

# Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

## An Expository Journey Through **1 Peter** **1 Peter 1:1-2**

### 4 Chosen by Foreknowledge and Sanctified to Obey, Part 2

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September 24, 2017

#### **1 Peter 1:1-2**

**1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen<sup>2</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.**

To the Glory of God

Now as we discovered last week, the Apostle Peter begins this amazing Epistle with one of the deepest and most profound Doctrines in the entire Bible: "Sovereign Election" or "Unconditional Election". Here is how Peter says it:

**... To those who reside as aliens, scattered ... who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood...**

So, Peter says here that saved people are "chosen" by God. And as we found out, the Greek word that was translated here as "chosen" is the word *eklektos*. And it is the word from which we get the word "elect", or "those chosen by God for Salvation". And, interesting, this word is *also* the *root* word for *ekklesia* or the assembly of the believers, or the Church.

And Peter uses four words in verse 2 that define Sovereign Election:

- ✓ According to
- ✓ By
- ✓ To

So, Peter teaches here that we are chosen by God for Salvation, “according to” something, and “by” something else, and “to” a third aspect. And Peter really wants these scattered aliens, and us, to understand our lives in this world in relation to God. Peter didn’t believe that we all just come to Church on Sunday and then we live like the world for the rest of the week, and we shouldn’t believe that either. And I’m not talking about wicked sin; I’m talking about how you relate every area of your life to God. Peter wants us to see all our life connected to God in a certain way.

And the first clue is that he *engulfs* you with God's “Electing Initiative”. So, Peter puts Election *behind* us by telling us that we are chosen **“according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father”**. And then he puts Election *in* us by saying that God chose us **“by”** or **“through the sanctifying Work of God the Holy Spirit”**. And finally, Peter puts Election out *in front* of us by telling us that God chose us **“so that”** or **“to obey Jesus Christ and through the sprinkling of His Blood”**.

Now many preachers would just skip right over all these words to get to something that interests them. And then they would teach things that either completely ignores what Peter just said right here, or that would totally contradict it. And what is sad is that they would do this, and neither they nor the people to whom they are teaching would know the difference.

But the concept of “Sola Scriptura” *demands* that we slow down, that we think, that we ponder, that we ask and find out what Peter and the other biblical writers actually wrote, and what they *meant* by what they wrote, as they were moved along by God the Holy Spirit. And so, we just can’t skip over these phrases and do the Gospel justice.

Now unless you are a Universalist, you don’t believe that everybody is going to be saved. Only the false teaching of Universalism says that everyone will be saved. And some of them actually believe and teach that satan himself will eventually be saved. The heretic, Rob Bell, recently wrote a book entitled *“Love Wins”*, where he simply

*repackages* the ancient heresy of Universalism to deceive another generation with that false teaching.

But, aside from those deceived souls, Christians, for two thousand years, have believed and taught that *some* people will be saved and will enjoy the eternal Delights of Heaven, while *others* will *not* be saved and will spend all of eternity in a devil's hell. And the reason the Christian Church has taught that is because that is what the Holy Bible says.

So, there is a real place called "Heaven" where sinners, who repented of sin and trusted in Jesus, will spend all of eternity in pleasures and delight that are incomprehensible. And there is also a real place called "hell" where those who *refused* to repent and trust in Jesus will spend all of eternity in everlasting torment and Divine Punishment.

Now when you are trying to understand Salvation, *biblically*, you have to comprehend two very important issues, that, sadly, most people, who lay claim to being saved, rarely, if ever, have even heard of. And that is:

1. The Glory of God
2. The Pride of Man

... and that includes Salvation. So, God is not simply interested in rescuing fallen Man from hell, but that He does that in such a way that He alone is glorified, and the arrogant, self-righteousness of Man is humbled. And *both* of these are totally dependent on the other to exist. If God is to be glorified, then Man must be humbled, and if Man is going to be humbled, God alone must be glorified. These two dynamics are *constantly* in play, and nowhere is it seen more evidently than in Salvation.

Now, the Glory of God is the displayed radiance of His Own Personal Holiness. God is Holy, in other words, God is *different* and *distinct* and *set apart* from everything that He made. And that means that God is *better*, and *more lovely* and *wiser* and *truer*, and *more important* than anything else in the Universe. And God wants to *manifest* or *display* the particulars of His Own pristine Holiness through Who He is and what He says and what He does. And God wants that *display* to be seen and known and understood and comprehended. And the knowledge and understanding of the display of

Who God is and What God says and What God does, the beholding of God's Glory, will result in God's creatures marveling it and valuing it and treasuring it.

And the valuing or the treasuring of Who God is and What God says and What God does is called "Worship". So, Worship is the end result, or the goal of *why* God does everything that He does and why He says everything that He says. So, God's Desire, His burning Passion, the single most important thing to God, the one thing that drives God and is the catalyst behind all that He says and does, is so that His creatures will see and they will behold and they will know and they will understand that God is the highest and best Being in the Universe, and they will value and treasure what they know.

And this is why, all through the Bible, God is constantly talking about His Glory. And there are three main ways that the Bible speaks about why God does what He does:

1. For My Glory
2. For My Name's Sake
3. So they will know there is none like Me in all the earth

And, the God, Who is revealed in Scripture, is infinitely *worthy* of Glory. No one is like Him. And so, a Being, Who has all of the Attributes that we find on the pages of the Holy Bible, *deserves* adoration and worship and obedience. It is the *summation* of all that God is, in all His particular Excellencies, that make Him to be God. And because that is true, we are not *noble* for worshipping a God like this, we are simply giving to God that which God is *entitled* to receive from His Own Creation! The psalmist wrote in **Psalm 147:1**:

**Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant and praise is becoming.**

... but *why* is it "**good**" to sing praises to our God. He wrote that praising God is "**becoming**". And the word "becoming" comes from a Hebrew word that means: *fitting or appropriate*. So, *why* is it *appropriate* for God's creatures to praise Him? Because of His Glory! We praise God because of Who He is and What He has said and what He has done. And this is why I spend so much time teaching you Who God is. Most

people today really don't know Who it is they are supposed to be worshipping. And so, they resemble the pagans of Ephesus who worshipped an Unknown God. But through a systematic understanding of what the Bible reveals about God your eyes will be unveiled and you will be able to see His Glory. And when the creature beholds the Glory of God, the only informed and reasoned conclusion will be that it is right and proper and "good" for Man to worship and obey and love and treasure this great God.

So, the full and correct Biblical knowledge of God is the *catalyst* or *foundation* for our love *for* God and our service *to* God and our worship *of* God. Another way of saying this is that the knowledge of God (from Scripture) is the *basis* of our love for (to) God. And our love for and to God is the *basis* of our obedience and service to God. And so, a shallow knowledge of God always leads to shallow love, which in turn leads to shallow service and shallow obedience.

Now there is a Principle here that must be understood. And that Principle is that love, *true love, real love, deep and abiding love* is predicated upon three things being true:

- A. We must Respect the one we love
- B. We must Admire the one we love
- C. We must be in Awe of the one we love

And without those three things being present, human beings may have some level of affection for someone else, but true love that is deep and abiding will simply not exist where those three things are absent. But respect, admiration, and awe for another don't just pop out of the ground. They are predicated on us having knowledge of the one we desire to love. It is common to hear people say, "*In order to love someone, you have to spend time with them*". And this is true. But I suggest that the reason *why* you have to spend time with the one that you hope to love is so you may know and understand them better.

Therefore, as our knowledge of God from Scripture grows and becomes richer and fuller and more biblical, our respect and admiration and awe of God will also grow. And as these three qualities grow in us, our love for God will become deep and abiding. And that kind of love, in turn, will produce the kind of devotion and obedience and service and worship that God deserves.

And sin stops all that from happening. Sin is the *inability* and the *unwillingness* to behold God in His Glory and treasure Him above all things. Therefore, sin *robs* God of the Worship that only He is entitled to. Sin makes that which is created look like it is worthy of valuing and treasuring above God. And so, the reason that sin is so bad is because sin *insults* God by *belittling* His Glory. Sin *mocks* God and devalues the most valuable Being in the Universe. And that is why the Apostle Paul said in **Romans 3:23**:

**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

Now look how Paul connects our sin with God's Glory here. And the phrase "**fall short**" in this verse doesn't mean that you *almost* reached the mark but fell just shy of it. No, this means that you trampled God's Glory under your foot with disgust. Now what tramples God's Glory under foot with disgust? Sin. So, sin is seeing the magnificence of God's Glory and rejecting it. Sin is beholding the majesty of God and not treasuring it. Sin is knowing the Glory of God and saying, "*No, thank you, I'd rather have something else.*" Every time you choose sin over God, every time you "set your affections" on that which has been *created* rather than the Creator, every time you place your desire and loves on the pleasures of this world rather than Jesus Christ, you trample God's Glory in the ground with disgust. And you simply cannot be any more wicked and evil than that.

And that is *why* God punishes all sin with Eternal Damnation. God's Righteousness will not allow an insult to God's Glory to go unpunished. Sin has insulted God and His Glory, and if God didn't damn that act of High Treason, He would be agreeing with us that His Glory was not worth defending.

So, unlike what you might hear on the Hay, Wood, and Stubble television network, God is very angry with sin and the sinners who engage in it. And He has promised terrible things to those who do not value His Glory. And those terrible things are called "God's Wrath". And God has promised that He will pour out His Wrath against all who refuse to delight in Him and His Glory rather than other things.

So, human beings are in trouble with God, because we have blatantly and publicly and repeatedly trampled God's Glory under our feet with disgust. We have sinned with impunity and we have sinned

all the day long. And that means that God's Wrath is bearing down on Humanity like a freight train running at 300 miles an hour and we are tied to the train tracks.

Now, since all that is true, "Salvation" then is God *rescuing* or *delivering* or *healing* or *saving* guilty sinners from His Wrath in such a way that He alone is glorified and Man is humbled. So, when we say we are "saved from our sins", what we mean is that we are *rescued* or *delivered* from the *Penalty* of our sins, which is the Wrath of God. So, we are saved from God. We are rescued from God. Salvation is God saving us from *Himself*.

And God has chosen to carry out this glorious Salvation *in such a way* that another aspect of His Own pristine Holiness will be displayed and seen and marveled at, and that our pride and arrogance is humbled. Look at how the Apostle Paul said we are saved from in **Ephesians 1**, please turn there with me.

### **Ephesians 1:3-6**

**3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,**

**4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love**

**5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,**

**6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.**

Now notice here at the beginning of verse 4 that Paul said that God:

**... chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...**

... which is very similar to the way that the Apostle Peter said it in **1 Peter 1:1b-2a**, when he said,

**... who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...**

So, the “**foreknowledge of God**” in **1 Peter 1:2** is attached to the “**before the foundation off the world**” in **Ephesians 1:4**. Now look at the *end* of **Ephesians 1:4** again:

**... that we would be holy and blameless before Him [Jesus]...**

... that is very similar to what Peter said in **1 Peter 1:2b**:

[who are chosen]... **by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood:**

So, being chosen so that **we would be holy and blameless before Jesus** in **Epehsians 1:4b** is attached to being chosen... **by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood** in **1 Peter 1:2b**.

So, Peter and Paul taught the same thing. They *both* taught that everyone who is saved is saved *by* being chosen by the Foreknowledge of God the Father *through* the sanctifying Work of God the Holy Spirit, or the Work of God the Holy Spirit to make us holy, *unto* the obedience of Jesus Christ, God the Son, which will allow us to be blameless before Him.

Please notice that Man has no part in this at all. God has done all of this, *sovereignly*, all by Himself, without any assistance or cooperation from humans, at all. And that reality accomplishes the two Goals that God established: He alone is glorified because He alone did all of the Work, and Man is humbled precisely because Man has played no part in this at all.

Now why did God set up Salvation like this? Why did He first choose those who would be saved according to His Foreknowledge or “before the foundation of the world”? Why is that the way to set up Salvation? Look again at **Ephesians 1:5** and the first part of verse 6:

**He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace...**

So, now Paul uses a *third* different word, or a *third* different phrase to explain what “**the Foreknowledge of God the Father**” means and



what being chosen for Salvation “**before the foundation of the world**” means. Paul said that God:

**... predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself...**

God *predestined*, He *pre-determined*, God *determined before*, to bring guilty sinners into His Own Family as sons through adoption. So, before the foundation of the world, according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, God predestined wicked rebels to become sons through adoption. Or, in other words, God chose to save whoever will be saved before the foundation of the world. And look at the beginning of verse 6 as to why God carried out Salvation like this:

**...to the praise of the glory of His grace...**

So, *part* of God's Holiness, part of what makes God to be God, part of God's Own Attributes, His Character and Nature, is His Grace. And God's Grace has a Glory to it, it has a value, an importance to it. And when that Grace is displayed, the Glory of God's Grace is then seen and marveled at and treasured.

So, how is God's Grace displayed? Before God made the Universe, Grace was not displayed, and therefore, its Glory was not seen, and therefore, it was not valued. Why? Because God the Father, in His Triune Godhead, doesn't *need* Grace. The only commodity that needs Grace are guilty sinners. So, in His Wisdom, God set up Salvation in such a way that the only way that guilty sinners can be saved is by God's Grace being displayed on them. Man simply *cannot* affect his own Salvation. Man cannot *initiate* his own Salvation. Man is the broken and humbled and trembling *recipient* of the Grace of God in Salvation, but Man is not the *Cause* of it, therefore, he is humbled. God is the sovereign *Cause* of Salvation, and therefore, He alone is glorified. So, when God's Grace is displayed on these rebels, the Glory of that Grace is seen and it is valued and marveled at, and God is glorified.

Now what is Grace? Grace is the Power of God to sovereignly *interrupt* the lives of these chosen rebels to grant them Faith and Repentance so they may be rescued from God's Wrath and be adopted as sons. It is the sovereign *imposing* of God's Will that the Glory of His Grace be displayed onto those who have been predestined. It is the

sovereign *insertion* of the white hot Desire of God to be known and valued and treasured on those who have trampled under-foot His Glory, through the Foreknowledge of God the Father.

Grace is the omnipotent Power of God in *circumventing* all of the plans of all of God's elect, and sovereignly opening their blind eyes and unstopping their deaf ears, and taking out of them a stony heart and giving them a heart of flesh, so that these chosen aliens will see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, and they will love what they see.

Grace is God's Desire to be known and feared and admired and loved and worshipped and obeyed and treasured, *outweighing* or *overwhelming* or *overpowering* the chosen elect's desire to sin and rebel against Him. It is God, all by Himself, *violating* the will and changing the loves of fallen sinners so that they will delight themselves in Him. Grace is God shining in His Glory by saving vessels who before were unwilling.

And what is the end result of saving people this way? So, that the self-righteous arrogance of fallen Man will be humbled, and that God alone will be glorified. Or in the words of the Apostle Paul:

**Ephesians 1:14b**  
**... to the praise of His glory.**

And

**Ephesians 2:9b**  
**... so that no one may boast.**

Now many of us have been *wrongly* taught that the distinction between those who are saved and those who are not is that those who are lost have *rejected* the Gospel, while those who are saved have *exercised* their own "free will" to "choose Jesus". They *initiated* their own "human self-determination" and they made a "decision for Christ". This is yet another sinful attempt by fallen man to gain control over a situation and rob God of the Glory that only belongs to Him.

And in that clouded theology, God loves everybody *equally*, and Jesus died for all humanity *in the same way*, and everybody has a "fair" and "equal" opportunity to be saved. And those who "take God up" on

His free offer of Salvation and “accept Jesus into their hearts” will be saved, and those who reject this free offer that is given to everybody will not.

And that unbiblical theology has become the *dominant* theology on the earth today. It is *exuberantly* promoted and joyfully accepted, precisely because it is easy to teach and easy to learn and seems to be patently “fair”. But we must understand that what makes this theology so attractive is that it robs God of sole claim to some or all of the Glory, and gives that Glory to Man. And fallen humans like that. And that is precisely why we need the Bible. Because nobody seems to have a problem with this way of looking at Salvation until they run into Statements in the Bible like the one that Peter makes to us.

I want you to take notice that Peter doesn’t discuss “Human Free Will” or “Human Self-Determinism” in his Epistle. No, Peter discusses Sovereign Election or God’s sovereign Choosing. There is no hint of any of these scattered aliens “exercising their own will to accept Jesus into their hearts” here in Peter’s words. Peter says these aliens were:

### **chosen by God according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father**

There is no mention of anyone “taking God up on the free offer of Salvation that He has offered to everyone”. No, Peter says here that these scattered aliens have been **chosen by the sanctifying Word of God the Holy Spirit**. And there is nothing in Peter’s words that would make *anyone* think that Peter bought into the notion that “we have to take the *first* step in Salvation and then God will do all the rest”. No, what Peter bought into was that people are chosen **to the obedience of Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with His Blood**.

So, what should be abundantly clear to anyone reading verses 1-2 is that what Peter is teaching here *is at odds* with what almost *everybody* teaches today concerning Salvation. Let me say this another way. What Peter was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to write down here in verses 1-2 is *diametrically opposite* to what most people teach about how lost people are saved. Let me say this a third way. What is being taught this morning in almost every church in this town about how lost people are saved is *not* what the Apostle Peter believed and what he taught, and is not what the Holy Bible says here in **1 Peter 1:1-2**.

And that reality ought to trouble us, *deeply*. We should be *very* concerned as to *why* the majority of those who make up the visible Church on the earth today are teaching something about Salvation that the Bible *doesn't* teach! As far as I am concerned, they should shut *everything* down until they can figure out *why* their teaching on Salvation is at odds with Scripture.

So, I repeat my statement. Nobody has a problem with the false view of Salvation that is being eagerly promoted by the overwhelming majority of religious groups until you very *carefully* and very *thoroughly* read and study the Holy Bible. In other words, a clear and precise knowledge of the Truth of God's Word will expose false teaching and *prevent* you from being deceived about how lost people are saved, and any other issue as well.

So, I am *not* in disagreement with the majority of those who lay claim to being Evangelical about how lost people are saved because I think I'm smarter than they are, or because I'm trying to find a new "slant" on Divine Truth, or because I'm just trying to be controversial. No, I am in disagreement with the majority of those who lay claim to being Evangelical about how lost people are saved because I'm honestly and sincerely seeking to be biblical, and what they are teaching is *not* in the Bible. And I'm honestly and sincerely trying to believe and teach what God actually said in this Book and not just make stuff up.

I want to be crystal clear that you hear what I'm saying. What many people believe and teach today about how lost people are saved is simply *not* taught in the Bible. At all. Anywhere. And what they believe and teach has *never* been taught in the Bible. Ever. At all. But as bad as that is, it is really *worse*, because what they *do* believe and what they *do* teach and what millions of people now believe, is at odds with what the Bible *does* teach about how lost people are saved. And I don't throw around statements like that.

Now if we were talking about things that don't matter, like what time do we need to start the Lord's Day Service or how many times we need to have "Dinner on the Grounds", then believers could disagree all day long and still be saved and still be in right standing with God. But we're not talking about things that don't matter. We're talking about how lost people are saved. And that is probably one of the single most important elements in the entire Bible.

And let me give you an idea of how important an issue it is. 500 years ago, we broke off from the Roman religious system over this very issue. And 500 years later, we are *still* separated. And we are not separated today from Rome over personalities or because we do not understand the issue. We are separated because what the Roman system teaches about how lost people are saved is at odds with what the Bible says.

So, one of us is wrong. And we are wrong about a very serious and an eternal issue. Either the Romans are right and the pope *does* have final authority in the Church to "bind the conscience" and the ability to determine right from wrong. And that would mean they are correct to teach that when the pope sits in the throne of St. Peter and speaks about matters of Faith or Morals that whatever he says is infallible, or we are right, and the Scriptures and the Scriptures *alone* are infallible, and every human being who holds any office, *including the pope*, must bow his knee in submission to God's Word.

Either they are right and lost people are saved by Grace through Faith plus participation in the Sacraments plus attendance to the Mass plus participation in the Rite of Penance, or we are right, and lost people are saved by Grace *alone* through Faith *alone* in Jesus *alone* and in His finished Work *alone*, plus *nothing*.

And the point I'm making here is that people who call themselves "Evangelical" in our day don't have the right to teach things that the Bible doesn't say, any more than Rome does.

So, God saves the lost by choosing to *sovereignly* and *unconditionally* "setting His Love" upon them from before the foundation of the world. And there is a very interesting Passage back in the Old Testament that explains this, so please go there with me, **Deuteronomy 7:7-8:**

**7 "The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,**

**8 but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.**

Here, God is speaking to the Old Testament Jew. And God tells them very clearly, in verse 7, that He:

“set His Love upon them and chose them”

So, the Jew didn't choose God, God chose Abraham while Abraham was a pagan idolater, and God chose him to be the “father” of the Jewish people. God never even asked Abraham if he *wanted* to be saved, and Abraham made no move toward God prior to God choosing him. So, the choosing of Abraham was “Sovereign” and it was “Unilateral” and it was “Unconditional”. It was God *imposing* Himself onto this idol worshipper in order to rescue him and use him for God's Glory. But then notice the “negative” connotation in the rest of verse 7:

**The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,**

So, God set His Love upon them, Yes. But here God says that He did *not* set His Love upon them because they did something to make themselves attractive to Him, or because they did anything to earn it or deserve it. Now look at the first part of verse 8:

**but because the Lord loved you ...**

So, God set His Love on them, because He loved them. God loved them because He loved them. So, there is no other reason why God set His Love on Abraham and the Jewish people under the Old Covenant other than He loved them. They didn't do anything to cause God to love them; He decided, way before they even *existed* to choose them to be His people, for no other reason than He loved them. And this allowed for them to be humbled and for God alone to be glorified.

And God's Love toward us today works the same way. It is also not a *response* to something that we do first. Because that would feed into our need to be in charge and would allow us to boast about what we did to earn God's Favor. No, God loves *first*, and everything we do, from repenting to believing to following to obeying to serving, is a humble and broken *response* to God setting His Love on us first. And this is what Jesus meant when He said:

## **John 15:16**

**You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.**

... so, God, "setting His Love" on those who foreknew, is them being "chosen" or "predestined" or "elected" for Salvation.

Now we've seen that God set up Salvation like this so that He alone would be glorified. But how does saving sinners by choosing them before the foundation of the world humble the self-righteousness of fallen Man? And to understand this, we first we need to examine Man's condition before God. Look at what Moses wrote in **Genesis 6:5**:

**Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

After Adam and Eve sinned and fell, they completely lost their "First Estate" or their "Original Standing" with God. The Fall *radically* and *negatively* ruined them. And perhaps the best summary statement in the entire Bible as to what Human Depravity looks like is in **Genesis 6:5**.

Notice what Moses says here at the beginning of this verse:

**Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth...**

Now the word "**great**" comes from a Hebrew word that means: "*all-encompassing or pervasive*". So, what was "all-encompassing" or "pervasive" in the earth after the Fall?

### **The wickedness of Man**

Not Man's *nobility*, his wickedness. Not Man's *goodness*, his wickedness. Not Man's *love* toward God, his wickedness. The Holy Bible says that Man's *wickedness* was "all-encompassing and pervasive" on the earth after the Fall.

Now what does that kind of pervasive wickedness look like? Well, Moses tells us in the next part of this verse:

**... and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

Now notice the all-inclusive terminology here. Look at the words “**every**” and “**only**” and “**continually**”. Moses was moved along by God the Holy Spirit about 1550 years before Jesus was born to say that the Fall was so devastating, so horrible, so destructive that:

**... every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**

Now look very closely at the end of this verse. Moses wrote that every single intent of the very thoughts of the heart of all of Mankind was:

**... only evil continually**

And in Alabama English, that means- “all evil, all the time”. So, what was “all evil, all the time”?

**every intent of the thoughts of his heart**

So, after the Fall, there was *nothing* inside of Man that would help him to be convicted of sin, assist him to repent, or aid him in coming to God for Salvation or Forgiveness, or even Help. Man is now “all evil-all the time”. The Fall removed any thought, any desire, any impetus, any internal ability inside the human heart that anyone could capitalize on, that would *enable* or *empower* him to love or serve God gladly. Fallen man has absolutely no inclination to ever want to be near to God to love God or to obey Him. Fallen Man now loves only two things:

- ✓ Sin
- ✓ Self

And this is what it means to be “lost”. You see, being “lost” doesn’t mean that you’re a mass murderer or a pedophile. Most lost people don’t indulge in the more heinous sins. Being “lost” simply means that you don’t love God or the things of God. So, you can be perfectly normal, as far as the world is concerned, and you can love your family and be a conservative and watch Fox News and vote Republican and be



in favor of limited Government and lower taxes, and you can be against abortion and against homosexual unions and you can salute the flag, and still be lost and unsaved and yet in your sins.

We must remember what attracted Adam and Eve to sin. It was the lie of satan that if they sinned:

**... you will be like God...**

... so, part of what it means to be lost and fallen and sinful is that we think and act and feel and behave as though we are God. And as long as we feel in control of our lives, as long as we are autonomous, as long as we make all the decisions and chart our own path through life, based upon the omnipotence of our own choices and willful determination, we are happy.

And this is where the concept of "Human Free Will" comes from. It doesn't come from the Bible, God doesn't teach it in Scripture, it flows out *normally* and *naturally* from the very being of people who have fallen and are at odds with God. It is the ultimate rebellion. And that is why the concept of "Human Free Will" has become the single most sacred belief of the modern Church.

And therefore, it is important for us to know that you *don't* have to be "saved" to go to Church. You don't have to be saved to want a better life. You don't have to be saved to want God to do something for you. You don't have to be saved to want to be healed or blessed. You don't have to be saved to read and study the Bible or sing Christian songs or even preach the Bible. You don't have to be saved to be a Pastor or a Deacon or an Elder. Lost people can do all those things, all day long.

But you have to be saved to love Jesus. You have to be born again to delight in God, and see Jesus as the Treasure of your life. You have to be sovereignly regenerated to want God to get all the Glory for everything that you do, *regardless* of what that might mean to you personally.

You have to be Blood-bought and Spirit-filled to Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness. You have to be bought and paid for as a bond-slave by Jesus to pant after God like the deer pants after the water brooks. And you have to be redeemed for Jesus to be more important and more valuable and more precious to you than your wife

or your children or your possessions or your money or your home or your business or even your own life.

So, lost people are not "lost" simply because they sin. No, they sin because they are *already* fallen and depraved through the Fall. So, our fallen, lost and rebellious condition is not merely manifested in things that we "do", but it is now "who we are". Being lost is a state of being.

And there is *nothing* in a lost person that would incline them to want God or to love Him. No, their affection is set on something else. Jesus said:

### **John 3:19**

**This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.**

So, it isn't that lost people merely "do" darkness, but that they "love" darkness. The aspect that brings delight to the depraved is not God, but "darkness". And that is why being lost does not allow anyone to suddenly want to repent and be saved. The Apostle Paul said this about lost people:

### **Ephesians 2:1**

**And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,**

Now, lost people are breathing and laughing and building and planting and doing all sorts of things. But spiritually, they are dead. And it's important to know that lost people are not merely sick or hindered, but that as far as God and the things of God are concerned, lost people are "stone cold dead".

Another way the Bible describes lost people is that they are "morally unable". They *do not* love God, because they *can't*. And they *cannot* love God, because they don't *want* to. Lost people are morally *unable* to love God and serve Him. The Apostle Paul said:

### **1 Corinthians 2:14**

**But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.**

Now the “**natural man**” here are lost people. And Paul says that a lost person “**does not accept the things of the Spirit of God**”. He “**does not**”. And this phrase indicates an act of the human will. So, Paul is teaching here that lost people do not accept “**the things of the Spirit of God**” because they don’t want to, they choose not to.

Now, the “things of the Spirit of God” here includes God and everything about God like: His Word and prayer and belief and trust in God and repentance, etc. So, the lost person does not “accept”, he does not trust in, he does not believe, he does not receive and embrace God and everything about God. Why?

**... for they are foolishness to him ...**

Now this is not the “ha-ha” or the silly kind of “**foolishness**”. This word has to do with something that is so patently ridiculous and absurd that it merits only scorn and ridicule. So, Paul is teaching here that the lost person does not *want* to believe in God and does not choose to trust in the things of God because God and everything about God is so patently ridiculous and absurd that it merits only scorn and ridicule.

Now we can see that there is a great hostility toward God here. And that tells us that lost people are never neutral about God. They are hostile against Him. In their lost condition, human beings not only do not love God, but they set their love on sin and self in defiance against God. Now, as bad as that is, it gets worse. Look at what Paul says next:

**... and he cannot understand them...**

Here, Paul says that lost people not only don’t *want* to love and serve God, but now he says they *can’t*. Before it was an act of their will. But now it is power and ability. So, lost people not only don’t *want* to love God and embrace the things of God, but they *can’t*. And they *can’t* because they don’t *want* to. This is what is meant by “Moral Inability”. Lostness means that people *cannot* voluntarily love God, they *cannot initiate* their own Salvation, precisely because they don’t *want* to.

Now one of the best illustrations of what Moral Inability looks like is found back in the Old Testament, when Joseph’s brothers sold him

into slavery. And as he was moved along by God the Holy Spirit, Moses wrote this in **Genesis 37:3-4**:

**3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic.**

**4 His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.**

Notice carefully what Moses wrote in the last part of verse 4:

(The brothers of Joseph) **could not speak to him on friendly terms.**

So, Joseph's brothers were *unable*, they did not possess the *ability* or the *power* to speak to Joseph **on friendly terms**. The Bible says that they "**could not**". Now notice that this inability was *not* the result of any *physical* limitation on their part, they certainly had a mouth and were able to speak. But notice *why* the Bible says Joseph's brothers were unable to speak to him on friendly terms:

**His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him ...**

The Bible teaches that Joseph's brothers were not *able* to speak to him on friendly terms because of their vicious hatred toward him. So, the *hatred* that Joseph's brothers had toward him was so great and so all-encompassing that it *ruined* their ability to act in any way contrary to that hatred. This is a natural example of the spiritual Truth about Moral Inability. Fallen Man's natural and normal hatred toward God *ruins* his ability to love and serve God.

And so, absent a Sovereign and gracious intervention by God the Holy Spirit, no human being would ever love or serve God voluntarily, precisely because, in his fallen State, Man's normal disposition toward God is abject hatred, and Man *cannot* act in any way contrary to his *will*. Once again, Fallen Man *cannot* love and serve God, because he *wills not to*.

So, their will to rebel against God and sin, that has been radically ruined by the Fall, *overpowers* them and *governs* them and *dominates* them by *removing* any power or ability to love and serve God. And since

this is true, no human being is merely a *victim* of his fallen State. No, by virtue of "Moral Inability" fallen Man is now fully *culpable* and is *liable* to God for his rebellion and sins.

So, how does a person in this condition ever get saved? What exactly has to happen to an individual like this to cause them to desire God and love Him? Sovereign Election. Unless God would sovereignly *override* Man's fallen condition and *overpower* his rebellion, and *interrupt* all his plans, and *insert* Himself into their lives, nobody would ever be convicted, nobody would ever repent, and nobody would ever be saved.

So, in His great Mercy, Peter says that God chooses to save *some* of those who are fallen. And those whom God chooses to save will come to Jesus, they will repent, they will believe, and they will be made righteous, and they will spend eternity in Heaven! And all of this will happen solely because God chose to set His Love upon them and choose them to be saved before the foundation of the world. And by saving guilty sinners like this, the Glory of God's Grace will be displayed and seen, and God will be valued and praised and marveled at forever!

And those who are not chosen, what about them? They will continue on in their rebellion and their trampling under-foot the Glory of God. And when confronted with their unwillingness to repent and believe and be saved, they will have only one answer:

*I was not saved and I did not believe and I did not repent, because I didn't want to.*

... and they will perish in eternal Damnation forever.

So, did God *lose* those who refused to repent? No. Before the foundation of the world, God chose them to receive the Glory of His Justice, which is displayed in a devil's hell.

So, the humbling aspect of Salvation is that the only difference between those who will spend eternity in heaven and those who will spend eternity in hell is *not* in their actions or their deeds or their choices or their decisions. No, God chose to set His Love upon some, before the foundation of the world, to be the recipients of the Glory of His Grace, and God chose to set His Justice on the rest. And that is the only way that Salvation could be carried out so that Man would be humbled and God alone would be glorified.

So, therefore, everybody in hell *deserves* to be in hell. But, the humbling part is that everybody in Heaven *deserves* to be in hell, too. People in heaven are not better people than the people in hell. No, in fact, people in hell may have even been more moral than the people in heaven. *Nobody* deserves heaven. *Nobody* has earned heaven. *Nobody* is entitled to be in heaven, and God is not obligated to saved anyone.

God would have been just as Holy and just as Righteous if He would have decided to save *nobody*. So, the great mystery of Grace is not that God chose to save some but not all. The mystery of Grace is that God chose to save anybody. So, we must understand that we are not saved by our own morality. We are saved by God's Grace, alone. And we are saved through God gifting wicked sinners with the desire and ability to believe, alone. And we are saved unto God's Glory, alone. And we are saved without human works. None. And therefore, no Man can boast before God.

*Nobody* initiates their own Salvation. *Nobody* takes the first step and God takes all the rest. *Nobody* acts on some internal goodness that has somehow managed to escape the Fall. No, the Apostle Paul said that Salvation:

**Romans 9:16b**

**... *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.**

... and that is why Peter said that we were:

**... chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood:**

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.