses 16 and 17: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs. Heirs of God.” That is, we inherit Him. True, He inherited us, but we inherit Him as well. “And if children, then heirs. Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”

Let me explain this. Suppose Steve and Lorraine are my children, brother and sister, and suppose that I am a multi-millionaire who owns thousands of acres of land. If I write in my will that they are joint heirs of everything I have, what does that mean? It means that each one has access to everything I had—fully, totally, completely. Has it ever struck you that God the Father loves us so much that He has made us joint heirs with Jesus Christ? Whatever Jesus Christ inherits, we get. He is the head; we are the body. We are one with Him, which means that we are not only indwelled, but loved.

Conclusion and Assurance

When you think about what our Lord prayed for in John 17, He is teaching us that salvation is basically revelation: a revelation of God the Father and a revelation of God the Son, which we receive. If we have received that revelation, if we have been preserved and are persevering in the faith—not denying the faith or walking away—if we are living a sanctified life and being sent and used by the Father according to His will, that means that we are indwelled and loved by Him.

We can have absolute confidence and assurance that we are God's elect, that God the Father gave us to Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world. That is why He said in John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." We who have been given to God the Son by God the Father will always come to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith. He will receive us, and we will never, ever be cast out.

Some are going to say, "I still don't like the doctrine of election." But remember this: if God did not choose some to be saved, none would be saved. Each one of us was desperately wicked, rebellious, ungodly, and at enmity with God. God, in His grace and mercy, spared us. The Apostle Paul said, as Isaiah said, "Except the Lord of the Sabbath had left us a remnant, we should have been made as Sodom and Gomorrah."

Here is what we can rejoice in: there is an election of grace, and we can know that we are God's elect by our Lord's prayer in John 17. He prayed that we would receive revelation, persevere in our preservation, live a sanctified life, be sent by Him, and be indwelled and loved by Him. We are His people. When you stop and think that He loves us as much as He loved the Lord Jesus Christ, it should make you fall on your face and worship and thank Him for His infinite grace.

Father, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your Word and Your truth. Teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and help us to love Thee, adore Thee, worship Thee, and rejoice in Thee. May we enjoy full assurance of heart that we are Thy children. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

Source Notes

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