

1Peter 11-02-18b

Let's resume our study now in 1 Peter. And having at least drawn attention to the idea here that these specific things that Peter is talking about in terms of being chosen, being pilgrims, and so on, have a great specificity. They're very particular to this generation of Jews that have been scattered.

Now we want to move into the more general application for ourselves. And one of the things that everybody gets hung up on is election. And coincidentally, I just had a discussion with some people.

It's kind of a long-running thing with regard to election. And what I want to do is just cut to the chase. What does the Bible actually say about election? Because this comes up a lot.

You'll be circulating around, and people have various ideas about the relationship between God's operation as God in determining what happens and whether or not we actually get saved. How much of that does God predetermine? And although there's wide degrees of variation, there's basically two schools of thought. One is God pretty much determines everything because He's God, and He dispenses grace to some whom He wills He saves and whom He wills He hardens.

And who are you to answer back to God? Romans 9, Why have you made me thus? You made me a hell-bound reprobate. Or not. And the difficulty that those folks have, and understandably so, is that if you can just freely choose to be saved, aren't you somehow kind of chipping in? You sort of earn it or deserve it because you were smart enough or perspicacious enough to say, Hey, I think this salvation is a pretty good deal.

I think I'll take it. And that you're cooperating with God or that you have somehow put God into a secondary position that while God is kind of standing there with His hands folded waiting to see whether or not He's going to save you based on what you choose. This is how they see it.

And here's the thing. The Bible has a lot to say about election, but you only have to remember one thing. Here is the mnemonic.

Here is the memory aid, the big clue. You can not only survive a debate with somebody who's a little over heavy on sovereignty, but you can effectively put Scripture in a place where it cannot be overturned or refuted because Scripture is the bottom line. So I'm going to give you the fruit of a few observations here when it comes to what election and predestination are because it's in our passage here.

It says, you are chosen. This goes back, if you want to see it in chapter 1. God picked you ahead of time to be a sojourner. Now these people were picked for their particular sojourn and their particular mission of being first generation Jews.

They are the ambassadors. And Ken and I had an interesting conversation on the break. Ken mentioned that isn't it interesting that these people are the front line of witnesses out there and many of them probably were not eyewitnesses to the Lord Jesus.

They were in the first generation that the apostles witnessed to and now they are scattered out amongst the Gentiles. And that's what God did with the apostles. The apostles that were with Jesus stayed in the Jerusalem Judea mission field and it's Paul who wasn't an eyewitness and didn't travel with Jesus that gets sent to the Gentiles.

And it is as though the ones that really need the eyewitness affirmation are the Jews. It doesn't take an eyewitness to convince the Gentiles. They can be somebody that it just makes sense to.

They are reasonable people. They'll accept something that makes sense. You don't have to have extra bona fides.

The Israelites are like from the show-me state. Unless you saw it with your own eyes, I'm not going to believe you. So God's got to send 11 apostles that actually eyewitnessed the Lord to them.

He can send one bald-headed, beak-nosed, squeaky-voiced Jew out to the Gentiles and they just fall in droves. I believe it. That's great.

Let's jump on board. We're founding churches. It's a movement.

It's a worldwide religion based on the ministry of Paul. But the great thing that God did is that he... When you think about the... And Paul talks about this. He says when you look at the plan of God, at the way he does things, it's so amazing.

You think about being a Gentile. Let's say that Dallas is in Cappadocia somewhere and we're in the first century and we're all a bunch of godless, pagan Gentiles. And one day, here comes this former Pharisee, unimpressive-looking guy with a squeaky voice.

He says, hey, you know, there was a Jew that got killed down in Israel and because of that, you can have a relationship with the God of the universe. And we're saying, wow, that's really out of left field. I've never heard anything like that before.

I've never had a religion that said I was sinful and had to be redeemed or any of that. God didn't do that. Before the apostle Paul went to Asia, before the apostle Paul went to Galatia, God, in his wisdom, sent these scattered Jews who were believers in the Lord Jesus.

They were chosen pilgrims of the dispersion. They arrived first. Now suppose we're here in Dallas and this is Cappadocia in the first century.

We're a bunch of godless, pagan Gentiles. And some people move into the neighborhood. We

say, wow, you dress a little different.

You've got different customs. I notice I don't see you out there mowing the lawn on a Saturday. You all get together and go to a synagogue.

What is this all about? Well, you know, we're Jewish, but our Messiah has come. And he's brought deliverance, and not just to us, but to everyone. Oh, well, that's kind of interesting.

And, well, how did you find out about this? Well, you know, there was a fisherman. I just got a letter from him a couple of months ago. And he was reminding us of these things and telling us how God has made sense of all these things.

Then here comes the Apostle Paul at some time later. And he's bringing the message, and he's erudite, and he's learned it, and he's scholarly, and although he's not physically impressive, nobody said that he wasn't impressive in word. You remember he makes that contrast.

He says, people say that I'm real impressive when you read me, but I'm not much when you see me. But Paul comes, and people say, you know, this is not the first time I've heard of that. There must be something to this.

There's people who live down the street. And then you go back and think about these pilgrims of the dispersion. Did they have any concept when they got run out of town and driven out of their homes, maybe by the Apostle Paul, and scattered out into these regions by geopolitics or whatever, and they thought, why would God let this happen to me? You know, I'm not just any old Jew.

I'm God-fearing. I recognize the Messiah. I believe the preaching of the apostles there in Israel.

And look at me. I'm not blessed. I'm cursed.

I'm scattered out here, uprooted, separated from my family, all of my tribal and clan associations. I'm out here floating around with all these unwashed pagan idol-worshiping Gentiles. How could God let this happen to me? And yet, stepping back and looking at the big picture, Peter says, you know what? This was by God's design.

You are an ambassador. You are a royal priest. You are there to be the conduit through which the information about God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is going to come to these people.

You've been prepositioned. You've been sent on a mission. Your scattering is no accident.

You are an elect pilgrim. You have been chosen for this specific purpose. Not chosen to be a believer in Jesus.

Chosen to fulfill this specific mission. And any time you have *eklektos*, any time you have that word in Greek applied, it is chosen for something. Well, you've got those that say, well, yeah, see,

the elect are chosen for salvation.

Well, no. Because to be elect in the sense that you hear it used in Reformed theology, you have to be elect even before you're saved. Let's say you're going to get saved at the age of 30.

Well, when you're 12 and 15 and 18 and 20 and 22, they say, well, you're elect. You just haven't gotten activated yet. You're like a time bomb.

You're a landmine. You've already been armed. You're already ready to explode and be a Christian.

But you're already elect. You are the elect. And the reason God sends preachers out is to get you the word so that it will set you off, set off your faith.

Well, here's the thing. Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 1. And this is what I was saying. All objections can pretty much be answered with just this one observation.

And it's important to understand what election is because you are elect. I am elect. In some cases, we're all elect to the same thing.

In others, you are elected to things I'm not elected to. Some of you are elected to be wives to believing husbands. Some of you are elected to be husbands to believing wives or parents to believing children or children to believing parents.

We are chosen for specific things, but all of the choosing has one thing in common. These people were chosen pilgrims, but it has the same thing in common. Your choosing has something in common with these pilgrims' choosing.

And it's here in Ephesians chapter 1. Now, if you're not afraid of marking your Bible, it will be helpful if you can mark it. Make a little tick mark. Make a big old... In mine, I just circle it.

I just did it on the break. I've done this in two or three other Bibles. I hadn't done it in this one yet.

So, I got my trusty blue pencil and I marked it a few minutes ago. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and, of course, N-E-F-A-S-O is not in the oldest manuscripts, but we'll leave it there, and faithful in Christ Jesus. Circle in Christ Jesus.

Now, what we're going to do is, every place we find something on the order of in Christ Jesus, in Him, in Christ, we're going to circle it. And then we're going to underline what it is that comes to us as a result of being in Him. So, we've circled in Him here in verse 1. What benefit or attribute derives from being in Him here? You're saints and faithful, right? If it wasn't for being in Him, you couldn't be a saint, and you wouldn't have anything to have faith in, right? In Him, you are faithful.

In Him, you're a saint, right? Okay, we'll go down. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ. Blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Circle in Christ. Now, what comes to us by being in Christ in verse 3? Every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, right? Go down to verse 4. Just as He chose us in Him before the foundations of the world. Circle in Him.

What happens in Him? Chosen before the foundations of the world, right? So, we underline that. Go down to verse 5. Having predestinated us to adoption as sons by Christ Jesus to Himself. By Christ Jesus.

Predestinated, right? So, circle by Christ Jesus. It's not exactly in Him, but it's close enough. And predestinated to adoption as sons by Christ Jesus.

If you don't have some sort of relationship with Christ Jesus, that's what this ties to. Go down to verse 6. To the praise of the glory of His grace by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. Circle in the Beloved.

What comes to us? Accepted, right? Skip down to verse 10. In the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ. Things in heaven, things in earth, in Him.

That's just bracketed within Him. What does this mean? You become part of the heavenly, earthly continuum of God's plan and purpose. God's things that He's gathering in heaven and in earth.

Now, does this include the lake of fire? Does this include judgment? Does this include death and sin and sorrow? These are all of the positive things of God's plan and purpose in Christ, in Him. Look at verse 11. In Him also we have obtained what? An inheritance.

Circle in Him. Underline an inheritance. Look at verse 13.

In Him you trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. In whom also, having believed, you were sealed. In whom you were sealed.

Circle in whom? You were sealed. Holy Spirit of promise. That's far enough.

That's just 14 verses. Now, look at all of your in Him. And look at everything that's associated with in Him.

And look at the things that are underlined. Can you find any of those things that you would have not in Him? Can you be a saint not in Him? Can you have spiritual blessings in heavenly places not in Him? Can you have adoption as a son without Him? Can you be accepted without being in Him? All of these things require being in Him, right? Well, notice one of the in Him benefits is elect, chosen. Elect in Him before the foundation of the world.

What does that mean? In Him you have now entered into something that you didn't have when

you weren't in Him. Election is part of what comes to us when we are entered into Christ. These elect pilgrims of the dispersion weren't chosen pilgrims before they were in Him.

In Him they have a purpose. In Him they are chosen to be ambassadors and holy priests and royal priests in a holy nation and so on. If they weren't in Him, none of that would pertain.

There were hundreds of thousands of Jews that got scattered and they weren't ambassadors. They weren't holy priests. They weren't chosen nations.

They weren't any of that stuff, right? In Him. So anytime somebody starts banging the drum for election, you just remember Ephesians chapter 1. Everything we have comes from Christ. The thing about this alternate view of election, that God in the corridors of eternity past looked down and chose me individually, that's all about me.

The biblical view of election is it's in Christ. Christ is our righteousness. He is our peace.

He is our sanctification. We share His election. We share His sonship.

We share His destiny. We share His inheritance. We share His acceptability.

We share His heavenly treasures. We share His glory. Everything we have comes from Christ, including election.

We're not chosen for anything. The only destiny we have before we're in Christ is damnation. Pretty simple, isn't it? You don't have to go down long avenues of debate.

If somebody starts bringing up predestination, you just remember Ephesians chapter 1. We have nothing until we are in Him. Nothing. Every person is given the ability to choose.

They say, oh, well, but it's the gift of faith. The other common argument that's made is that, well, let's just leave that aside because they can't answer Ephesians chapter 1. It's overwhelmingly convincing. They say, well, but see, here's the thing.

You act like you can believe as a godless unbeliever, and you're dead. The Bible says you're dead in trespasses and sins, and if you're dead, you can't choose anything. God has to make you alive.

He has to regenerate you, in other words. You're just another one of the many unwashed multitudes. God makes you alive, then you believe.

Well, how could he make you alive unless he had already figured out who was going to be saved? So he looks and he says, you know, I figured out that here's Fritz and here's Bob. Bob is going to be a believer. Fritz is going to be an unbeliever.

So I'll regenerate Bob, and with that life of God, Bob will then be able to look and live. Because

I've already made him alive. And when Fritz being dead has no ability to look, but it's his own fault because he's depraved anyway.

And we shouldn't ask, why doesn't God save everyone? We should only ask, why does God save anyone? Well, you can't really, anyone to whom that argument makes sense, you're not going to have much luck trying to point out the illogic of it. But what you can do is point out scripture. So let me give you some scripture.

If being dead in trespasses and sin, and this is quick, I'm not going to do an exhaustive thing. These are just a little quick. You ought to have an answer.

If somebody asks you for the hope that's in you, and it includes the fact that you are responsible and accountable for the function of your free will, before and after salvation, you need to have an answer. At least a first-line answer. You don't have to be a theologian, but you ought to know why you understand free will the way you do, and where the Bible teaches it.

And that's what I'm giving you right now. Because this passage says, chosen. Well, what does it mean to be chosen? Were you chosen for salvation, or were you chosen for a destiny as a believer? So, you're dead.

You can't choose. Well, this is what I wrote to somebody earlier this week. They quote, if you're still in Ephesians, look at 2.1. You he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sin.

And they say, see, you were a godless pagan unbeliever. God made you alive because you were dead in trespasses and sin, and then you were able to believe. And verse 5, when we were dead, he made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. And they say, see, he makes you alive, he gives you life, and then you believe. Well, here's what I say.

The argument is, as an unbeliever, you're dead. It is impossible for you to choose the good. This is the tea and tulip total depravity.

You can't choose God. You're depraved. It's an oxymoron.

It's impossible. It's a contradiction. Well, turn over to Colossians chapter 2. Ephesians, Colossians.

Colossians chapter 2. And look at verse 20. Colossians 2.20 says, Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourself to regulations? This, by the way, up in verse 13, says the same thing as the Ephesians passage that is quoted so often. You being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has made alive together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

That's another one of those, in him. In him, we've been made alive. But you go down to verse 20.

Therefore, if you died with him, you've died to the basic principles of the world. You have died to sin. You've died to worldliness.

And Paul says, well, if you've died to those things, why do you keep subjecting yourself to regulations? Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle. Why are you getting into legalism? You've died to those things. Well, here's my question.

If you have died to the worldliness, and if you've died to the legalism, how can you choose it? You're dead to it. You're dead in the realm of legalism. You go to Romans 6.11. How shall we who have died to sin any longer live in it? Paul says in Romans 6.11, you have died to sin.

Well, if you're dead to sin, can you still choose it? You see how the logic works? If I'm dead to God and dead to the things of God, and I can't choose it, then if I'm dead to sin and dead to the world and dead to legalism, I shouldn't be able to choose that either. If I'm dead to a thing, I can't choose it, is the logic. And the Bible obviously teaches otherwise.

I can be dead to worldliness and still choose it. I can be dead to trespasses and sins and still choose to sin. And in the same way, I can be dead to God and I can still choose Him.

You can't have it both ways. Unless you believe that evil is stronger than good, and you can be dead to evil, but it can still come back and get you and draw your will in, but good isn't strong enough to hold your will once you've died to sin. You see what I'm saying? Your will is either free or it isn't.

So being dead to a thing obviously doesn't mean what they think it means, that if you're dead to it, you can't choose it. I've just given you three passages, Colossians 2.20, Romans 6.11, and look here at Colossians 3.3. He says in 3.2, Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. You pick what to set your mind on, for you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

It doesn't get any plainer than that. You died to the things of the world, so set your mind on the things of God, but can you still set them on things of the world, even though you died? Yes. So, that answers that.

Secondly, John 11. As soon as I say John 11, what do you think? Lazarus. Jesus wept.

John 11.35, Jesus wept. John 11, that's the Lazarus resurrection story. You remember our memory verse, He that believeth in me, what? Though he were dead, yet shall he live.

He were dead, he believeth in me, and he art alive. What's the sequence? He's dead, he believes, he's alive. It does not say he that liveth will believe.

He that liveth, though he were dead, yet shall he believe. It doesn't say that, does it? Life does

not precede belief. You believe, and life comes in him.

Life comes through him. You have the same idea in John 20.31. Remember John 20.31 is sort of the purpose statement for the whole Gospel of John. These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

These are written, you read this, so that you may believe, and believing ye will have life. It doesn't say these things are written that you may have life, and having life you might believe. So, we have answered the predestination and election thing with Ephesians 1. We have answered the dead thing with Colossians 2. Romans 6. John 11.

Third, this idea that dead things can't think and can't choose, can't change their mind. You remember in Romans 11? Turn over to Romans 11. It's been a while since we were in Romans.

This is the thing about the tree of God's plan and purpose. And Paul, writing to the Gentiles here in Rome, and he says, first of all, if they say, well, if you're choosing God, you're cooperating in your salvation, you're contributing, you're a partner with God in your salvation. Paul says, look, in Romans 11.6, if this salvation, according to the election of grace, by grace it is no longer of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

If it is of works, it is no longer grace. Otherwise, work is no longer work. What he's saying is, the Bible declares that faith is not a work.

Ephesians 2.8 and 9. For by grace are you saved through faith, and that salvation by grace through faith is not of yourselves. Salvation by grace through faith is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2.9 tells you that choosing salvation is not a work.

So, that's what the Bible says. If somebody tries to tell me, if you're choosing God as an unbeliever, you're cooperating, you're contributing, you're doing a meritorious act, I say, read your Bible. Ephesians 2.9 says, God doesn't treat faith as a work because everybody's got faith.

That's why Romans 1 says, what may be known of God is manifest, they suppress the truth and unrighteousness, and they're without excuse because everyone has the opportunity to choose. Well, our last thing here is in Romans 11. He says in Romans 11.11, has they, Israel, stumbled that they should fall? Well, certainly not.

But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. And he says, verse 17, if some of the branches were broken off, and they're broken off because of unbelief, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them become a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Notice again, in him, in him.

When you're grafted into him, you partake of the fatness and the root. Do not boast against the branches. If you boast, remember, you do not support the root.

The root supports you. You will say, branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well said.

Because of unbelief, they were broken off. Because of apisteia, faithlessness. And you stand by faith.

I.e., the only thing that keeps you in the tree is faith. Do not be haughty, but fear, because if God didn't spare the natural branches, he won't spare you either. If you continue in his goodness, verse 22b, otherwise you also will be cut off.

If you become faithless, you can be snapped out just like they are, because this is not really the tree of salvation. This is the tree of productivity and fruitfulness in God's plan. If God plugs you in, and you don't do anything with it, you're like the field in Hebrews 6 with the rain coming many times upon it, and it only bears thorns.

It's fit for burning and near to a curse. But look at verse 23. They also, if they do not continue in unbelief... Now, what's the picture here? There was a branch that was in the tree.

It was snapped off. It's laying on the ground. It's a dead branch.

But, if they do not continue in unbelief, God will pick that branch up and graft it back into the tree. The dead branch can change its mind, develop some faith, and get put back into the tree. Dead branch changes its mind.

How is this possible in the world of if you're dead, you can't choose anything? It flies in the face of Scripture. I've given you three really helpful illustrations here that utterly put that to bed. And people that continue to cling to it after looking at these Scriptures are just simply not interested in the truth of the Word of God.

Being dead in trespasses and sins does not mean that you cannot choose God anymore than being dead as a reprobate believer would mean that you could never recover. God has given us, in His image, self-determination. And we're held accountable.

That's why there's a judgment. And it's a righteous judgment. And it's a deserved judgment.

If God gives you the ability to choose, if He calls you, if He draws you, they say, you know, no man can come to me unless the Father draw him. Jesus said, if I be lifted up, I'll draw all men to me. Well, all doesn't mean all.

Anytime all doesn't mean all, look in the context, and you'll see what the all is. In Adam, all die. In Christ, all shall be made alive.

It's real clear in the context. In Adam, that's everybody in the human race. You're going to die.

In Christ, that's not everybody in the human race. That's those who have believed in Him. In Christ, circle, all shall be made alive, underline.

In Christ. Well, all is clearly defined in the context. When you go to the passage that says, it is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, there is no limiting factor anywhere in that context.

When Jesus says, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me, there is no limiting factor anywhere in that context. So, you should know why we are elect. You should know the nature of our choosing.

Just like those first century pilgrims that were chosen, their life didn't make sense looking at the circumstances. If I was blessed, I'd be in Israel. If I was blessed, I'd be prosperous.

If I was blessed, I could go to the temple and offer my sacrifices. What's wrong with that? How could that be wrong? That's in my whole Old Testament. But in God's economy, it makes perfect sense.

What a privilege to be the point of the spear into the Gentile world, to be the first to share the good news of Jesus Christ as a royal ambassador, as a royal priest, as a holy nation, to be a representative, and to be a confirming witness when the Apostle Paul and others will come later and preach the gospel. It's the mouth of two or three witnesses that establishes the thing. What a great privilege.

And does that outweigh whatever the circumstantial benefits would have been in staying comfortably in Israel? Well, now when we observe and we interpret and we apply, we say, you know, God has given me, I was doing a transcript today and Dr. Criswell said, a very serpentine path. In fact, he said serpentine trail because we had to go listen to it to see if he said tail or trail. Has he given me a serpentine tail or a serpentine trail? I'm pretty sure it's trail.

But our life takes twists and turns. We come up against something and we don't understand the disappointment. We don't understand the challenge.

We don't understand the trial. Sometimes we don't understand the blessing and we start feeling guilty because we feel like it's kind of undeserved and we're waiting for the other shoe to drop. God has a purpose that's beyond us, that's bigger than us.

We can be blessed in the process. Can you imagine how exciting it would be to recognize after reading this letter of Peter what their privilege and opportunity was as a pilgrim in Cappadocia or Galatia somewhere and to begin to watch for opportunities to bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah to Israel and the Savior of the world instead of saying, oh, woe is me, darn it, I'm not down there in my comfy, cozy place in Israel with all my friends and relatives. What a privilege.

What an opportunity for eternity. There's going to be people that say, you know, I moved in next to Ahab and Tabitha and they were the ones that shared Christ with me. And when the Apostle Paul came, we had a great fellowship.

I could actually understand what he was saying because I had already heard it. Paul tells in one of his letters, he says, you know, when we go to some of these places, they're already telling us about your faith. How did that happen? God scattered those Jews and those believers out there and let them bear witness.

Well, that's what he's doing with us. That's the nature of our choosing. In Christ, all the details, all of the features and characteristics of our life have meaning.

They have purpose. They have function for the eternal, for something greater and grander than ourselves, something stone, not wood, not hay, not stubble, gold and silver and precious stones. You remember the kind of stone that the heavenly Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem is made of? It's not granite.

It's semi-precious and precious stones. These are your rubies and your emeralds and your diamonds. And as a living, wouldn't it be great to get to the judgment and be judged a living ruby, a living diamond, a living amethyst.

I'd be happy to be a living opal or a living chunk of marble, just something that has had permanent weight of glory absorbed into it by being part of the plan of God. That's what Peter is telling these people. That's what it is to be elect.

Looking back at the process by which somebody got saved is in the rearview mirror. What does election mean now? What does calling mean now? What is the opportunity now? Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. It doesn't really matter how you got saved.

You're saved. And in Him, look at all of these things we have. Look at how chosen we are in Him.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for how clearly and wonderfully you manifest and express these truths of your grace and your love for us in Christ. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will make us aware and sensible to these things and that they will be a source of motivation and encouragement to us in the days ahead.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.