***The Doctrine of Election  
  
RV214-01***

We are studying Revelation 17:1-18. Our subject is "Ecclesiastical Babylon." This is segment number 12.

**Israel Recognizes the PLO**

Well, this past week in the news (it was all over the TV this morning), the unbelievable has happened, as Israel has agreed to recognize its arch-enemy, the Palestine Liberation Organization (the PLO) in exchange for peace. One of our men this morning told me that Zola Levitt, on TV last night, spent the whole program indignantly sounding forth against the government of Israel, doing anything (he indicated) to bring it down for this act of accommodation to a terrorist group. This is the first step for Israel on a road that it hopes will lead to recognition by the Arab nations and a status of peace. The nations of the Arab world do not want Israel to exist. They hate it with a purple passion. They want to destroy Israel. They despise Jews, for they are the descendants of Ishmael, the arch-enemy of the people of God. So, Israel, by this act, signals to me that desperation has set in. A year ago, they would have responded with nothing but contempt to sitting down across the table to discuss anything with Yasser Arafat and the PLO.

However, at the same time, American intelligence services are learning more and more that Iran's religious leaders, the Mullahs, have taken over Sudan to serve as a training base for terrorists. Sudan is critically located in Africa. Their objective is to create a hardcore group of dedicated, fanatical Islamic fundamentalists who are willing to murder and to destroy for the glory of Allah. Five of the alleged terrorists which were arrested last June, in the conspiracy against the United Nations, where Sudanese, part of this group.

Iran is currently irritated by Syria, who has been the leader and the hotbed of terrorist training and development. Iran is irritated by Syria's current interest suddenly in wanting peace with Israel also. Syria wants to secure the return of the Golan Heights. So, it wants to come to some accommodation with Israel. Israel is now listening. This has made Iran very mad, and they have decided to have their own terrorist operation to continue the destruction of Israel. Iran's highly trained and combat-experienced Revolutionary Guards have now been dispatched to Sudan to lay the groundwork for a military terrorist force.

American intelligence sources have learned that the ultimate plan of Iran is to build a vast Islamic movement across the whole of North Africa, from Morocco to the Red Sea. Iran boasts that its revolutionary regime will play a significant role in building a new world order that would be anti-American – Israel's great and only protector.

So, all of this means that there is no peace and safety for Israel, no matter what deals she makes with the PLO. Israel is becoming desperate. All over the nation, more and more, the rabbis are speaking publicly about the need for the Messiah to come now in order to preserve the nation. So, they are pleading to God, "Please send us the Messiah. If the Arabs decide to unite and jump on us, and the United States is incapacitated, Israel will be destroyed." So, they're pleading for a protector.

**The Antichrist**

Enter the antichrist, whom they will welcome; take to their bosom; and, say, "Here is God's answer, our protector." He will make a deal for a seven-year treaty of protection of Israel. He will be able to bring under control the Arab antagonisms.

So, Israel is moving into a serious part of its history now, and wonder of wonders, you and I are alive to see all of this coming together. Indeed, even Zola Levitt last night (I'm told) recognized that this may be God's movement toward bringing things to an end, and bringing that antichrist on the scene.

Well, we have seen in Revelation 17 that one of the seven bowl angels tells John that he is going to explain to him the meaning of this astounding symbol where John sees a harlot woman; gorgeous externally; mouth dripping with the blood of saints that she has slaughtered; and, she is riding a beast which is covered with names of blasphemy and contempt for God. So, the angel comes along in Revelation 17:7-13, and proceeds to explain the meaning of this astounding symbol. John himself is dumbfounded at the sight of this woman riding a beast – a beast with seven heads waving about, and on one of the heads there are ten horns.

**The Beast**

Please remember once more that the term "beast" is used sometimes in the Bible in reference to a kingdom, and at other times it refers to the king of that kingdom himself. Which it is has to be determined by the context. For example, in verse 7 we see that the beast is ridden by the woman. This is obviously not a person, but a kingdom use of the word "beast." In verse 8, the beast comes up from the abyss as a representative of Satan, and it's going to be sent into the lake of fire. This clearly is an individual, the king antichrist, who is also called a beast. So, there's a close connection between the beast and the kingdom that he rules.

We have been told in verse 8 that unbelievers are going to be terribly impressed by the antichrist and his kingdom. But the believers of the tribulation will not be fooled. The reason for this is that the unbelievers have not had their names recorded in the Lamb's book of life before the creation of the universe. So, they have absolutely no spiritual discernment to see the truth about the antichrist. They have not been elected by God out of the mass of humanity to go to heaven, and thus to have spiritual discernment.

**The Book of Life**

This book of life, I remind you once more, we have had referred to previously in Revelation 3:5, where we read, "He who overcomes (that is, a person who has been born-again, shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not erase his name from the book of life. And I will confess his name before My Father and His angels." Here we have a book that God keeps (a record that God keeps). God puts names in his book. He calls it the book of life, and on occasion, he erases a name from the book of life. Some people have jumped on this as proof that one can have your salvation taken away from you. You can be lost again after having been saved. But this book of life refers to the book of all who have been conceived into the human race. Humanity begins at the moment of conception. So, the moment conception takes place, this name of that person is recorded in God's book of life.

**The Lamb's Book of Life**

However, there is another book that this book develops into, and, we read about that in Revelation 13:8: "And all who dwell on the earth (these are unbelievers) will worship him (the antichrist). Everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world (from before the universe was created) in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." Here, the name is a little different. It is called The Lamb's book of life. When a person dies without Christ (without having accepted Christ as Savior), his name is erased from the book of life, the book of the living. Eventually, at the rapture of the church, that book will then be completed. All names of unbelievers have been erased out of the book. What remains in the book of life will then be what the Bible calls the Lamb's book of life. So, the book of life, after the rapture, becomes the Lamb's book of life. That is what the angel is referring to. The people whose names were not recorded before the foundation of the world are the ones who will be deceived by the antichrist.

Psalm 69:28 says, "May they be blotted out of the book of life. May they not be recorded with the righteous." This is referring to Israel's enemies: "May they be erased (blotted out) of the book of the living, and may they not be recorded with the righteous in the book of the Lamb's book of life. So, even in the Old Testament, you have this perspective.

Believers have been elected by God to salvation, so they possess a spiritual illumination from God the Holy Spirit, so that they can understand what the antichrist is up to, and they understand his evils that he is bringing upon mankind during that era. We are told that the beast is the kingdom or empire which once existed. That the beast was in existence in John's day. Then it has gone off the scene, and it will be revived again as the Roman Empire of the tribulation era.

**The Doctrine of Election**

This reference on the part of John to those whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, of course, brings up the Bible doctrine of election. Around this doctrine, there are all kinds of human viewpoint, objections, and distortions – the challenging of God's right to look down upon the mass of humanity, all of whom are guilty morally of sin, and therefore destined for the lake of fire. None of them qualify for heaven. None of them can qualify themselves for heaven. Yet, God looks down upon them and says that out of that mass of humanity, who have no claim upon God, and who have no claim upon salvation, He selects certain individuals to go to heaven. He selects certain individuals to have their minds break open to grasp the gospel, and their wills rise to the capacity of accepting Christ as personal Savior. They believe the gospel, and are saved.

There are many questions that people who are not trained in the Word of God attack this doctrine with. You should have a very clear picture in your mind that God is righteous; He is justice; and, He would not do anything that is not compatible with His character. Let's look at a definition of the doctrine of election.

**Called**

One word is the word "called." This word looks like this in the Greek Bible: "kletos." Jude 1 uses this word in the Greek. Jude 1 says, "Jude, a bond servant of Jesus Christ, the brother of James, to those who are the 'kletos' (the called), beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." The word "kletos" means "invited." It is a reference to the fact that, out of this mass of milling human beings destined for the lake of fire, unless God's grace enters the picture and does something for them, certain ones are called. They are invited to salvation. They're invited to have their destiny changed from hell to heaven.

**Efficacious**

You must understand that this word "kletos," while it is an invitation, the theologians call it an "efficacious" invitation. "Efficacious" means that you can't say, "No." It's just like in Oklahoma, the girl who sings the song, "I'm just a girl who can't say, 'No.'" Well, when it comes to "kletos," God says, "I want you in My heaven, and you can't say, "No." It's an efficacious invitation. Yes, it is an invitation. Yes, it is a sovereign choice. Yes, you make the decision to go with it and believe the gospel. And if you are in hell, it is because it is your fault. You did not choose to believe the gospel. It gets a little thick, doesn't it?

**Chose**

Let me give you another word. This is a keyword. This word is translated as "chose." This is the main word connected with the doctrine of election: "eklego." "Eklego" is the main word used in the New Testament for the doctrine of election. We may illustrate it in Ephesians 1:4: "Just as He chose us in Him." There it is – the word "chose:" "Before the foundation of the world." Before there was any creation, He put his finger on you, and said, "You're going to heaven: "That we should be holy and blameless before Him:" That we, consequently, should act as those who have been chosen amazingly by God for eternal life. That calls for a certain kind of action, and a certain kind of lifestyle on our part.

This word means "to pick out." "Eklego" means "to select." That's exactly what it means. God is looking down from heaven and sees this milling mess over the generations of lost humanity, and He says, "I'll take that one. I'll take this one. I want that one." Just look around this auditorium, and you see people on whom the single finger of God landed as He picked from that mass. This word in the Greek language is in what is called the aorist tense. This means that the selection was made in eternity past. It was made at a certain conference of the Godhead where the divine decrees were determined. The term "divine decrees" is a theological term which means everything that God plans and does. We refer to that as a decrees of God. And at a conference of the Godhead in eternity past, this aorist tense tells us that these that these decisions were made for who would go to heaven.

It is also in the Greek language in what we call the middle voice, which means that God chose these individuals for His own benefit. He chose certain lost sinners for salvation for Himself, and for His benefit. You must remember that. God didn't choose you and me for salvation so that we could escape the agonies of hell. He didn't do it for us first. He did it, first of all, for Himself. He wanted you. It's interesting, isn't it? He is somebody who is that tender toward. He is somebody who especially comes up and says, "I want to put My arm around you because I'd like to have you in My heaven. Is that a person to treat with sin? Is that a person to treat with contempt or with indifference? Is that a person to thumb your nose at? When He calls upon you to do something; or, when He calls upon you to invest your money in something, when He gives you an opportunity for service? Or is that a friend such that you should put your hand out and say, "You can count on me?"

This business of election is not a harsh doctrine. It is a tender doctrine, and it tells us an enormous thing about the love of God.

**Foreknown, Foreknowledge, and Purpose**

There are several other New Testament words relating to the doctrine of election unto salvation. For example: the word "foreknown," which is same as the word "predestination;" the word "foreknowledge;" and, the word "purpose." I will not go into the meaning of those words, but each of them tell us something very importantly significant about the doctrine of election. If you want to know more about this, get the opening tapes on the series of Jude, and you will have the full instruction on that.

Election is actually stressing the process by which God expresses His love toward those who are saved by Him. Election is a process by which He expresses His love. God's election program is planned by Him. It is not haphazard. It is part of the divine decrees which were deliberately put together and decided upon. God did not decide to elect a believer after he was born. It says that the name was written *before* the foundation of the world, and certainly before he was born. God doesn't select the person because he sees that that person indicates positive volition toward being saved. God did not choose a person for election at the point that that person exercised faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, in effect, God would be choosing someone because he wants to believe in Christ, rather than because he is chosen and *caused* to believe in Christ. That goes backwards. God doesn't pick you at the point that you decide to be saved, and then say, "OK, you're one of the elect." You're one of the elect *before* that point. The choice to salvation, therefore, is pre-temporal. It's all before time even existed. It's pre-temporal, and the decision is made by God alone.

**The Definition of Election**

Here's a definition of election. Election is the sovereign act of God in grace, choosing from among mankind some for Himself through salvation in Christ Jesus according to His own purpose. It is pre-temporal. It's all of God.

**A Summary of the Doctrine of Election**

OK, here's the doctrine of election summarized:

1. **A Sovereign Divine Purpose Independent of Man**

Election means a sovereign divine purpose has been formed independently of human merit; of human deserving; and, of human cooperation. A divine purpose has been formed. The word "election" simply means "to choose."

**Corporate**

Election may be corporate, as in the case of Israel. Isaiah 45:4 speaks about Israel being elected by God – chosen. Or it may be of the church, as in Ephesians 1:4, speaking of the church as a body being chosen by God.

**Individuals**

Election may be in terms of an individual, as in 1 Peter 1:2 where a person is elected. Election proceeds from the will of God. That is very important to remind ourselves, as John 15:16 does. Jesus says, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you." God does the choosing.

**Salvation**

Election is for salvation. John 15:19 tells us that: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world. Therefore, the world hates you. Why are Christians hated? They are hated because their mouths are talking about God. Christians are hated because they run Christian schools. Christians are hated because they run Berean Youth Clubs, and say that that the entertainment people are wrong about the values that they're conveying. The whole world system does not like Christians because it exposes their moral evil.

**Christian Service**

So, election is for salvation, but election is also for Christian service. This is also stressed in Acts 9:15.

**Examples of Divine Election**

Here are certain examples of divine. There are seven "I wills" in the unconditional Abrahamic covenant. You may read about that in Genesis 12:2-3. Seven times God says, "I will do something for Abraham. Abraham doesn't deserve it. Abraham couldn't earn it." Abraham simply was chosen by God for this blessing.

Luke 4:25-27 tells us that there were many widows in Israel, but only the widow of Zarephath was chosen by God for blessing.

Only Naaman, out of all the lepers, was chosen to be healed.

Luke 1:28 tells us that the virgin Mary was especially chosen by God from among all women.

Luke 6:13 tells us that the 12 apostles were specifically chosen by God. They were elected.

Acts 9:15 is a very dramatic declaration about the apostle Paul, and the fact that he was chosen and called by God: "But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is the chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel." I constantly reminder our teachers in BCA that they are chosen instruments of God. Therefore, there rests upon them a very serious and divine mission which they cannot ignore, and which they must fulfill to their maximum capacity, and do it under whatever hardships it is necessary to do it. Paul understood what it was to work under hardships. I remind you that what is said of here of Paul (that "He is a chosen instrument of Mine), is true of every one of you. You are each a chosen instrument of God. Your business is to find out where you're supposed to operate as His chosen instrument. You must discover what spiritual gift you are to function under, and then do it to your maximum, and keep pushing it to the limits of what that gift can produce.

Romans 9:14-24 talks about Pharaoh of Egypt being a chosen instrument of God.

In Isaiah 45:1-4, one of the great prophetic Scriptures proving that the Bible is a supernatural book from God, the Medo-Persian ruler Cyrus is recorded in Scripture. He wasn't even on the scene yet. But God said a man named Cyrus will be a ruler, and he will open the door for you to go back to your land after the Babylonian captivity. When the Jews came in into King Cyrus and said, "Cyrus, our book here which was written by the prophets hundreds of years ago, the God of Heaven, the Great Creator, put your name in this book to record that you would be the one who would issue the order for us to go back to our land to rebuild the walls of our city, and to rebuild our temple." And Cyrus looks down at that page, and there's his name. It was put there before he was ever born. Now, that is the election.

1. **God has Chosen Some to Salvation, but not All**

God has by election chosen some to salvation, but not all. The word "election" itself implies choosing some but not others. It is not merely that God plans to give salvation to those who believe, but He determines who will believe. Yes, the Bible says, "Whosoever will may come." But unless God the Holy Spirit moves your will, you will not come. Now you're coming into that realm that begins to spin the mind – the sovereignty of God which cannot be denied: the free will of man, which must choose and be responsible. There is a relationship of those two.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 speak about election specifically to salvation: "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." From before the foundation of the world, God chose you. He tapped you on the shoulder for salvation by setting you aside, by an act of God the Holy Spirit, and through guiding you to be able to have faith in the truth of the gospel: "And it was for this that He called you through our gospel – that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In John 16, Jesus explained to the disciples the horrendous blindness that rests upon a human being. And until God convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment, a person cannot believe. You cannot talk a person into believing. All you can do is tell them the gospel, and then you sit back and watch, and you say to yourself, "I wonder if this is one of the elect." If this is one of the elect, that person will go for that gospel like a fish for a piece of delicious bait. But he will rise to it and grab it. When he grabs the gospel, you say, "Aha, here was an elect person." But if you see one who sniffs and turns away, he's non-elect.

I was diving in the deep dive at Cozumel one time when an enormous jewfish came along, and he looked at me eyeball-to-eyeball. I smiled and waved at him. This guy had big teeth, and he looked me over, and decided that I was not his bait. He turned around and left. I was among the non-elect, but I'll bet that sucker's stomach was full of a lot of elect little fish that he picked up along the way that day.

So, God says, "You'll believe the gospel when I move you to take the bait of the truth. Now, you must not go beyond the Bible. Do not go to the extremes to which some Christians have gone. Does the Bible say that God chooses some to go to heaven? Yes, I think you've already seen it. Does the Bible say that God chooses some to go to hell? No, and you must never say that. God never chooses some to go to hell. Everybody's going to hell. He just does not choose to change the destiny of some. He leaves them where they have already come by their own sin. They are going to suffer the results of their own self-chosen rebellion. But God does not elect people to hell.

1. **Eternity Past (Eternal Decrees)**

Divine election was accomplished in eternity past. The Godhead in eternity past held a conference, and all relating to human history was then determined as the decrees of God. We must discuss the doctrine of eternal decrees. Let's look at a few verses that touch upon that.

Ephesians 1:4: "Just as He chose us in Him (before the foundation of the world) that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love."

2 Timothy 1:9 says, "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 granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity." It couldn't be clearer than that. God has saved us by calling us with a holy calling – the calling of God the Holy Spirit. This is efficacious calling. You can't say, "No:" "Not according to our works." This was not because we did some good work to deserve it: "But according to His own purpose." What was His purpose? When you look upon other Christians, you wonder what God's purpose could be for saving them, indeed. It was according to His own purpose. That's the answer, along with grace – His purpose and His grace, which was granted to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, from eternity past.

One more: Acts 15:18 says, "The Lord, who makes these things known from of old." The things that God has done from of old are made known to us. And among those things are the things of the election.

Of course, all members of the Godhead (who are identical in attributes) have had a part in that conference, and have made the decision. They have different roles to play. God is the author of the plan of salvation. The Son subordinated His will to enter humanity; to die; and, to pay for the sins of the world, to make that salvation possible. The Holy Spirit empowered the Son in His humanity to execute His mission, and applies that salvation to those who are elect. We stress again that election does not take place in time. It takes place in eternity past.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 points out that: "We should always give thanks to God for you, brethren, and beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation, through sanctification, by the Spirit and faith in the truth." God, again, put you aside (set you aside) for this salvation. God did not merely purpose to send the gospel in eternity past. Men are not elect merely when they exercise positive volition toward the gospel, but God chose some for that salvation. So, there are many unsaved elect persons in the world today, and not a one of them will die until he has received the gospel. I don't care if he's in the heart of Africa. If he's one of God's elect, a missionary is going to come down the trail and give him the gospel, and he's going to believe it, and he's going to cash in on his divine election. In time, he will believe. Your personal faith in Jesus Christ does not determine your election. Your election (your position as one of the elect) is determined by God.

1. **Election does not Rest Merely on Foreknowledge**

Election does not rest merely on foreknowledge. This is a grave misconception – that God's election is based upon the fact that He looked down the corridors of time, and He saw who was going to believe the gospel (who had positive volition), and those are the people that He has then elected. That is not true. God does not elect on the basis of His seeing who is going to decide. If that were true, God would not be omniscient. God would be learning something. So, God doesn't look down to see who's going to believe. It is God who decides who's going to believe. Nothing could be foreknown as certain which God has not foreordained.

**Romans 8:28-30**

Romans 8:28-30. Notice that in this passage of Scripture, the purpose of God is placed before the foreknowledge, and the rest of the chain that leads to glorification heaven. It all starts with God's purpose. He wants you. Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good." A few weeks ago, I taught you that one of the first good things is being called to eternal life: "To those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Here is one of the words that deals with election: the word "purpose."

Now notice what comes after purpose: "For whom He foreknew." First, He decided, and then he foreknew: "He also predestinated." You must understand that the word "foreknowledge" in Scripture doesn't mean knowing beforehand. It means being intimately related with somebody. Adam *knew* his wife, and she conceived." What does that mean? That's the Bible way of saying that there was an intimate physical relationship. Foreknowledge means that God is intimately related to you. He wants you particularly, and He draws you to Himself. So, He makes a purpose, whom He therefore foreknew in this intimate relationship: "He also predestinated to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brethren; and whom He predestined, He also called; and whom He called, He also justified; and whom He justified, those He also glorified."

Do you see the chain reaction? You go from the purpose of God to glorification in heaven, and nothing can interrupt that chain. You go step-by-step: purpose; foreknowledge; predestination; called; justified; and, glorified. The divine decision on the death of Jesus Christ, in fact, follows this same order. That decision follows from the purpose of God (Acts 2:23). God's purpose is first. His sovereignty is the issue. Acts 2:23 tells us about the decision for the death of Christ: "This man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of the godless men, and put Him to death." Isn't that amazing? God's purpose was to deliver His Son by a predetermined plan, and by God's foreknowledge, therefore (foreknowledge because God had already decided that Christ was to be nailed to the cross, and now Peter points out), and you people, by your freewill, did it." You people, by your free will, chose to do what God has probably determined would be done. There's an inscrutable relationship.

Please notice Romans 9:10-13. Election does not rest merely on foreknowledge. Romans 9:10-13: "And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac. For though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose (here is the purpose of God up front again), according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger,' just as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

So, here you have twins. Esau is always going to be born the eldest, but he's not going to receive the privileged position of the oldest. Instead, Jacob is going to be the line of the Messiah. Why? Because it was God's purpose. God decided. God elected Jacob over Esau. Nothing could stop that.

1. **Divine Election is Immutable**

Divine election is immutable. There is no human will which is created which will frustrate the divine decrees. All expressions of the human will are accounted for within the divine decrees. That's an important point. Whatever expressions of your human free will, they're all accounted for within the divine decrees. God's plan is going to be realized. It's all going to come about just as He has determined.

In 2 Timothy 2:18-19, the apostle Paul says, "Men who have gone astray from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taking place, and thus they upset the faith of some. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness."

Here you have men who are saying, "Forget it. The resurrection has passed. You're never going to rise from the dead. You can live any way you want to." Paul says that these men don't understand what they're saying, because nobody loses salvation. You are sealed to God, and God knows who you are. He has recorded your name in the Lamb's book of life, and you're never going to come out.

1. **Divine Election vs. Man's Freewill**

The relationship between divine election and man's free will is not revealed in Scripture. So, please don't come up and ask me afterward how the two come together. The relationship between divine election (God's sovereign act of choosing), and man's freewill (that says, "If you don't choose, you will not be saved" – How are they related?

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, in discussing this subject at Dallas Seminary when I was a student, said, "I illustrate it to you this way, men. You're walking down a road, and you see a little side path. Over that is an arch, and on the arch is a sign that says, 'Whosoever will may come.' You look at that, and you look at the road you've been on, and you look down that path. And you say, 'I'm going to go this way,' and you choose 'whosoever will may come.' You walk up under the arch. It's very impressive. You look at it. And when you get to the other side, you see that there's something written on the other side of the sign. The other side says, 'Congratulations. You were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.'"

Somehow the two are related in the minds; in the sovereignty; and, in the justice of God. He has not explained it. God's infinite wisdom governs this perfect righteousness and justice in divine election so that He will not do something that is wrong. "Whosoever will may come to salvation" is equally revealed in the Bible, along with the divine selection by God. The elect are never identifiable within any mass of humanity. All of the people that you deal with this week (those of you that you work with) – you look upon them, and you don't know which of them are elect and which are non-elect.

When the evangelist preaches to a mass of human beings, he simply tells them: "Here's the gospel. You may accept this truth; if you believe in Christ; if you trust Him as Savior; and, you do not add any works." You have to say that.

**Only by Grace**

You cannot say that if you believe in Christ as Savior, and you are baptized with water baptism. You can believe in Christ, but if you add water baptism, you've interjected a work. You have denied God the only basis upon which He can save you, which is grace, and you will not be saved. Whole denominations are sending their people to hell, because you're telling them that they must have baptism to be regenerated. God says, "That's a human work. If you perform a human work, you're paying your way in, and I can't give you a gift if you pay Me. It's a serious thing specifically to understand that grace is the only way God operates.

So, God says, "I'll give you eternal life, and He selects us for it. What the relationship is (what the basis of that selection is), we don't know. Why does God elect a person to salvation? Does He elect a person to salvation because they are good? By God's standard, his standard of absolute righteousness, nobody is good. Does God elect a person to salvation because he foresaw that that person would believe? There's absolutely nothing in man to move him to want to believe the gospel.

Romans 3:10-11 tells us that nobody wants to go to heaven. Nobody cares about God. They're all indifferent. Nobody's going to believe. That's the natural attitude.

Why does God elect a person to salvation? Because He has purpose to do so. The reason is in God alone. So, salvation is indeed of the Lord. It's from God alone. Salvation is truly of the Lord. Ephesians 1:4-5: "Just as He chose this in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will."

Why are you an adopted son and daughter with all the full privileges of adulthood in the family of God? Because he predestined you by selecting you for eternal life to come to His family so that He could put you in that privileged position of adulthood. You're not just a kid in the family of God. You're in full adulthood.

So, if you're a freewill type, you will say, "God chose me because I first chose Him." But if you are the sovereignty of God, you will say, "We love Him because He first loved us. The truth of the matter is that both of these things are true. He chose me because I did choose Him. We love Him because He first loved us. The sovereignty of God and the free will man are joined together. We can legitimately and properly tell people, "Here's the gospel. If you believe it, you will go to heaven." In our own minds, we know that if they are elect, they will believe it at some point. But if they are not, they will never believe it.

So, just look around this room. Every one of these people is a special choice of God. It is not because we're all that special; not because we're all that outstanding; and, not because of anything in ourselves. It is just because He wanted you. That to me is very humbling. And that to me, when I keep reminding myself of that, helps me to know where my priorities should be. I hope it does for you as well.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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