

Election

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: 2 Peter 1:10-11

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Over in the book of 2 Peter chapter one, verses 10 and 11 there is a passage of Scripture with which you are familiar, I'm sure. Peter says, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Make your calling and election sure. If you do these things you will never fall and an abundance entrance shall be given to you into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Here is my subject today: Our calling and election.

Now, what is the scriptural doctrine of election? What is election? Well, Charles Haddon Spurgeon who pastored the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England for many, many years back in 1850 to 1890, this is what he said about election. He said, "The whole of the work, the entire work whereby a lost ruined sinner is brought from death to life is the work of our Lord, our sovereign Lord, the whole of the work whereby a fallen son of Adam is lifted from the dung hill. He lifts the beggar from the dunghill and sets him among princes."

Do you remember Isaiah saying that?

"He lifts the beggar from the dung hill and sets him among the princes, the rulers. Well, that whole work whereby a fallen son of Adam is lifted from the dung hill of sin and depravity, washed, cleansed, made holy and seated at the right hand of God is the work of our sovereign Lord and of him only." Spurgeon continued, he said, "Election simply declares that salvation is of the Lord from alpha to omega, from beginning to end, from first to last. Salvation is of the Lord."

I like to read these old timers. Dr. J.R. Graves who pastored down in Texas back over a hundred years ago, I suppose, he was out in his garden working among his roses and his neighbor came out and walked up to him and she said, "Pastor Graves, I believe that you preach election, don't you?"

He said, "Yes, ma'am I do. I believe election."

She said, "What is election?"

The old man looked at her and he said, “Well, my dear,” he said, “are you saved? Are you redeemed, a child of God, a believer?”

“Oh, yes, indeed,” she says. “I’m saved.”

He said, “Well, my dear, who saved you? Who saved you? Did God save you or did you save yourself?”

“Oh,” she said, “God saved me. God saved me.”

He said, “Well, then let me ask you this. When God saved you did he do it on purpose or was it an accident?”

“Oh,” she said, “God saved me on purpose. It was no accident. He meant to save me.”

He said, “That’s election.”

Every person God says, he saves on purpose. Every person whom God calls, he calls on purpose. And every person whom God redeems, he redeemed them according to his own purpose in Christ Jesus, given us in Christ before the world began.

I want you to open your Bibles to another very familiar passage of Scripture. This is Romans chapter eight. I am going to give you some help today, now, on the doctrine of election. What is election?

Now, open your Bible to this familiar Scripture, Romans eight, verse 28. You have quoted this. You have heard it quoted many times, almost at every funeral, almost someone will quote at least the first half of this Scripture. But I am going to read it all. I want you to open your Bible to Romans eight because we are going to stay there a little while.

Romans 8:28 Paul wrote, “And we know.” This is what we know. “That all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” And those who love God and those who are called according to his purpose, according to the next verse are those whom he foreknew. Those who are called of God according to his purpose and who love God are those, number one, whom he foreknew. He knew them before the foundation of the world. That’s what he says in 1 Peter. He said, “We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.”

And he says in Ephesians one, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies according as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

Those who love God and those who are called according to his purpose and those for whom all things work together for their good are those whom God foreknew. He knew

them before they knew him. He loved them before they loved him. He called them before they called on him.

He said this to Jeremiah. “Jeremiah, before I formed thee in the belly, before you came from your mother’s womb, I sanctified you and set you apart and I made you mine.”

Now, that is election. Those whom God has elected God foreknew.

Now, look at the next line. “And whom he foreknew, those whom he foreknew he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Those who love God and those who are called according to his purpose will one day be like Christ. God has predestinated the end of all those people. They are going to be like Christ. They are going to be sons of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Over in 1 John three John said this, 1 John 3:1, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know this, that when he shall appear and Christ comes again we are going to see him as he is and be what? And be like him.”

Those whom he foreknew he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son, to be like Christ. That’s what predestination is.

I hear people say they don’t like the doctrine of predestination. But will you listen to me a moment? That word is not in the Bible, but four times. That’s all. The word “predestination” is not in the Bible but four times. It is in the book of Romans here twice, in the book of Ephesians chapter one. And all four times it says the same thing. We are predestinated to the adoption of children. We are predestinated to be like Christ. We are predestinated to be sons. That is the object of God in redeeming his people to make them like Jesus Christ. And that’s what David rejoiced in.

David said in Psalm chapter 17, verse 15, “I will be satisfied when I wake with his likeness.”

What is election? Well, everything is working together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. And those people, those whom he foreknew before the foundation of the world, you see, known unto God are all his works from the beginning. God never learns anything. God never makes any decision today that he didn’t purpose from all eternity. God says, “I am the Lord. I don’t change. I do not change. Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” There are those whom he knew and those whom he predestinated to be like his Son.

Do you want to be like Christ? Well, God will have to make you like Christ. You can’t do it. And listen to this. “And those whom he predestinated to be like Christ, them he also called. What is election? It is God knowing us from eternity, God predestinating us to be like Christ and God calling us.”

Now, let me quote the old Theologians again, back hundreds of years ago. These men taught that the Scripture teaches a general and effectual call, a general call given to everybody and an effectual call given to his sheep. And our Lord confirmed that. He said in Matthew 22:14, "Many are called, many are called, few are chosen." Those who are chosen are effectually called.

Now, what is the general call? Well, everybody hears it. There is a light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Now, here is the general call, there is first the call of creation. God is known by the things that he has made.

David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God." The stars, the moon, the sun, the things that God has made. God may be known by creation. So men are without excuse.

Over in Romans one it says, "When they knew God by observing what God made, the glorified him not as God, but they worshipped creeping things and snakes and all manner of evil things." That is the Gentile nature. But they had a call, the call of nature.

And then there is the call of conscience. It says in Romans 2:15, "The work of God is written in every man's heart, the work of the law, their conscience bearing them witness accusing them or excusing them." Every man has got a conscience. What is that conscience? It is the law of God written on his mind. He knows wrong is wrong and right is right. He knows it inside. That's a call.

And then there is the call of the Word of God.

People are listening to me preach right now who will not receive it. People are listening who will receive it. But Israel heard the gospel back in the wilderness, back in the 40 years of wandering. "The gospel was preached to them. That is what Paul said in Hebrews. "The gospel was preached to them, but the Word preached did not profit them because it wasn't mixed with faith in them that heard it." They didn't believe.

So there is the call of nature. God is known by what he has made. The call of conscience, the law of God written in the heart. That is a call. And there is the call of the preaching of the Word and there is the call of providence, judgment, things that happen.

Amos said this. Amos talked to these people. He is speaking for God and about his works of judgment and providence. He says to them in Amos four, verse six, "I have sent famine among you. I have withheld the rain when it was just a few months to the harvest, but you didn't repent. You didn't return to me. That didn't have any effect on you." He said, "I sent disease," verse nine, "and pestilence among you. And your people died, but you still didn't repent, you didn't return to me. I sent wars and killed your young men and still you didn't return to me."

Now, therefore, in verse 10 he says, "Prepare to meet thy God. Prepare to meet thy God."

God hath not left himself without a witness. All men have some light and a general call. So many are called. Few are chosen.

Now watch this. Here is the effectual call. By his Holy Spirit, by his Holy Word which comes to all whom he foreknew and all whom he predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ here is that effectual call. Christ said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Him also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, my voice, and there will be one fold and one shepherd."

And Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians one, "You see your calling, brethren, your calling, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world," those whom the world calls foolish. They are not foolish. God's people aren't foolish. But the world calls them foolish. "The things which are despised by the world, the things which are not hath God chosen."

God's calling confirms his choosing. You see your calling.

All right. Look at 1 Thessalonians one. This is good. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God."

What is election? He foreknew them. He predestinated them to be like his son. And he called them.

And Paul says, "You know, brethren, your election of God because our gospel came not to you in word only. It came in power. It came in the Holy Ghost. It came in much assurance. It came in conviction. You didn't just hear the voice of a man, you heard God, the Holy Spirit, speak through his Word. You were born of the Word and of the Spirit."

Any person who is born again always there is present the Spirit of God who quickens, the Spirit of God who begets, the Spirit of God who gives life. And the Word of God which is the seed of his own will beget he us with the Word of truth.

"We are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed by the Word of God."

"Our gospel came to you in power, in much assurance and in the Holy Ghost."

Now, watch this. You read that 28 again, verse 28. Listen. "We know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew," I said he knew them before they knew him. He loved them before they loved him. We love him because he first loved us.

Secondly, he predestinated, predetermined that they are going to be like Christ. Christ is going to have a people in heaven like himself. They are going to love what he loves and enjoy what he enjoys, rejoice in what he rejoices in. They are going to be just like Christ, joint heirs with Christ.

Those whom he foreknew, those whom he predestinated he called by his Spirit. He called by his gospel powerfully, effectually.

What does effectual mean? It gets the job done. That is what he said in 2 Thessalonians two. Listen to this. Paul said, "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Word." That is how you are called. "Sanctified by the Spirit and belief of the truth whereunto he called you by our gospel."

There has got to be the preaching of the gospel. If sinners are saved there has got to be the preaching of the gospel. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him on whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without the preacher through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

Now what's the fourth thing? What is election? Those whom he foreknew he predestinated to be like Christ, one of these days, to see him and be like him. And he called them, called of God. And then he said, "Whom he also justified, justified, cleansed them, washed them, purified them, made them holy, put away their guilt."

Job asked this question in Job 25. Job said, "How can a man be justified be justified with God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold, even the moon, it shines not. The stars are not pure in God's sight. How much more abominable and filthy and less pure is a man that is a worm and drinks iniquity like the water?"

How can we be justified before God?

Well, how can God be just and justify us?

Well, our Lord answers these questions in Romans three. I want you, if you are not going to turn to it, write this Scripture down and read it later. But in Romans three, verse 24, this is what it says, "We are justified freely by his grace." We are not justified by works. We are justified freely by his grace. We are justified, secondly, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He represented us before the law and obeyed it perfectly. He took our sins in his body on the tree and paid for them, washed us in his own blood. We are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Now what is the next verse? "Whom God set forth." God sent him. God anointed him. God ordained him. God sent him forth to be our Savior. The angel said to Joseph, "Call his name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins."

"A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a child, call his name Immanuel, God with us." He is setting forth.

God sent him forth way back yonder in promise. He promised in the Garden of Eden that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. He promised him to Abraham, promised him to Moses, promised him, prophesied, pictured him. All through the Old Testament you see pictures of Christ. The passover lamb is a picture of Christ. The high priest going into the holy of holies with the blood atonement is a picture of Christ. The brazen serpent lifted up is a picture of Christ.

God sent him forth through all the Old Testament Scriptures in picture, in prophecy, in promise, in pattern, in type.

Then one day he sent him forth on this earth in person, in person. Unto you...the angels said to the shepherds, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Christ the Lord."

Oh, he came, the Word. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God. The Word was God. And all things were made by him and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

Jesus Christ, God sent him forth, sent him forth in person. And then on the cross, "He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Then God sent him forth risen from the grave. He said, "Because I live, you live."

Then God sent him forth ascending up on high and he seated him at his right hand till his enemies be made his footstool.

Oh, my, my. And then Paul asked this question. "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies."

He justified us.

Salvation is of the Lord.

What did David mean when he wrote that in Psalm 37? Psalm 37:39 David wrote, "Salvation, the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord." He meant exactly what Paul has written here. "Whom he foreknew he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. And whom he predestinated he called. And whom he called he justified, justified him perfectly, perfectly holy, washed him, cleansed him in the blood."

Now watch the next thing. "And whom he justified, he glorified." Everybody whom he knew and predetermined to be like his Son and whom he called effectually on purpose, by his spirit, by his Word, by his Gospel and justified them by his blood, he is going to glorify them. That's exactly right. They are going to be in heaven, every one of them. Not a one is going to be missing. And there is only one song in heaven. Do you know what that song is? "Unto him, unto him who lived us and washed us from our sins in his

own blood and hath made us kings from the dunghill to the throne and priests of God to offer spiritual sacrifices of praise and worship and thanksgiving and priests unto God his father, unto him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Unto him who loved us and washed us and justified us and called us and saved us and glorified us.”

Now, there may be people on this earth, religious folks, who boast of what they have done for God. There may be. I am sure there are, who boast of what they have done for God. But that is not the song in heaven. The song in heaven is what he did for us, not what we did for him.

There may be folks on this earth who feel like they are due some praise and some credit for their teaching or preaching or giving or their works. But not in glory. Your works might look pretty good down here, but they won't look too good before God, not compared to Christ's perfect work, perfect holiness, perfect righteousness, perfect love. Ah, nobody there is talking about what they have done. They are talking about what he did.

“He washed us. He redeemed us.”

There may be folks here who feel like they deserve a reward, that they deserve a crown, that they deserve some special attention up there for what they did down here. But nobody up there feels that way. From first to last, from the last to the first every one of them are saying, “Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own precious blood.”

Here are some more comments from David. David wrote in Psalm three, “Salvation belongs to God.”

In Psalm 37, “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.”

In Psalm 62, “My soul, wait thou upon God. From him cometh my salvation.”

Oh, my friends, everything and all things in eternity in time, past, present and future all things in heaven and earth, all things pleasant and unpleasant, all things in life and death work together for good for the glorification, for the salvation of those who are called according to his purpose, who love God and who are called according to his purpose.

Now, I want to close with this. In those next verses, Romans 8:31-39, Paul declares the foundation and ground of our assurance who believe him, who love him and who are called by his grace.

Here are five questions. Listen. “If God be for us who can be against us?” If God is for me in election, calling and justification who can be against me?”

Secondly, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for our sins, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?”

The next verse, “Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth?”

Are they not chargeable? Oh, yeah. Do they not charge themselves? Oh, yeah. Does not Satan charge them? Oh, yeah. But God doesn’t. God is justified. We are justified in Christ.

Verse 34, “Who is he that condemneth?” Christ died. We can’t be condemned if Christ died for us. Payment...God’s justice cannot twice demand, first at the bleeding surety’s hand, then again at mine. We are justified. Who can condemn us? Christ died. He rose again. He ascended to heaven. And he prays for us.

And then he asked this question. “Who can separate us from the love of Christ?” Who can separate us from that everlasting eternal love of Jesus Christ? He loved me. He will not let you go if he loves you. You love him and you are called according to his purpose.

Calling and election. You want this tape? On the other side is a message I will preach next week on this subject: The Joy of Giving. If you want these two messages send two dollars. We’ll mail them to you. Until next week, God bless you.