

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth One Verse at a Time*

Chosen by God, Part 2

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:2

Code: 60-3

Let's open our Bibles tonight as we come to God's precious treasure, His Word and examine our text. We're looking at 1 Peter chapter 1. We're considering the first two verses and since Peter plunged so headlong in such a massive subject, it's going to take us a little while to get out of these two verses. He begins this wonderful epistle with the words, "Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Asia and Bithynia who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood. May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure."

Now as we have already discussed in our study of this wonderful epistle, Peter addresses his readers as chosen, the end of verse 1, the elect. We pointed out last time that that is a term to describe Christians. We can be called believers, we can be called saints. We can be called Christians or we can be called the chosen, or the elect. The particular chosen and elect believers to whom Peter writes are scattered throughout the Roman Empire in a series of little assemblies. They may not be the choice of the world but they are the choice of God. They are aliens in the world. They are scattered aliens because their real homeland is heaven. And so as long as they're in this world they are strangers and aliens.

It seems that in such a small beginning we would not find ourselves so deeply entrenched in theology. But as soon as Peter says "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God by the sanctifying work of the Spirit that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood," he introduces us into a tremendously deep and far-reaching and profound arena of thought...namely the matter of election...election. The reason he brings it up at the very beginning is because of its capability to comfort persecuted Christians. As you know, these aliens, these strangers in the world who really were citizens of heaven, were scattered around. They were considered by the society in which they lived in many ways outcasts. They were undergoing ever increasing persecution which really began with them being blamed for the burning of Rome. It was important for them to understand that though they were not esteemed in the world they were chosen by God. And that's why Peter introduces this epistle the way he does. He comforts them with the reality that they may be rejected and they may be persecuted by the world but they are chosen by God.

Now we notice from these two verses several things about election. First of all, we noticed last time the nature of our election...the nature of our election. At the end of verse 1, "We are chosen.." and we talked about the fact that that is to say God has chosen us sovereignly by His uneffected divine

will, strictly on the basis of His own free sovereign grace. He predetermined to set His love on certain people out of all the world and they are the elect. That's the nature of our election.

Then we discussed the condition of our election. Because we are elect we are residing as aliens. That is to say we are stranger, we are foreigners. We are an alien race. We are temporarily living in the earth but we are citizens of heaven. We are a society within a society. We are a supernatural culture within earthly culture. We are governed by God. We are governed by God through His Word. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We have convictions and beliefs and ideas and creeds and ethics and habits and emotions and life standards and principles and thoughts and pursuits and pleasures that are totally alien to the world. We don't fit in. We are completely distinct.

We do not love the world, John tells us in 1 John. We are not preoccupied with the world, James says, so that we could be called friends of the world. We are enemies of the world. We are aliens from the world by very condition because we are the elect. In fact we are not chosen just to exist as different, we are chosen to witness to the world in which we are strangers. And we witness not only by what we say but we witness by what we are. The platform for what we say is what we are. We are ambassadors of Christ, Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5. And has been committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, that is that we are to tell men they can be reconciled to God through Christ. We are sent into the world as witnesses. Jesus said, "You are My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth."

So here we are, this alien society within a society, this supernatural culture within a culture. We are this group of dispossessed people who live by a totally distinct standard. We cannot be friends of the world. We do not love the world. We are enemies of the world. We must speak to the world. And we must live in a such a way that they are drawn to listen to what we have to say. That's a challenge.

It's not easy to be effective in witnessing to the world. In a sense we tend to retreat into our own little society, don't we? And you can imagine that in a persecuted environment like the readers to this great epistle, the tendency would be to draw more and more and more inward for the sake of protection, support, love, companionship, fellowship...protection, of course, leading it all. And so Peter, of course, through this epistle will remind the persecuted believers that they must not become ingrown because that's the tendency. We love each other very much. We have so much in common with each other. One of the great threats to Christianity is that the longer you're a Christian, the less you even interchange your life at all with unbelieving people. We get so wrapped up in our own Christian culture, Christian society.

Alexander McClaren(?) said, "Seed in a basket isn't in the right place, but sown over the field it will be waving wheat in a month or two." And we must resist the temptation because of our condition to become ingrown so that we become a society of people talking to ourselves...rather than evangelizing a lost world. God has helped the process a little. Every time He comes against the church to

persecute and scatter believers, starting with Acts 8, the church grew. Every time the seed is emptied out of the basket and thrown over the field it results in the waving wheat. So we are to remind ourselves, even as we think about our condition as aliens that we are not simply here to exist but we are here to reach the world.

You see, that's why we don't belong in monasteries. That's why we don't belong hold up in caves somewhere. That's why we don't belong in educational ivory towers all our lives. We have to be scattered. We are alien ambassadors of Christ. We have to take the redemptive message into the world and resist the constant pull inward where we become ingrown. So that's the condition of our election...foreigners in the world. We don't expect to be treated like the worldlings. We don't expect the natives to treat us the way they treat the other natives. We're in the world, we're not of the world, and we desire a far better place, a place which is our real home.

Speaking of Abraham, in Hebrews chapter 11 it says he was looking for the city which has foundations whose architect and builder is God. That's our city. That's really our homeland. William Barclay called Christians, "The exiles of eternity."

There's a famous Christian description, really a description of Christians not written by a Christian. But in ancient times some writer described Christians in this most interesting way. Listen: "Christians are not marked out from the rest of mankind by their country or their speech or their customs. They dwell in cities both Greek and barbarian, each as his lot is cast. They follow the customs of the region in clothing and in food and in the outward things of life generally. Yet they manifest the wonderful and openly paradoxical character of their own state. They inhabit the lands of their birth but as temporary residents thereof. They take their share of all responsibilities as citizens and endure all disabilities as aliens. Every foreign land is their native land and every native land a foreign land. They pass their days on earth but their citizenship is in heaven." And that's it. That's us. That is precisely accurate.

I remember growing up as a little boy singing in youth groups, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through. My treasure is laid up somewhere beyond the blue." So that's the condition of our election.

Thirdly, we need to talk about the source of our election. And that brings us to a very very important thought. Verse 2, here is the source of our election. Now we know we've been chosen by God and therefore we have entered into a family which makes us alien in this world. The source of God's choosing, it says in verse 2, is according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. It was out of God's foreknowledge that He chose us. Now we have already learned that God the Father is the one doing the choosing. It is God the Father who made the choice. And if I need to remind you ever so briefly about that I would just call your attention to Romans 11:5, "In the same way then there has also come to be at the present time," says Paul, "a remnant according to God's gracious choice." And

Ephesians chapter 1, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Verse 4, "He chose us in Him." He chose us.

So it is God who chose us to be saved. He made the choice. He did the choosing. And, by the way, God does it independently of any person. He does it independently...are you ready for this?...of any circumstances. Now you need to grasp that. There is no person who moves on the will of God to help Him make the choice. There is no circumstance which in any way precipitates God's choice.

In Daniel 4:35 we read, "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, What have you done?" No one can question it. No one is involved in the process in any way. God singled out certain ones in His own mind both among the angels, the holy and elect angels as they're called in 1 Timothy 5:21 and among men, and He chose them for eternal life and blessedness. Before He created them He decided their destiny. We saw that last time.

I might put it this way. The chosen people is made up of the people chosen. The chosen people is made up of the people chosen. But what was the source of God's choosing? Verse 2, now follow, "According to the foreknowledge of God." Now some people say, "You see, that's it. We're chosen because God knew before what we would do." Have you ever heard that? That's the most common sort of traditional explanation of election. They say, "Well foreknowledge means foresight, or it means...and I've heard it explained many times...God looked down through the eons of history and saw by His future omniscience what you would do and what I would do and when He saw that we would believe, He chose us and when we saw that we wouldn't believe, He didn't choose us." Some people think that's what it means...that God in His omniscience knew what you would do, knew what everyone would do so in some supernatural way He observed history before it was written and by His observation elected those that He foresaw would believe. Men love that doctrine. They love that. They want to believe that. Something in me wants to believe that. Something in you wants to believe that. Yeah, that sounds better.

You know why you want to believe that? Number one, because in your fallenness you desperately want some responsibility for your salvation. And secondly, in your fallenness the other sounds as if it's...what?...unfair. But since our minds are polluted by sin we're not in a position to exalt our own pride and call it virtue or to pull down the justice of God and call it something less than that. That's not what foreknowledge means.

You know what's wrong with that view? I'll tell you. I'll give you a few little reasons, you can jot them down. The first thing, if you were to translate the idea here, foreknowledge, as knowing before and assume that God just looked down history, saw what you'd do and wrote it down cause He saw you were going to do it, the first thing that does is make man sovereign. Right? We're sovereign. We're doing it and God's saying, "I'll see, I'll write that down, he was going to do that." So man is sovereign.

Now you're going to have a problem with that in John 15:16 where Jesus said, "You have not chosen Me, but...what?...I have chosen you." Now who is sovereign? Is man sovereign? Are you sovereign and I'm sovereign and everybody is sovereign? Everybody can choose whatever they want and God's just up there trying to keep it all in line and get the right guy on the right side of the ledger. No. See if you believe that then you've made man sovereign.

Secondly, that view also gives man the credit for his salvation in some way and allows him to share the glory. And as I said, man loves that. I heard a person give a testimony the other night, said, "I'm so glad that I had the sense to receive Christ." And I wanted to get up and say, "No you didn't and I don't even know you, but I know you don't have the sense to receive Christ because no one has the sense to receive Christ." That is not an act of human sense. I'm so glad that I had the sense to give my life to Christ...no you didn't. But we want a little of that glory. God chose us. First Corinthians 1:29 says that no man should boast before God. Not of works lest any man should boast, Ephesians 2:9 says the same thing.

So, if you're going to take foreknowledge and make it God knew before what you were going to do, then you have just made man sovereign and secondly, you can give man the credit for being smart enough to come to Christ and therefore he shares in the glory due for the gift of salvation.

The third problem with that, it assumes that man can seek after God...it assumes that man in his fallen state can sort through the available data and seek God. Romans 3:11 says, "No man seeks after God." The reason you're saved is not because you sought God but because God...what?...sought you. And you never responded to seek until God sought you first and moved your heart toward Him.

Fourthly, that view makes salvation a result of a human work. And what is that work? Believing. If you can believe strictly on the basis of your own human ability, then you have appropriated salvation by a human work. You say, "Well now wait a minute, don't you have to believe to be saved?" Yes, but your believing to be saved was also a gift from God. God granted you the faith. If God is sitting back in eternity looking down the road and just waiting to see what you do, then the faith that you exercise is your faith not His, it's therefore a human work. It makes salvation a human work, a work of faith but still a human work...human faith.

And fifthly, that perspective makes God a victim of man's choice. It makes God a victim of man's choice. God is sitting up in heaven saying, "Humph...that's going to make a difference in My plan. Boy, if that guy had only said yes then I could have done this and I could have worked that but now it's just not going to work out." That's hardly short of a blasphemous view of God. God does all things by the counsel of His own will. God does all His good pleasure. God is never in any way frustrated by anything, any time done by anyone. That is so very vital for us to understand.

Isaiah 46:9, "I am God, there is no other. I am God, there's no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done...listen to this...saying, My purpose will be established, I will accomplish all My good pleasure." God is not a victim.

Now if you take the view that God just looks down the road and sees who's going to believe, you've made man sovereign. You give man the credit for a part of his salvation so he gets some of the glory. You assume that man on his own is going to seek after God, not prompted by God Himself. You have made salvation a human work of faith. And you have just made God a victim of what men do. That is not what this word means.

Now those are theological reasons why that can't be true. Let me go to the text and give you a reason that's inherent in the Word itself. The word here, please notice, "foreknowledge" is the word prognosis, have you heard that word? Prognosis, it's a very important word. Peter also uses it one more time in this same chapter, please notice it, verse 20...verse 19 ends with the word "Christ," then it says of Christ, "For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world." Same word...form of proginosko, same word. Does it mean foresight there? Does it mean God was up in heaven looking down the road and said, "Oh I see what Christ is going to do? Oh, I see...I get it." Is it God looking down the path of history to see what Christ will do? Not hardly. Well whatever prognosis means in verse 2 it means in verse 20, Peter's certainly not going to try to confuse us. And if Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world and I was foreknown before the foundation of the world, then I was foreknown in the same way Christ was foreknown, right?

How am I to understand that? Look at Acts chapter 2. Acts chapter 2 verse 23, speaking of Christ, Peter preaching here. He likes this word. This is Peter on the day of Pentecost. It talks about Jesus of Nazareth. And he says in verse 23 of Acts 2, "This man delivered up...listen to this...by the predetermined plan and...what?...foreknowledge of God." You nailed to a cross by the hands of Godless men and put Him to death. Now wait a minute. Christ was delivered up to die by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.

Beloved, do you understand it? Foreknowledge is linked to the predetermined plan. Foreknowledge is deliberate choice...deliberate choice. It is a predetermined relationship, a predetermined relationship in the knowledge of God. It doesn't mean He observed before, it means that He planned before. It is knowing not in the sense of observation but is knowing in the sense of bringing into reality.

For example, let me give you some illustrations so you'll not be confused. Jeremiah 1:5, God says of Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I...what?...I knew you." That's the kind of knowing. What do you mean? I predetermined a relationship with you, that's what it means. I predetermined a relationship with you. You know what it says in Genesis? "Cain knew his wife and she bore a son."

What does that mean? He knew who she was? He observed her and said, "Oh, you're my wife." And she had a son? No. Know in the sense he knew her and she had a son, he engaged in an intimate relationship. It was the same thing with Joseph, he had known Mary and yet she was with child. Know there speaks of an intimate bond, an intimate relationship.

Amos 3:2, "Israel only have I known." What does He mean? That Israel's the only people I know anything about? They're the only ones I'm observing? No, they're the only ones with whom I have an intimate predetermined relationship.

I'm thinking of Isaiah, I want you to fully understand this because it confuses so many people. Isaiah 49:1, "Listen to me, O islands, and pay attention you peoples from afar, the Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother He named me and He has made my mouth like a sharp sword," this is the prophet Isaiah saying it all happened before he was ever born, before he was ever born. God had the whole thing planned. The Lord knew me. What do you mean? He knew who he was? No, He predetermined a unique relationship of intimacy with that prophet.

In Exodus 33 the Scripture says, "I have known you by name and you have also found favor in My sight," God speaking to Moses. The Lord spoke to Moses verse 17, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken for you have found favor in My sight, I have known you by name." In other words, bound up in this knowing is God's predetermined bond, God's predetermined relationship.

You see the same thing in Matthew 7. Do you remember what it says there? "Many shall say, Lord, Lord, and I will declare to them...verse 23...I never...what?...knew you." I didn't know who you were? No, He knew who they were. I never had a predetermined relationship with you. John 10, similar, I think it's about verse 14 or 15. Verse 14, "I am the good shepherd and I know My own," see. I have a bond with them. More than I know who they are, I have a relationship with them bound up in a predetermined choice.

Well that's the idea.

Let's go back then to Peter, understand fully what he's saying. When he says, "Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" he means the predetermined relationship which God established in His own mind in the predetermined plan. That's exactly what he means. The source of sovereign choice then is God's previously determined act of establishing a relationship with us. That was all a part of His plan. It's not God looking down through history and saying, "I'll have to react to what they do," God knew it because He ordained it.

You want to hear something? Get this, will you please? Every single thing that exists in the universe exists because God allowed it, willed it, thought it into existence. Did you get that? You say, "What about sin?" He didn't do it but He allowed it. There is nothing that happens, has happened, will

happen that is not happening, has happened, will happen because God knew it into happening. Got that? You say, "How does sin fit in?" I don't know. But He allowed it and He has a purpose for it. If nothing else, He allowed it to exist in order to destroy it forever so that it would no longer be potential to mar His holy Kingdom.

This is not an easy thing to grasp. But what you must understand is that God predetermined in His plan to set His love upon certain people, that's foreknowledge. He foreknew you. In other words, He brought the relationship into existence by knowing it into existence. God does not know anything from observation, He knows everything from creation. He wills it into existence. He doesn't watch it happen and react to it. Christ certainly is a good model.

Christ, 1 Peter 2:6, was the elect stone, chosen, precious. Just as He elected Christ through foreknowledge, He elects us through foreknowledge. Tremendous truth.

So, the nature of election, chosen by God. The condition of election, aliens in the world. The source of election, it came out of a predetermined relationship with God which He ordained as a part of His plan. Fourthly, in considering election here so many more things to say, but let's go to the fourth thought, the sphere of our election...the sphere of our election. Verse 2, this is so marvelous...now notice this, "By the sanctifying work of the Spirit...by the sanctifying work of the Spirit." Now listen, please. Being elect and being saved are two different things. Are you with that? Two different things. Are you ready for this? You can be elect and not be saved.

What do you mean by that? All of us were elect and unsaved at some time, true? It isn't saying, "Well, I'm elect, I guess I don't need to get saved." No. The sphere in which election goes from being a plan to a reality is salvation. The reality of election comes to the elect through the sanctifying work of the Spirit. This is how the divine and eternal decree becomes a fact of history.

How long have the elect been elect? You remember? How long have you been elect? Forever. How long have you been saved? A few years. You've been elect a long time before you've been saved. You were elect when you were alive and lost. There's a difference. Election, the plan of God, becomes reality in the life of the elect in the sphere of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. This is a marvelous thought for here you have the term sanctifying used to refer to the whole of the theologians would call the salvific work, the work of salvation. And I believe that what Peter has in mind by the sanctifying work of the Spirit is the new birth...salvation, regeneration, faith, repentance, all that the Spirit produces.

This sanctifying work, hagiasmos from the word from which we get holy, means to be separate, set apart, hallowed, consecrated, holy. And the subjective genitive here seems to indicate that the Spirit produces this sanctification. The Spirit comes along, makes you holy, which means makes you separate, sets you apart, hallows you, consecrates you to God in the work of salvation.

You've been elect and so have I from all eternity, but all of us at one point in time were a part of the mass of unredeemed humanity. We were milling around in unredeemed condition until the Holy Spirit came and set us apart, saved us. Sanctified means to set apart. And it can refer to salvation and all that comes out of it. The Holy Spirit does that marvelous work.

Chapter 2 verse 9 of 1 Peter, look at it for a moment. "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has...and here's your sanctifying work...called you out of...what?...darkness into His...what?...marvelous light." That's your setting apart. That's your consecration. That's your hallowing. And then verse 10, "For you once were not a people, even though you were elect, now you are the people of God." At one time, implied you had not received mercy, now you have received mercy. And so he is saying you've been chosen all along but you've only been saved since the sanctifying work of the Spirit took place, when He set you apart from sin unto God, set you apart from darkness unto light, set you apart from unbelief to faith, set you apart from the love of iniquity to repentance. That's all the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

Acts 15, listen to this, verse 7, much debate in the Jerusalem Council. Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the Word of the gospel and believe." God made a choice. He chose Peter to preach. "And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, that is the Gentiles, giving them the Holy Spirit just as He also did to us and He made no distinction between us and them...watch this line...cleansing their hearts by faith." Who did that? The Holy Spirit...cleansed their hearts by faith. God sends His Holy Spirit. That's why the Bible says you must be born of the Spirit, born of the Spirit. It's the Spirit who comes and sets us apart from sin and unbelief unto faith and holiness. We are born of the Spirit. It's the Spirit's work.

In Titus, you remember this, we go to this verse so often because it's such a tremendous verse. Listen, "He saved us...Titus 3:5...not on the basis of deeds which we have done." He didn't look down history and say, "Oh, that's what they were going to do, so this is what I'll do." No, He saved us for with no regard for what we have done, but according to His mercy, and here's how he saved us, "By the washing of regeneration and the renewing by the Holy Spirit." God planned salvation. Christ purchased salvation. The Holy Spirit applies salvation. He does the regenerating work.

First Thessalonians 1, he says in verse 4, "Knowing, brethren, beloved of God, His choice of you...I know God has chosen you...for our gospel did not come to you in word only but in power and in the Holy Spirit." How do you know we're elect? Because we saw the Spirit come with power and change your life. That's the only way you can know. That's when election becomes a reality.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, back to that verse we looked at last time, it says, now listen to this, "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation." How? Second Thessalonians 2:13, "Through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." The Spirit produces a change, cleanses, separates. Oh what a great truth. God planned it. Christ effected it. The Spirit makes it a reality.

In Romans 15:16 Paul said he was a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God in order that his offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. There's the same phrase used to refer to salvation. The sanctifying work of the Spirit is that He sets people apart unto God.

What does Paul say to the Corinthians? Chapter 6 verse 11, "Such were some of you...that is you used to be fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards and all that...but you are washed, you were sanctified." So we often think of sanctification, I think, as something that happens after you're a Christian, it embraces everything. It means you're set apart from sin to God. It's a synonym here for salvation in 1 Peter. And it is the critical work of the Holy Spirit at conversion, He sets us apart. That's why we must remember that we are born of the Spirit.

Now listen. Once you're set apart He continues to hallow you and consecrate you and make you more holy, and that's the process of sanctification. And it goes on all our life. Salvation is a work of the Spirit. You're born of the Spirit. You're born of the Spirit. That's His work. The Spirit grants you faith...faith is a gift of the Spirit. The Spirit opens your heart so that you'll believe. The Spirit turns you in order to understand the message of the gospel. Second Peter...pardon me, 2 timothy 2:25 says that the Spirit grants you repentance. The Spirit turns you from sin, turns you toward God. Why? Because He's working out the reality of the elective purpose of God. Tremendous truth...tremendous. The Holy Spirit makes us holy. Ephesians 1:4 says that we were chosen in order that we should be holy. Hebrews 12:14 says, "Pursue holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

Now this doesn't mean perfection. It means separation. I'm holy, did you know that? You're holy if you're a Christian. I'm not as holy as I ought to be and you're not as holy as you ought to be. I'm not as holy as I'm going to be, you're not as holy as you're going to be, but I was once not holy at all. I wasn't separate from sin, unbelief, darkness. Now I am. And now I'm growing more and more to be like Christ as I grow spiritually the decreasing frequency of sin is the increasing reality of holiness. That's a process but it begins with the saving act of the Holy Spirit. This is really the new covenant in a great way.

In fact, let me just take a footnote here for a minute, and maybe we'll stop at this point. It would be a contradiction to say, and I need to make this point so it's good that I thought to do it, it would be a contradiction to say that God chose a man to be in Christ but didn't make him holy. Got that? Total contradiction...total contradiction. If you've been taken out of darkness and placed into light, if you've

been taken out of death and placed into life, if you've been taken out of unbelief and given faith, if you've been separated from sin you're holy. You're not as holy as you ought to be but you're holy. It would be absolutely impossible for God to choose a man to be in Christ, send the Holy Spirit to do the work and not separate that man from sin somehow. I mean, to put it simply, take the words of Paul in Romans 6:22, "Having been freed from sin and enslaved to God you derive your benefit resulting in sanctification." Of course...of course.

So, somebody says, "Well, I'm a Christian but there's never been a change in my life." Wait a minute, what does that mean? What are you saying by that? If the Holy Spirit separated you from unbelief to faith, if He separated you from love of sin to hate of sin, if He separated you in all those ways from death to life and darkness to light, you're holy. And it will show up in the way you live. A failure to understand that has created some diabolical misunderstanding of the gospel. It is to this very issue, beloved, that I have been writing a book for the last eight years which will be released the first week of June. And I've been telling you about it. But this again is the same issue. You cannot say to me that there are people who have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, set apart from sin to God but you can't tell it. Wait a minute. There has to be a difference. There has to be. You used to be the slaves of sin, now you're the servants of righteousness. It's a total change in your nature.

I was thinking of Galatians 4:6, "Because you're sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts." Oh my, that's another thing the Holy Spirit does, comes to live in our hearts. Do you think that makes you a different person? I hope to tell you it does. How can anyone say that a person can be saved by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and as some are saying today and not believe, and not be separate? It certainly flies in the face of what Scripture teaches.

Well the sphere of election, what is it? The environment of its realization is salvation. It occurs in salvation. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit that makes the unholy person holy. Second Peter 1:3, let's look at it. The salutation in this letter, verse 2, is similar...Grace and peace and so forth. It speaks about Jesus our Lord, seeing that His divine power has granted to us...look at this...every thing pertaining to life and godliness. Boy, how did we get it? Through the true knowledge of Him. When you come to truly know Christ you get all that pertains to life and godliness. You say, "What is that?" Repentance has got to be part of it. Certainly repentance pertains to spiritual life and godliness. Faith, virtue, righteousness, love for God, delight in the work of the Spirit, it's all there.

Well the nature of election, God chose us independent of any outside influence. You say, "Why?" We don't answer those questions. He did, that's all.

The condition of our election, we are aliens residing in a foreign place. We love each other. We live by a whole different standard of life and we have to resist the temptation to get so ingrown we lose the purpose of our being here which is to be salt and light, scatter the seed.

The source of our election, it came out of a predetermined plan in which God before the world began knew us, knowing us not in the sense of observation, He knew everything in the sense of observation. Knowing us in the sense of a predetermined relationship, that's the source. It was in His own mind. He knew it into reality. He knew it into existence before it ever happened.

And what is the sphere where election becomes reality? The sphere of salvation. Theoretically, if you were to die without ever embracing Christ, you go to hell, even if theoretically you were elect. Now that's an impossibility but you understand what I'm saying. Election is invalid until it's confirmed by the sanctifying work of the Spirit. And that's the sphere in which it takes place.

I've got to give you a preview. Number five is the purpose of our election, are you ready for this? What is the purpose of our election? I mean, this is so straightforward. In order that you may do...what?...obey Jesus Christ. Now that's the purpose of our election. He saved you that you may obey Jesus Christ. That's so basic. That...that is not a wish, that is a fact. Ephesians 2:10, "You're His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto...what?...good works which God has before ordained that you should walk in." That's not a wish that's a fact. We're going to talk about the fact of obedience and then next Sunday night we're going to talk about what it means to be sprinkled with His blood, that truth alone is one of the most compelling I have ever found in the New Testament. But I want to save it because it has to be fully developed, so we'll wait till next time.

Listen, don't tune me out, don't close up your mind. The doctrine of election is so practical, it is so powerful, when I understand it it literally changes one's entire life to understand this doctrine. When you understand that you're elect, the practical ramifications of that will change the way you live every day. The doctrine of election will deal with your pride. That's right. It will deal with the matter of worship in your heart. It will deal with the issue of joy. The doctrine of election will tell you all you need to know about benefits and spiritual privileges. The doctrine of election will compel you to certain kinds of behavior like no other doctrine will ever compel you. The doctrine of election will produce power in your life in ways that perhaps you would never be able to understand if you didn't understand this doctrine. I'm going to outline all of those in detail next Lord's day. You can't ignore it. You absolutely cannot ignore it.

Listen to what Spurgeon said and I'll close. "Before salvation came into this world election marched in the very forefront. And it had for its work the billeting of salvation. Election went through the world and marked the houses to which salvation should come and the hearts in which the treasure should be deposited. Election looked through all the race of man, from Adam down to the last, and marked with sacred stamp those for whom salvation was designed. He must needs go through Sumaria said election and salvation must go there. Then came predestination. Predestination did not merely mark the house, it mapped the road in which salvation should travel to that house. Predestination ordained every step of the great army of salvation. Predestination ordained the time when the sinner should be

brought to Christ, the manner how he should be saved, the means that should be employed. It marked the exact hour and moment when God the Spirit should quicken the dead in sin and when peace and pardon should be spoken through the blood of Jesus. Predestination marked the way so completely to the house that salvation does never overstep the bounds and is never at a loss for the road. In the everlasting decree of the sovereign God the footsteps of mercy were every one of them ordained," end quote.

Beautiful imagery, isn't it? Election marked the house. Predestination laid out the path and the timing. And salvation followed that path. A gift from God. Let's bow together in prayer.

We confess, Father, again tonight that we're overwhelmed. Overwhelmed to think about Your infinite grace to us, we don't understand it. Why would You choose us? But we'll always rejoice. O God, thank You...thank You, we bless You. Lord, how our lives should reflect our gratitude. Help us, Lord, to always remember that we are aliens here. We are chosen by You for another place, a perfect place. Don't let us get attached here, keep us with a clear focus on our true home, our eternal destiny. Fill our hearts with such gratitude for grace that we are compelled to dedication, generosity, untiring service, investment of time, talent and money in the exaltation of Your blessed name, save us, Lord, from fooling with this fading world to which we have no kinship. Thank You, O God, for setting us apart. Spur us on the path of sanctification to become daily more like Christ, for we know that's the continuing work of the Spirit.

And, Lord, we would pray that even tonight in this place there would be some whose election becomes reality even this hour who having been chosen of God are now the recipients of mercy and saving grace, who are granted repentance and faith and set apart from sin unto You. Do that work, Lord, for Your glory. Amen.

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