

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Chosen of God 1 Peter 1:1-2 Part Two

I have the challenge this morning of speaking to you about one of the most difficult doctrines in all of the scriptures. I have the challenge this morning of presenting to you one of the most controversial doctrines in all of the Scriptures. And yet for all of its difficulty it has the potential of being one of the most comforting doctrines. And it is for this very reason that Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to introduce this doctrine very early within this epistle. This morning we will begin to examine the doctrine of ELECTION.

Let us read **1 Peter 1:1** “**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontas, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen.**” Notice the last word of this verse “CHOSEN.” This is the Greek word, “Eklektos” which can also be translated “ELECT.” In fact if you have a NIV Bible with you this morning it reads, “**Peter, An apostle of Jesus Christ to God’s elect**”

The church was about to go through an extremely difficult period of time. Nero was then emperor and he had begun to persecute the church. Paul was writing this epistle in order to help them respond properly to the suffering that was about to take place. And within the greeting which is contained in the first two verses of this epistle he is seeking to comfort them by reminding them of who they were.

He reminds them, first of all, of their relationship with the world when he addresses them as “ALIENS” which we discussed last week. This is comforting because those who are suffering in this world know that ultimately they will be going to their heavenly home never to suffer again. Then he reminds them, secondly, of their relationship with the Lord when he addresses them as the “CHOSEN OF GOD” or as “GOD’S ELECT.”

In what sense are the Christians Peter is writing, and for that matter, all Christians “chosen of God” or “elect?” This question introduces us into what is commonly referred to as the doctrine of election.

Election, according to the Scripture, IS THAT ETERNAL ACT OF GOD WHEREBY HE, IN HIS SOVEREIGN GOOD PLEASURE, AND ON ACCOUNT OF NO FORESEEN MERIT IN THEM, CHOOSES A CERTAIN NUMBER OF MEN TO BE THE RECIPIENTS OF SPECIAL GRACE AND OF ETERNAL SALVATION. Or in other words ALL THOSE WHO GO TO HEAVEN GO TO HEAVEN BECAUSE GOD HAS CHOSEN THEM.

This doctrine, this teaching, can be very upsetting. I remember the very first time I ever heard of this concept. I was dating a girl who was going to a Reformed Presbyterian Church. Somehow the conversation got around to salvation and she mentioned to me she believed that God chose those who would be saved and only those He chose would be saved. I found this belief offensive. For the life of me I could not imagine how anyone could hold to such a concept.

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It is amazing how time changes things. This doctrine no longer upsets me, but rather has become a source of comfort. It no longer provokes me, but only allows to me exalt the Lord and to praise His holy name.

Over the next several weeks we will be seeking to understand this doctrine, which will over time be a source of ever increasing comfort for Christians who are going through difficulty. In our attempt to understand this doctrine well be examining the various elements of election that Peter presents to us in these two very brief verses.

THE ESSENCE OF ELECTION

The essence of election is God's choice. Not our choice, but God's choice. This element of the doctrine is clear from the phrase "**chosen of God.**" The word translated "chosen" as I have already stated is EKLEKTOS. The very first part of the word is "EK" which means "from" and the second part of the word comes from "LEGO" which means "TO GATHER, OR TO PICK OUT." The Lord has picked out from all the peoples of the world those who would become aliens upon earth and citizens of heaven.

1. Eph. 1:3-5 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (4) just as He CHOSE us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love It tells us very clearly that God chose us in Him (that is Christ) before the foundation of the world. He chose us for what? **To be holy and blameless before Him, in love.**" This is just like saying, **'That he chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be saved.'** To be found holy and blameless is to be saved. DOES THE SCRIPTURES TEACH US THAT GOD CHOSE US TO BE SAVED? THE ANSWER IS YES.

2. 2 Thess. 2:13 "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH US THAT GOD CHOSE US TO BE SAVED? THE ANSWER IS YES.

If we are going to stand before the Lord holy and blameless it will be because God chose us. And apart from the Lord's choice there is no salvation. SOME PEOPLE TAKE OFFENSE AT THIS TEACHING.

1. One of the reasons why people take offense with this doctrine is because of their pride. There is something in the unredeemed heart of man that wants to share some responsibility for their salvation even if that part is something so small as thinking that the Lord did not choose them but that they chose the Lord. If this is what we want to think then our thoughts are totally out of sync with what the scriptures in fact teaches.

a. **John 15:16, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that your fruit should remain....."** Let me ask you, "Do the Scriptures teach us that we chose God or that God chose us?" The scriptures teaches that God chose us..... IT HAD TO BE THIS WAY.

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b. **Rom. 3:10-11, “There is none righteous, not even one; (11) There is none who understands, there is none who SEEKS for God.”** The scriptures are very clear all those in the world apart from the Lord’s intervention would forever continue to pursue their own way. They would continue to pursue what they wanted without any regard for the Lord. Apart from God’s choice of certain individuals for salvation all would be lost.....

c. **John 10:14-16, “I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, (15) even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. (16) And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.”** Notice that it does not say that the sheep that Jesus calls may hear His voice, might hear His voice, perhaps will hear His voice, it says, **“they will hear His voice.”** There was a time many years ago now when I heard the voice of my Shepherd, I was not seeking Him, He was seeking me and He called to me and I followed Him. It did not surmise Him, He knew I would follow.

2. It is important to note that being “elect” or “chosen of God” does not mean that the elect will be saved whether they want to or not, and the non-elect could not be saved even if they wanted to be saved. It simply means if a person comes to the point in his life where he truly wants to be saved that desire comes ultimately not from him but from the Lord who has called him..... THIS LEADS US TO THE SECOND REASON WHY PEOPLE FIND THIS DOCTRINE OFFENSIVE. WHEN PEOPLE HEAR THIS TEACHING FOR THE FIRST TIME THE INITIAL GUT LEVEL RESPONSE IS THAT IT IS UNFAIR.

a. Let me ask you this question. Who is better prepared to judge whether something is unfair, you or God?

1) **Ps. 97:2 “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.....”**

2) We are not in a position in our falleness to determine if God is just, right or fair. How dare we exalt ourselves to be God’s judge. Rather, let us with Paul join in saying, **Rom. 11:33, “Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!**

3) Justice is an essential attribute of God. The Lord is infinitely and perfectly just in Himself, of Himself, for Himself, from Himself, and by Himself and none other JAMES USHER SAID. “IF HE WILLS IT, IT IS JUST.”

For the Lord in eternity past, in His sovereign good pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in men, to choose a certain number of people to be saved as recipients of special grace and of eternal salvation CLEARLY IS NOT AN EXPRESSION OF INJUSTICE BUT RATHER OF DIVINE MERCY.

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CONCLUSION

In the recent Northridge earthquake there was an apartment collapse which killed sixteen people on the bottom floor of a three story apartment complex. There were others that survived this tragedy. One of those that survived this tragedy and who recently was released from the hospital was not challenging God's sense of justice or fairness rather he was thanking the Lord for His mercy. It wasn't surprising that so many had died. What was surprising that any could have lived. AND SO SHOULD IT BE FOR US!!!

There is a song entitled "I STAND AMAZED" and it goes like this, "I stand amazed in the presence Of Jesus the Nazarene, and wonder how He could love me, A sinner condemned, unclean. How marvelous! How wonderful! And my song shall ever be: How marvelous! How wonderful is my Savior's love for me!