***The Blessings of Election - Jude 1

JD03-01***

We have been considering in these sessions the very magnificent, and sometimes very difficult to deal with, doctrine of election. I thought it would be fitting now that we spend a little time in one more solid major review of this doctrine, and then pause to look at some of the significant blessings that stem from it. Here is a doctrine that raises all kinds of human emotions. We have all kinds of responses and reactions. I hope that you have picked up some very definitive and some very clear cut concepts now concerning the subject of election. Some of these things should now be pretty clear in your mind so that if someone were to come up to you, and usually the question is something like this: "Do you believe in predestination?" Of course, that is part of the question. However, it's dealing with something that is larger than just predestination.

One thing we found about the doctrine of election is that it is not only taught in the Bible, but that it is extensively taught. Several of you have been pointing out to me the fact that you have now discovered verse after verse after verse in your Scripture reading that connoted and referred, in one way or another, to the subject of election. This is exactly what you will find. There are some major passages that we have looked at, such as Romans 9:6-29 and Ephesians 1:3-14. In that Ephesians passage, we have the statement that, "We (who are destined for eternal life) have been chosen in Him (Jesus Christ) before the foundation of the world." Then in John 6:64, we have the statement by the Lord Jesus that there are some of you that do not believe: "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believe not and who should betray him. And he said, 'Therefore I said unto you that no man can come unto me except it were given unto him of My Father.'"

Now this concept that no human will moves toward God until God has proceeded that will, is a start; is a thought; is a concept; and, is a truth which permeates the Word of God. And it is important that you understand this. There is the danger of going to one extreme or the other. There is a danger of saying, "Well, it's all man's decision, and man's will is entirely free, and if you want to go positive, you can go positive." Or you can go to the other end and say, "Well, man has nothing to do with it. It's only what God determines, and if God's going to do it, it is going to be done, and if He is not, then it will not be done.

**Election**

Now, we have seen that the purpose of God to choose some to salvation has been described from different aspects by three major words. You may now test yourself and see whether you have some definite understanding relative to these three major words. Word number one is election. What does that mean to you? You should remember that election looks at the process which creates the relationship which God has purposed for us. Election looks at the process. It stresses the fact that some out of the mass of lost humanity were called to salvation while others were passed over. The word election should be connected in your mind to the word "process." It is the process whereby God is creating the relationship that He has purposed for you and me relative to himself.

**Foreordination (Predestination)**

Then we dealt with another word: foreordination. There is another word which is translated into the English for this same Greek word that means the same thing, and that word is "predestination." Predestination and foreordination mean the same thing. This looks at the aim of the relationship which God has purposed for us with himself. And what is the aim? It is that we should be transformed into the image of Christ, and that we should become like His Son. Alright, election looks at the process while foreordination looks at the aim.

**Foreknowledge**

Then there is one other word and that's "foreknowledge." This looks at the nature of the relationship which God has purposed between us and Himself. And foreknowledge stresses the intimate personal relationship which God enters with the one that He has called. The personal intimacy is the factor to remember concerning the word foreknowledge. The word does not refer to the fact that God has some knowledge about what we will or will not do because He is omniscient. The Bible never says that God foreknew certain things. It only says that God foreknew certain people. And when He says that He foreknew certain people, it indicates that He, in His purpose, chose that person to enter into an intimate relationship with Himself.

This is why the sex relationship is described by this word "know." Adam "knew" his wife. It connotes a personal choice of the most intimate nature. God sovereignly entered into an intimate relationship with some in His mind before the creation of the world. Thereby, those certain ones were foreknown by Him. Please do not make the mistake of thinking of foreknowledge as just God's omniscience that knows beforehand. You will go far astray if that's what you think this Greek word means. It does not. It connotes an intimate relationship of a personal choice.

So, the ground of election is not the will of man. Salvation is not the result of a choice which our fallen wills have made. Well, certainly that's one thing you have to get straight. Salvation is not the result of a choice that our fallen wills in themselves have made. John 1:12 says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." You couldn't say it any more clearly than that. Salvation is not grounded in the will of man, but grounded in the will of God.

Romans 9:16: "So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." The ground of our election is not the works of man. 2 Timothy 1:9: "Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." God chose us to salvation before we were ever on the scene, so as to have an opportunity to even exercise a choice.

Now, of course, we have indicated that this doctrine raises some questions--some that are very legitimate, and some that people get very hot about. Those who reject the idea of election and those who resist this doctrine do so because of the motivations of their old sin nature. If you find that you have some hangups and some mental reservations about the doctrine of the election, it is because of your old sin nature that has not been fully brought under control, and your mind which has not been fully oriented to God's viewpoint on this subject.

Now I know that part of this is a matter of words that you use, but it is more than semantics. These are concepts, and these are often taught erroneously by people who in general are pretty good teachers of the Word. So you are going to have to think through this subject because here is one place that even good teachers are led astray.

**Objections to Election**

Very briefly, this is a review to help you to think through this whole doctrine so that you can personally deal with it.

1. **Election is Inconsistent with Human Freedom**

Objection number one is that election is not consistent with human freedom and responsibility. How can God determine a thing such that we say that we are free? How can God determine a thing such that we say that we are responsible for our eternal destiny? But we know that the human will is not free. We know from the Word of God that the human will is enslaved by sin which directs its expression. God gives man a freedom. This is true, but that is a freedom which is limited by the plans and purposes of God. However, man is not forced to act contrary to his will. Nobody has ever been dragged into heaven kicking and screaming and fighting to stay out. When a person received Christ the Savior, He was not doing it under coercion. He did it because he wanted to do it. Yet his will is enslaved, and the natural inclination of his will is not to want to be saved. So something must have happened to his will, which by nature resists God, to suddenly be receptive to God. That something that happened is God setting in motion His choice through election.

Man is responsible for his actions because this inability to respond to God is self-acquired. We were responsible with Adam for what took place in the fall. We have inherited an old sin nature, so we are responsible in our own right for sins that we have committed. For this reason, we have an inability of the will to respond to God, and it is our own fault. For that reason, we are responsible for what happens to us, consequently, to that condition. No one is ever going to be lost who wants to be saved because he was not chosen. No one will ever be lost who wants to be saved simply because he is not chosen. The reason he is going to be lost is because he is a sinner. His will, therefore, cannot move toward God. The offer of salvation is a provision that is sufficient for everybody. All of the non-elect are going to reject this offer of salvation, and, consequently, they are going to be responsible for their eternal doom. Election is compatible with our freedom, and it is compatible with our responsibility before God.

1. **Election is Just Fatalism**

A second objection is that election is just fatalism, and this stems from the failure to understand the nature of divine election. Divine election is God working in love and grace, while fatalism is simply blind causation. When we speak of election, we are not speaking of some blind force, but we are speaking of something that has behind it the essence; the protections; the holiness; the righteousness; the justice; and, everything that God Himself is.

1. **A Sincere Offer of Salvation**

A third objection is that election prevents a sincere offer of salvation to the non-elect. Yet the Bible tells us that we are to present salvation in the context of "whosoever will may come." If some non-elect person would decide to respond to this offer of "whosoever will," what do you think would happen to him? If a non-elect person, while reading this right now, were to respond to this "whosoever will" invitation, what would happen to him? He would be saved. He would be 100% born again. Any non-elect person that responds to the gospel offer of "whosoever will" will be saved. However, the non-elect have wills which are adamantly opposed to God, and so they do not choose to respond.

What I'm trying to say is that God's provision is sufficient. The non-elect person could be saved. His sins have been covered. The reason he will not be saved is because his will cannot move toward God. He is adamantly opposed to God. "There is none righteous. There is none that seeks after God--no, not one." Though God knows that some will not come, the invitation, we are told, is to be made sincerely to all. Why is that? Well, because the doctrine of election, we have already pointed out, is a secret decree. You cannot look at people and know that they are elected or that they are non-elect. The elect identify themselves when they become believers. All that characterizes a believer in his daily walk and in his relationship to the Lord, in effect, are marks of election upon him.

The greatest evangelists have always been men who firmly believe in the doctrine of election. They had no problem in standing up before their audiences and saying, "Anybody in this room who wants to come to eternal life can have it. Does anybody want it?" The elect want it, and the non-elect do not want it. The reason that the elect want it is because God has persuaded their sin-enslaved wills. The reason the non-elect do not want it is because God has not persuaded their sin-enslaved wills.

1. **Only Some Are Chosen**

Another objection is that the doctrine of election is unjust since it chooses only some. What if somebody came to you and said that? Could you give him an answer? Election is unjust because God only chooses some people. The first thing you should say is, "I must point out to you that election is not a matter of justice at all. Election is a matter of grace." If God were to act in justice toward mankind, what would he do? He would send every one of us to the lake of fire. That's what we deserve. However, God is not treating us according to what we deserve. Election brings into the picture the fact of grace. Therefore, God is not unjust when out of the mass of people who deserve the lake of fire, He (because of something within His own being) chooses to preserve some of them from that lake of fire, while passing by others. The mercy of saving some is a testimony of God's grace. It is not a testimony of His injustice.

1. **All Should Have Been Elect**

Another argument, comparable to this one, is that if it takes election to come to salvation, then all should have been elect. Again, the question is not why has God not chosen to save everyone? The question is why has God chosen to save anyone? Well, God has decided to make His grace and His mercy known to us, as well as His justice. He has determined to do this by permitting sin to come into His universe, and God will save everyone that He could have saved consistent with His own wise and holy purpose. God is demonstrating His grace and His mercy as the result of sin that has entered the universe. He demonstrates His grace and His mercy by those that He has elected. He demonstrates His justice upon those that He has not elected.

And, of course, there are always some questions as to what it is in the nature and the being of God that moves Him to these choices and decisions, and those are the areas that we shall never fully understand, nor do we have all the information we would like to have. It is not unfair of God to elect some. It is not imperative and required of God that He save any.

1. **Election Discourages Evangelism**

Another objection was that election discourages evangelism to reach the lost. Supposing somebody said to you, "Well, OK. If God elects then I'm not going to share the four spiritual laws of the gospel with anybody. I'm not going to talk to anybody about the gospel. If God determines it, it will come to pass." And your answer would have to be that when God chose a person to salvation, He also did something else. He provided the agent who was going to lead that person to salvation. The two always go together. And, if a certain agent who is destined to bring the gospel to a certain person fails to do his job in evangelism, then God has ordained a substitute agent who will get the message to you so that you will be saved. The substitute agent will receive the reward. The one that God had designed to receive the reward will lose it.

We mentioned that the Lord Jesus Christ was under the compulsion of the fact that he had sheep which He must bring in (the lost) to Himself (John 10:16). In a spiritual Christian, election produces the attitude of total devotion for reaching out there and bringing the lost into the family of God.

1. **Election Results in Pride**

Another objection is that if election is true, Christians who know this will become very proud and very careless about themselves and their conduct. However, the realization of the fact of one's election produces a spiritual humility--not pride in yourself. You should stop and think for one moment what it means that you are going to heaven. It means that God moved and persuaded your will, and this has a very humbling effect. When Christians are proud, it is for other reasons than the doctrine of election. The normal response to this doctrine is rejoicing (Luke 10:20). It is rejoicing--not indifference. A person's normal reaction is not pride or indifference. The understanding of what God has done for him through election brings a spirit of gratitude, and gratitude is the greatest motivation for right conduct. Gratitude does not cause you to act in an immoral way.

1. **Election Implies Reprobation**

Finally, one other objection was that election implies reprobation. This means that God has passed over some and abandoned them to eternal death. This we agree is true doctrine. The doctrine of election implies reprobation. It is true, but man is responsible for the condition of reprobation. God has simply passed by some for some reason stemming from His own being. Men are lost because of their sins, and this prevents them from wanting to be saved because their wills have been affected by sin, and God simply left them in that negative volition condition.

We dealt with the question of whether you should ever talk to unbelievers about the doctrine of election. We pointed out that this doctrine infuriates the old sin nature, and you will get some very strong reactions. However we found in John 18:37 and in John 8:47 that the doctrine of election was presented to unbelievers by the Lord. You may be disturbed about your relationship to this doctrine of election, and you would be surprised how disturbed people can be. When I think that there can be no more questions, somebody comes up, as they have recently, and they ask a question behind which is reflected the concern, "Am I in or am I out?"

We are not interested and it is not our purpose to put you ill at ease relative to whether you are elected or not elect. If you have some problem on that, then I would suggest to you this simple solution. If you are disturbed over whether you are in the elect, you can resolve it now by a definite acceptance of Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. You can simply agree with God that you are a sinner, and you can simply recognize that Christ has died, and that He will swap your sin for His righteousness, and give you a perfect standing in the sight of God. He will make him as good as Jesus Christ. Then all He asks of you is to accept this gift of grace.

You may say, "I'd like to do that but I don't feel I can. I have reservations. I don't believe I'm ready to do that." Then you can hardly raise objections to the doctrine of election because the reason you are not accepting and the reason you are not in the elect is because you are a sinner and you do not want to be saved. If you want to be certain that you are in, accept the Savior.

**The Blessings of Election**

Now there are some blessings from this doctrine of election, and I'd like to mention four of them here.

1. **Praise for God**

The doctrine of election causes praise by believers for the sovereignty of God. Election exalts God as the sovereign ruler of this vast universe. His will is indisputable, instantaneous, independent, and inviolable. The consequence is that in the heart of the average Christian, there arises a word and a note of praise for the fact that God is sovereign, and this results in glory to Him. In Romans 9-11, we have the purpose of God laid out relative to the people of Israel. When we come to the end of that declaration by the apostle Paul of what God's purpose in election is toward His earthly people Israel, it ends up in Romans 11:33 with a song of praise on the lips of the apostle Paul: "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor? Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen." That's how Paul ends up a magnificent exposition of the doctrine of election in Romans 9-11.

So since only God has a part in the decision to elect us, only God can be given the credit and glory. Salvation is indeed of the Lord. From eternity past when He chose you, to eternity future when He's going to demonstrate His grace in you. One of the blessings of understanding the doctrine of election is that it will cause you to praise God for His sovereignty--that He is king, and what He says goes, and there is no deviation from that. Now because of His essence and the consequent trustworthiness of a person with that kind of character, it is great to know that He is in total and complete charge. There is no human will that can enter into a relationship to frustrate Him.

1. **Comfort and Strength for the Believer**

There is a second blessing, and that is that election comforts and strengthens the believer. This is to remind us that there are no accidents with God. If your heart is burdened, it will be comforted with your understanding that God has chosen in eternity past, and that He has chosen you within the context of a certain plan. There are no accidents in your life. Weak believers, with this realization, are made strong because they realize that they are in the sovereign plan of God. This will help you to realize that God has taken into account all of our failures. When God called you, He included all of your failures.

Therefore, once you get hold of the doctrine of election, and you rest upon it, there can be nothing that can happen to you which can upset you. There can be no one who can upset you. God has a solution for every trial through doctrine. He has made a provision for every failure in the grace with which He treats us in the plan that He has designed for each. God's hand is upon His elect through any experience of life. So the doctrine of election will not only cause you to praise God because He is sovereign, and to bring glory to Him. You will find comfort and you will find strength in the fact that He is running the elements of your life.

1. **Preparation for Suffering**

A third blessing is that election prepares us for suffering. In 2 Timothy 2, the apostle Paul gives us his view of suffering. 2 Timothy 2:8: "Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffered trouble as an evildoer even unto bonds, but the Word of God is not bound. Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Now, what Paul is saying here is that all that happened in his life, he viewed as part of his role as an agent of God for gathering in the elect. Paul says, "There is nothing that takes place in my life for blessing or disaster that is not part of the role that God has designed for me to play as one who is gathering in His elect."

So even what is unjust or what is unfair can be viewed as steps to the inevitable accomplishment of God's plan through us and for the reward that He is ready to offer. Election gives purpose to every Christian life. All that we must endure for Jesus Christ is to the end that you are His agent in fulfilling a role in election--His election of salvation, and you are playing a part in the role of His election to the plan that He has for other believers. This is a very vital role in His plan for believers. Therefore, election makes a Christian fearless and indomitable. As the instruments of God's will, when we're in His plan, functioning with Him, we can overturn any resistance. Over the ages, Christianity has withstood its attackers because at critical moments, there have been Christians who have stood firm because of their belief in the doctrine of election. No matter what came, they were winners. They could not be losers.

Now, if you proceed with the idea that you as a human being may choose, and through your human volition come to faith in Jesus Christ, you will not be in this company of people who stand firm. Historically, when the grace of God in His sovereignty, in His sovereign election, is expressed, things begin to take place. When God's sovereignty, expressed through His grace, is declared, things begin to happen among unbelievers and among believers. However, when man's spirit and man's will is stressed as a major feature, there's very little genuine work of God in evidence. When you put God as the key to the operation and the functioning of life, things happen. When you put man's ability to decide as the key, in itself, things begin not to happen.

1. **Election Undermines Self-Sufficiency**

There is one final blessing, and that is that election undermines the spirit of self-sufficiency. It removes the last vestige of credit from man. Foreordination removes any vain hope of human evolution as the basis of our choice for salvation. There is no place left for the idea that God looked down through the ages, and He chose one in whom He saw some merit, or He saw some potential response, but He did not choose somebody else because He did not see the merit or because He did not see the potential response. There is no merit and there is no response in any of us. So, there is no place for any self-sufficiency and any personal complimenting. Men cannot believe except God first draw them.

John 6:44 declares this to us: "No man can come to me," Jesus says, "except the Father who sent Me draw him. And I will raise him up at the last day." No man can come unless the Father draw him. Do you realize what that means? That means that there is no human being in all the world who can come to God. Now, if you are going to be a co-laborer with the living God, you have to understand that. There is no human being who can come to God. Listen to John 6:64-65 once more: "But there are some of you that believe not, for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believe not, and who should betray him. And He said, 'Therefore I said unto you that no man can come unto me except it were given unto Him of My Father.'" Nobody can come to God.

Now you may find that you look back on the day of your salvation, and you can say, "Well, I remember so clearly that I just went positive to the gospel. It was a definite act of positive volition on my part when I accepted the gospel." That's right it was. And it is necessary to respond with positive volition to the gospel, or you will never be saved. But before you discovered that you were ready to reach out there in positive volition, God had already performed a work upon your soul. Now that's the thing to get straight. The reason you were ready to respond with positive volition, which indeed you must respond with, is because He had moved upon your will to make that choice.

So, our eternal destiny hangs wholly on the will of God--a God whom we have offended by our sin. In the soul of the non-elect is the attitude that he can believe anytime he wants to. So, when he is presented with the gospel, and he is urged to make a commitment, and he is urged to make an act of positive volition, because there lies in the soul of the non-elect this idea that he can always decide (he thinks he can always decide), he will delay the decision. He will think there is no problem in saying, "Well, I want to think it over. I don't think I'm ready to make that decision. I want to think this a little further."

D.L. Moody once made this mistake in one of his campaigns in the city of Chicago. He was preaching to a vast crowd in this tabernacle. That night, D. L. Moody said, "I want you to go home and think over what I have told you this night, and next week I want you to come back here to this tabernacle and make a decision on the basis of what you have thought through of the gospel that you have heard here this evening." So, those people went home, and who knows how many of them prolonged and delayed. All of the non-elect did delay making the decision. However, next week never rolled around because Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over the kerosene lantern and set the barn on fire, and the Chicago fire took place. Scores of those people died in that fire, and there was never another meeting held for them to come back to make that decision.

**Deathbed Conversions**

If you think that deathbed conversions are commonplace, you are wrong. Some of you have had the occasion, as I have had, to stand at the side of people, and be talking to them one moment, and then all of a sudden to see something take place in that body, and look up in the eyes of the doctor and see the hospital staff move into action. While you step back and observe some very definitive, very methodical, and clearly understood procedures that they're doing, and yet you can tell that they're under pressure in haste. And you see a life suddenly before your eyes just slipped away, and you stand there thinking, "What was the last thing we talked about? What was the last thing we said?"

As you think back upon the occasion, you remember little glimpses and little flickers and little flashbacks that come to your mind, but you are under the very deep impression that it is not a very suitable condition for making a choice for eternal life. Deathbed conversions are a very hectic situation. And if you are going to decide that you can choose any time you want to, and you can always do it at the end, it is a pretty good signal that you are non-elect and that you will never find your will moving to accept this Savior. If election is true, and you are elect, it will drive you to immediate concern to make the move.

So here are some blessings of election. If election is true, and it is; and if the Bible teaches election, and it does, then it causes us to praise God for His sovereignty--to know that He is running things and that all that we do has certainty of fruition as we cooperate with that plan. Election will bring comfort and strengthen the believer who is weak. The believer who is under burden will recognize that all of this is part of his being God's agent. It will prepare us for sufferings that we take, again, in stride. These sufferings are part of our being God's agent; they're in His plan; and, they're in His provision. And finally, we will realize that election does not give us any room for self-sufficiency. Whatever arrogance may be left, the doctrine of election finishes it off. Thank God that you're in. The reason you're in is because He brought you in. If you are not, we certainly urge you to accept Him.

Our Father, we want to thank You for this Your Word. We praise You for it. We ask You to give us insight and understanding concerning this difficult doctrine. We pray that this brief review tonight will prove helpful and fruitful to crystallizing these concepts in a more definite way in the minds of Your people here. We thank You for this great doctrine. We do not apologize for it. We do not back away from it, and we would not distort it by seeking somehow to elevate and to glamorize and to dignify our sinful fallen human wills and rob You of the glory that is yours as the sovereign God who moves upon those wills and brings about the magnificent purposes that You have for each of us. We are glad, our Father, that You are sovereign. In Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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