

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #19
"The Fruits of Election"
(Scriptures from NKJV)

NOTE: Much of the text herein is quoted directly or paraphrased from the book, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* by Lorraine Boettner.

We meet again to continue the lessons on Predestination. This will be Lesson number 19 in the series entitled "The Fruits of Election." We have covered Predestination in its general sense, in that it applies to all of the affairs of human existence. When we come down to the doctrine of salvation, though, the Bible focuses upon something more specific, and that is the doctrine of election. Election primarily concerns us in relation to our salvation. While predestination is involved in election, it goes far beyond the matter of salvation itself.

We have looked at the doctrine of Total Inability, that man is totally depraved and also has lost his spiritual abilities to please God. Now we are looking at the doctrine of unconditional election. We have defined it that God has not chosen His elect based upon what He foresees they will do, but merely upon His good pleasure. We have shown that from the Scripture. Last week we looked at six different forms of election that are found in the Bible. The Arminian and Semi-pelagian positions acknowledge that five of those forms are unconditional. That is, they are by God's good pleasure. The one which we remember the most is that God's election of the nation of Israel was not based upon something which He foresaw the Israelites doing. However, for some reason the Arminian position does a flip-flop when it comes to the matter of salvation. They change their method of hermeneutics and instead of applying unconditional election to salvation, they flip-flop and say, "salvation is conditioned upon foreseen repentance, faith and good works, whereby at the end of a person's life, God will reward him for a life of obedience." That is offensive to the Calvinistic position, because we hold that, in essence, it is a reversion to salvation by human merit and human works.

Now lets turn to Ephesians 2:8-10. This text will be a general umbrella for the scope of the lesson this morning. **"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."** Neither predestination in general, nor the election of those who are to be saved, is based on God's foresight of any action in the creature. This text lays it out that it is not that God sees that some will believe, and some will do good works, and on that basis, He chooses to save them. But the whole salvation process, and its application and purpose, starts and originates in grace. It originates in God, and God is the cause. Repentance, faith and good works are the fruit of what God does. The other position flips it entirely upside down and maintains that repentance, faith and good works are the basis for God's choice. These are two different systems of salvation.

The tenet of the Reformed Faith has well been stated in the *Westminster Confession*, where we read:

Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet He has not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God,

whose workmanship they are created in Christ Jesus thereunto; that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.

That is but an expansion of Ephesians 2:8-10 which we just read. Reading on:

Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure; yet they are not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

This is a most balanced statement indeed. The latter part of that statement is emphasizing that it is even necessary for the Holy Spirit to produce good works in those who have been brought to faith. But it also gives a caution. It says that they are not bound to perform any duty unless they receive a special motion of the Spirit. That is, they are not free to say, "Well, I can't do this unless the Spirit enables me to." It is our duty to do our duty whether the Spirit enables us to do so or not. We cannot blame our laxness or our indifference on the Holy Spirit because we are waiting for some evidence or motion of the Holy Spirit to incite us to do it. That is one of the tenets of Hyper-Calvinism, that, "I am not responsible for what I do unless the Spirit drives and enables me to do so." No, we are responsible as moral creatures before God. That is why the *Westminster Confession* is so precise in giving us a balanced understanding of this.

Foreseen faith and good works, then, are never to be looked upon as the cause of Divine election. They are rather its fruits and its proof. They show that the person has been chosen and regenerated, and is the evidence of it. To make them the basis of election involves us again in a covenant of works and places God's purposes in time rather than in eternity. This would not be **pre-destination**, but **post-destination**, an inversion of the Scripture account which makes faith and holiness to be the consequents and not the cause of election. (Ephesians 1:4; John 15:16; Titus 3:5).

That the decree of election was in any way based upon God's foresight or foreknowledge is refuted by Paul when he says in Ephesians 1:4 that its purpose was **"that we should be holy."** We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that we might **be** holy. I will let that sink in. It is not that God foresaw from the foundation of the world that I would be holy, but that I needed to be made holy. I was nothing but a sinner, and it wasn't because that I made myself holy that God said, "Now I see that person, and because he has performed a life of obedience, I am going to choose him." No, it is the very opposite. We were chosen in Christ that we might become or be made holy. So that is the end design. Paul insists that salvation is **"not of works, lest any man should glory"** (Ephesians 2:9). Then in II Timothy 1:9 we read that it is God, **"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 to us in Christ Jesus before time began” or before the foundation of the world. These texts should be abundantly clear that our holiness and good works, are the fruit of God’s choice of us in election, and as the fruit of the Holy Spirit, they are not the cause of God’s choosing us. What we are laying out are the two basic systems of Calvinism and Arminianism. We have seen in our study there are basically three systems, the Pelagian in which we saw that “man saves himself.” Do you remember when we gave you that little formula. Then the Arminian or Semi-Pelagian system is that “man saves himself with God’s help.” Then the Calvinistic system is “God saves sinners.” He does it all by Himself, so that whatever shows up in our lives that is pleasing to God, we cannot boast about it. It is God who has done it in His own way and for His own good pleasure.

So Calvinists, therefore, hold that election precedes, and is not based upon, any good works which the person does. The very essence of the doctrine is that in redemption God is moved by no consideration of merit or goodness in the objects of His saving mercy. Now what does that do to man’s pride when he hears something like that? That pretty well humiliates him, and if grace is not working, anger and hostility begin to rise up. In all my years of preaching I have seen many red necks and faces on preachers when discussing this, than I have seen any where else in my dealings with humanity. Just let someone have the idea taken away from them that they weren’t the cause of their salvation, that is when the teeth start gritting and the neck and face start getting red. Man insists that he is his own author of his faith and salvation. This position that we are presenting in the unconditional election position humiliates that idea. We know that our faith, repentance and good works are all the effect of God’s grace in electing us. In Romans 9:16 we read that ***“it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.”*** That the sinner obtains salvation, is the steadfast witness of the whole body of Scripture, not just a few isolated passages.

Foreordination, or predestination, in general cannot rest on mere foreknowledge; for only that which is certain can be foreknown, and only that which is predetermined can be certain. That takes a little thought. No one, including God Himself, can know anything in regard to foreknowledge unless that object is already certain. Do we grasp that? It must be certain that something is going to happen before you can foreknow it. So it is not God basing His choice upon mere foresight unless it is certain that it is going to occur. So again we read that foreordination in general cannot merely rest on foresight. For only that which is certain can be foreknown, and only that which has been predetermined can be certain. So you must have predestination before you have foreknowledge, not the other way around.

The Almighty and all-sovereign Ruler of the universe does not govern Himself on the basis

of a foreknowledge of things which might haply come to pass. Through the Scriptures the divine foreknowledge is ever thought of as dependent on the divine purpose, and God foreknows only because He has pre-determined. His foreknowledge is but a transcript of His will as to what shall come to pass in the future, and the course which the world takes under His providential control is but the execution of His all-embracing plan. His foreknowledge of what is yet to be, whether it be in regard to the world as a whole or in regard to the detailed life of every individual, rests upon His pre-arranged plan. If we had time, there are several passages of scriptures we could look at. (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:14-16; Job 23:13, 14; 28:26, 27; Amos 3:7).

There is, however, one passage of Scripture which is often pointed out as teaching that election is based upon God's foreknowledge, and I would like for you to turn to Romans 8:29-30. Two or three years ago I was holding a meeting in Northern Alabama, and there were several Baptist preachers that attended one night, My topic was Romans chapter 8. When we began pointing out the security of the believer, nearly everyone of them were saying, "Amen, Amen." Their faces were in full agreement. Then when we dealt with the matter of man's total inability and that man's salvation was not rooted in his own choice, but in God's choice, there began to be a still hush among that group of preachers. After the message and on the way out after the service, one of the men, who was the most energetic at the start of the message, shook my hand and said, "Well, I don't agree with what you said tonight." I said, "Where do you disagree?" He said, "I believe in total depravity like you, but I don't believe in total inability." I smiled and said, "You would make a good Arminian." He was sort of taken aback, because he would resent being called an Arminian, but that is what he is. He would hold to "once saved, always saved" but you have to get yourself saved. It is your will which brings about God's response, so that you do the choosing and then God seals you unto eternal life. It is interesting that in that system man supposedly has free will until he gets saved, and then he loses it. That is, if nothing can separate him from Christ once he gets saved, then what happens to his free will? The "true" Arminian system says, if man can put himself in salvation, he has the will to take himself out of salvation. That is why Semi-Pelagians and Arminians are consistent. If man starts it, then man has to finish it. But if God starts it, God will finish it.

Now look at Romans 8:28-29. What is it saying? **"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God,"** now who is it that loves God? Look at the next part of the verse, **"to those who are the called"**. No one loves God until they are called. Now who determines the calling? Called **"according to His purpose."** So start at the end of the verse and work backwards, "purpose, calling, then love shows up." **"For whom He foreknew,"** this is the passage that the brother I was talking to quoted, when he said, "see there, it is based on foreknowledge," **"whom He foreknew, He also**

predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. So the word is in the Bible. ***"For whom He foreknew."*** Out the outset, I would draw your attention to look at this, and notice it is people that are foreknown, not what God foresaw. It is not a "what," it is a "who." It is not what God foresaw that I would do, it is whom He foreknew -- people. That requires that we do some Bible study and see how the word "know" or "knew" is used elsewhere in the Bible. The word "know" is sometimes used in a sense other than that of having a merely intellectual perception of the thing mentioned. It occasionally means that the persons so "known" are the special and peculiar objects of God's favor, as when it was said of the Jews in Amos 3:2, ***"You only have I known of all the families of the earth."*** Lets stop there just a moment. Somebody explain that for us. Did ***"you only have I known"*** mean that God was ignorant of all the other nations and didn't even know they existed? Is that a viable option? I had a fellow in one of my former churches who argued like that even though he believed in predestination. His argument was that God didn't even know the wicked are out there. I told him that if that were true, God is going to have a difficult time judging the wicked at the judgment. He would quote such verses as, ***"I never knew you"*** as if God in His omniscience forgot these people. But if it does not mean that God is not aware of all the peoples of the earth, what does it mean when He says, ***"You only have I known?"*** Would anybody want to answer that? It is "You only have I known in an intimate way." Adam "knew" his wife and she conceived and bore a child. That doesn't just mean that Adam was aware of the woman in his presence. No, he had an intimate knowledge of his wife to the effect that a child was produced. When God says of the nation of Israel, ***"You only have I known out of all the nations,"*** He is referring to that special intimate relationship, and that He had chosen them and set them apart for a special purpose out of all the general purposes that He had for the nations as a whole. I Corinthians 8:3 Paul wrote, ***"If any man loves God, the same is known of Him."*** He is ***"called according to His purpose."*** Who is it that loves God? Those whom God knows in an intimate way. Jesus said to His sheep, ***"I know my sheep."*** Does that mean He doesn't know the goats? No, He knows who is a goat, but He has an intimate knowledge of those whom He calls His sheep. Jesus also referred to the wicked when in Matthew 7:23 He described that He would say on the day of reckoning, ***"Depart from Me, I never knew you."*** I never had an intimate knowledge of you like I have for my own chosen. We read in the first chapter of Psalms, ***"God knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish."*** God knows in a special way who is righteous and who is wicked.

Coming back to Romans 8:29-30, ***"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined (foreordained) to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He (Christ) might be the***

firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called;" Do you see the order of salvation here? The predestination precedes the calling by the Holy Spirit. **"And whom He called, these He also justified;"** We are justified by faith. Therefore, do you see that faith follows the calling? You cannot insert here in the midst of all of this that God looked out and saw Jim Gables exercising faith, and on the basis of that, He predestinated me. No, in verse 30 it says, **"He predestined those whom He has called and whom He called, these He justified by faith, and whom He justified, these He also glorified."** This is in the eternal purpose of God in His decree, so that all of these are set forth in past tense, as if this has already occurred, but only in the sense that they are certain. These things must actually happen. A man must be called through the gospel. A man must believe. A man must be glorified and given a new body.

Therefore, looking at verse 29 in this light, God predestined those people for whom He had an intimate knowledge to be conformed to the image of His Son, that **"He (Christ) *might be the firstborn of many brethren, and moreover those whom He predestined,*** (the same people He foreknew, called, justified, are the same people He will glorify). So what is the question in verse 31? **"What then shall we say to these things?"** (Conclusion) **"If God is for us, who can be against us?"** Unregenerate people will pull that out of context and say, "Well, God is for me, so I know He will see me through this." However, this promise is for the elect only, not for all the people out here in the world. This is taking place only for God's special chosen people. Read verse 32: **"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all,"** (the elect) **"how shall He not with Him also freely give us"** (the elect) **"all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."** This famous section of Scripture is so comforting to the child of God but has no comfort for those who are outside of Christ. Look at it: **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"** (If God has started this thing, is there a possibility that it can be ended or aborted?) **"Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."** However, somebody will dare to say, "I can separate myself." Alright, in response Paul would just throw up his hands and say, **"But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant."** (I Corinthians 14:38). Paul used all the expressions here to point out that the elect are infallibly called, they will infallibly inherit eternal life, and that all of these things transpire

because God has done it. Romans 8:29 did not say that they were foreknown as doers of good works, but that they were foreknown as individuals to whom God would extend the grace of election.

The Arminian view takes election out of the hands of God and puts it into the hands of man. This makes the purposes of Almighty God to be conditioned by the precarious wills of apostate men and makes temporal events to be the cause of His eternal actions. Calvinism offers us a great God who is infinite in His perfections, who dispenses mercy and justice as He sees best and who actually rules in the affairs of men.

The Scriptures, as well as Christian experience, teach us that the very faith and repentance through which we are saved, are themselves the gifts of God. Look in Ephesians 2:8, which is our text this morning, ***"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves;"*** It has been debated by the two classes of theology, the Calvinists and Arminians, whether the word, "that" is referring to "faith" or whether it is referring to the whole of salvation. Faith is included in salvation, so is it all of it? If one part were left up to us, what would we do? We would "boast." ***"For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*** God has shut all doors of our being able to boast, so that we cannot even boast in our repentance and faith. This is what makes me different. People will claim that they acted in a certain way that caused God to choose them on the basis of their actions. The text is saying that our actions are based on what God has done.

In Acts 18:27 the Christians in Achaia were said to have ***"believed through grace."*** Now listen carefully lest this be misconstrued. A man is not saved because he believes in Christ; he believes in Christ because he is saved. Do you see the difference? If you make it the former, then you have man's believing is because of his salvation rather than the effect of his salvation. Even the beginning of faith, the disposition to seek salvation, is itself a work of grace and the gift of God. When you were being brought to faith in Christ, were you aware that God was doing something internally, or were you just aware that something was troubling you? You had a conversion experience, and you were seeking the Lord. You knew something was going on, but I dare say you didn't understand what you know now, if you have become a Christian since then. I got up one day and had no conviction of sin, but before I went to bed that night, I was a saved person. Do you know what happened? God got up ahead of me that day and changed my heart and gave me a concentrated dose of salvation compacted in a short period of time. I give God all the glory for it, but I certainly didn't get up seeking the Lord that day, but before the day was over, I had sought the Lord and had become a Christian due to God's grace. Some of my fellow Christians, whom I have talked to, were under conviction and in misery for three and four years before they were

ever converted. All our experiences are different, but they all end up at the same place.

Paul often says that we are saved "through" faith (that is the instrumental cause), but never one time in the Bible does Paul say that we are saved "on account of" faith (that is a meritorious cause). To the same effect we may say that the redeemed shall be rewarded in proportion to their good works, but not on account of them. In accordance with this, Augustine says that *"The elect of God are chosen by Him to be His children, in order that they might be made to believe, not because He foresaw that they would believe."* That is not bad coming from a Roman Catholic. Not only is faith said to be a gift of God, but repentance is also declared in the Bible to be a gift of God. We read in Acts 11:18, **"Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."** Did you get that? God "granted" repentance to life. Speaking of Christ, Acts 5:31 says, **"Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins."** We have not only received the gift of sins forgiven, but we have received the gift of repentance, so that repentance and faith become the fruit of election, not the cause of election. I am repeating myself over and over again, not because I am trying to fill up time, but to try to drive home the point between the two different systems of belief. In Romans 2:4 Paul rebuked those who did not realize that it was the goodness of God which led them to repentance. Also, look at Jeremiah 31:19. **"Turn thou me and I shall be turned."** The NKJV says, **"Surely after my turning I repented."** I don't care for the translation which uses the word "relented" instead of "repented." It means the same thing as a change of mind, but I prefer the translation of repentance rather than relented. The reason for that is that some people are trying to get God off the responsibility of dealing with the matter of God repenting. Some texts of Scripture say that **"God is not a man . . . that He should repent,"** (Numbers 23:19), and other texts say that **"it repenteth God that He ever made man."** (Genesis 6:7). So the word "relented" sounds a little softer than the word "repented," but it doesn't solve the problem. I want you to note from the original KJV, **"Turn thou me and I shall be turned. . . . I repented; and after that I was instructed."** Now which came first, the repentance or God's turning? The turning produced the repentance. **"After I was turned, I repented."** "Turn thou me and I will repent." There is cause and effect.

To base election on foreseen faith is to say that we are ordained to eternal life because we believe. However, the Scriptures declare the contrary. The Arminian system says that we are foreordained to eternal life because we believed. But Acts 13:48 says the opposite. **"As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."** So which caused which? Did the faith cause God to ordain a person to eternal life, or were those who believed, those whom God ordained to eternal life? If any of you have a Bible, like the new *Living Bible*, with a translation that says, "As many as wanted eternal life, believed," throw it out and burn it.

That so-called Bible is just a paraphrase reflecting the theology of a man named Phillips. Why would a person change the wording of the Bible, from "ordained to eternal life" to "those who wanted eternal life, believed?" Because they are an Arminian. Arminians want that text to say "As many as wanted eternal life, believed." They cannot swallow the idea that **"as many as God ordained to eternal life believed."** So they take the liberty to actually change the wording of the text and the theology of the text. Incidentally, if you had been a true Arminian, would you have put all these texts in the Bible? Absolutely not! You would just be disproving your position, and yet they are scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments from Genesis to Revelation that it is God who saves sinners, and sinners do not save themselves.

Our salvation is **"not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit."** (Titus 3:5). We are encouraged to **"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."** (Philippians 2:12-13). Just because it is God who is working in us, we strive to develop and to work out our own salvation. The Psalmist tells us in Psalm 110:3 that the Lord's people offer themselves willingly in the day of His power. **"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."** Hence, conversion is a peculiar and sovereign gift of God. The sinner has no power or ability to turn himself unto God, but is turned or renewed by divine grace before he can do anything that is spiritual. Let me pose you this question. Are repentance and faith spiritual acts or natural acts? If they are spiritual, then do natural unregenerate men perform spiritual acts? They cannot! There are some churches who teach that faith is a natural act. Those same churches teach that baptism is essential to salvation, you must be baptized to have your sins washed away in the water. That faith is just a natural act. But if repentance and faith are spiritual acts, they can only be performed by spiritual people. I like to put it like this, repentance and faith are the twin graces that were conceived in the womb of regeneration. When God regenerated me, repentance and faith came out of that womb of regeneration, and suddenly I was blind but now I see. I see this! I got it!

In accordance with this, Paul teaches that love, joy, peace, goodness, faithfulness, self-control are not the meritorious basis of salvation, but he calls them **"the fruits of the Spirit"** in Galatians chapter 5. Not the fruit of the flesh, but the fruits of the Holy Spirit who produces these virtues in us. Again, Augustine says, *"The grace of God does not find men fit to be elected, but makes them so."* And again he says, *"The nature of the Divine goodness is not only open to them that knock, but also to cause them to knock and ask."* I like that. **"Knock and it shall be opened unto you, ask and you shall find."** (Matthew 7:7). I repeat Augustine's statement again, *"The nature of the Divine goodness is not only*

open to them that knock, but also to cause them to knock and ask." Luther expressed the same truth when he said *"God alone, by His Spirit works in us the merit and the reward."* John tells us in I John 4:19, that **"We love Him because He first loved us."** It is not that God looked out and saw that Jim Gables would love Him, and then said, "Alright, I will start loving Jim Gables." These passages unmistakably teach that faith and good works are the fruits of God's work in us. We were not chosen because we were good, but in order that we might become good.

Good works are not the ground of our salvation, but they are absolutely essential to it as its fruit and evidence of salvation. Matthew 7:15 says, **"You Will Know Them by Their Fruits."** I know that text is referring to the wicked, but it is applicable that God's elect become visibly evident to others by the way they live. They are produced by faith as naturally as grapes are produced by the grape vine. While these good works do not make us righteous before God, yet they are so united with faith that true faith cannot be found without them. Nor can good works, in the strict sense, be found anywhere without faith. Our salvation is not "of works," but it is **"for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."** (Ephesians 2:9,10). The genuinely saved Christian will feel himself in his natural element only when he is producing good works. James points out that a man's faith is spurious if it does not issue in good works. This is the same principle which Jesus set forth when He declared that the character of a tree is shown by its fruits, and that a good tree could not bear evil fruits. Good works are as natural for the Christian as is breathing. How many of you breathe in order to get life? No one. We breathe because we have life. Breathing is the effect of having life. Suppose I go into a funeral home and find a dead body. I put my head over the casket and say, "Start breathing! If you will just breathe, you will come to life." You say, "How silly!" How silly is it in the free-will system to say, "If you will just start breathing, you will pass out of death and come to life! If you will just start believing you will become spiritually alive!" The Christian cannot help but breathe, the Christian cannot help but produce good works. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus said, **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify (not you, but) your Father in heaven,"** to whom the credit is really due. Let us do good works, not to draw attention to ourselves, but to draw attention to our Father who is in heaven, who is the Author of them.

So the Calvinistic view is the only logical one if we accept the Scriptural declaration that salvation is by grace, and grace alone. Any other system involves us in a hopeless chaos of views which are contradictory to the Scriptures. It is totally inconsistent for a person to say that he believes in salvation by grace and then deny unconditional election. Now there are mysteries connected with this view; and it is certainly not the view which the natural man would have originated had he been called upon to suggest such a plan. But it is to act

foolishly to simply throw overboard the Scripture doctrine simply because it doesn't fit in with our prejudices and preconceived notions. To do this is to bring the Creator down to the bar of human reason, to deny the wisdom and righteousness of His dealings just because we cannot fathom them, and then to declare His revelation to be false and deceptive. No, the free-will view just will not stand the test.

I close with this statement: There would have been no mystery at all in the matter of salvation, if salvation had been based upon our good works. Do you see that? But this is declared by Paul to declare the mystery. Now why is it mysterious? Lets look at some practical closing thoughts. What do you find mysterious about this thing of election, that God has elected some and bypassed others?

Pam: It is mysterious that He has elected "anyone."

Jim: That is close, but tie it down just a little more for us. The mystery is "Why did he elect ME and not another?" It reminds me of the song entitled "Who Am I" by Rusty Goodman which says, "*I wonder what I could have done to deserve God's only Son when I ask myself this question, Who am I?*" That is a fair question, but it needs to be clarified that there is NOTHING I could have done to deserve God's only Son. Then why did God choose me? Why did He choose Peter and bypass Judas? Was Peter a better person? Here is the mystery and if it is understood correctly, it ought to produce humility, not pride. So when those who approach us and say, "You believe in election, so you must be puffed up thinking you are better than everybody else because you are one of the elect and others are not." No, it is the very opposite. We are not told why God chose one and bypassed others. We are only told the words of Jesus, "**Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.**" (Matthew 11:26). We will close with that.