

Appointed to Glory!

by Leon King

Psalms 65:4 Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: . . ."

"We are the elect according to the foreknowledge of God . . . ," the pastor said to this writer in the very late 1960's. There were smiles and laughter, but the writer never forgot this incident. The passage the pastor quoted from was very familiar, yet the actual truth of it had not yet dawned. He quoted a phrase from First Peter 1:2.

Were we actually chosen by God? What does it mean "according to the foreknowledge?" Who are the "we" in this verse?

I. God chose some of the Jews.

In considering who the "we" are in the passage, we consider that these words were written to the Christian Jews who were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The writer, Peter, included himself in the term. In other words, God chose those Christian Jews who were scattered around the countries of the then existent Roman Empire.

Another way of saying "according to the foreknowledge of God" is to say "in full agreement with God's foreknowledge." So what do we understand about God's foreknowledge? Is this merely what God knew beforehand? It is indeed amazing that God knows all things and knows them simultaneously. Many think, as the pastor did back in the 1960's, that God foreknew that some would believe and chose them. Is that what the

scripture means? No, it is not what God foreknew, but it is whom he foreknew. There is a vast difference. Consider this verse from Romans 8:

Romans 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* It is very interesting that whom is directly connected to foreknow. The word "know" is a very interesting word. The word can denote that a person has intellectual understanding of something. In some of its first uses in Scripture, speaking of personal relationships, it denotes an intimate knowledge of. Consider:

Genesis 4:1 *And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.*

Genesis 4:17 *And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.*

Genesis 4:25 *And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.*

It is true that God "knows" all men and knows what is in all men. But, He "foreknew" some and those He foreknew, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Obviously, all men are not marked out to this destiny, for they are unbelievers. So, election is in agreement with the fact that God foreknew us who believe.

II. God Chose Some of the Gentiles.

Did God elect the Christian Jews scattered in the Roman Empire only? Or did he choose others also? Consider Ephesians 1:4:

Ephesians 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

The church at Ephesus was primarily a gentile church. The first church, which was at Jerusalem was composed entirely of Jews. Because of the persecution against the Church at Jerusalem by Saul of Tarsus, the people were scattered through the land. Missionary activity followed with Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and others. A church was established in Ephesus, a city in Asia Minor. Thus, we can see that God not only chose some of the Jews to salvation, but He chose some of the Gentiles as well.

III. Election is to salvation.

Election or God's choosing is not salvation itself, but his choosing is to salvation. This passage teaches this truth:

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

It is a blessed truth that God has chosen us to salvation from the beginning. Not only did He choose us unto salvation from before the foundation of the world, but he also wrote our names in the Lamb's book of life at that point. This is taught in Revelation 13:8 and 17:8.

Revelation 13:8 *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Revelation 17:8 *The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*

Both these passages are written from the negative viewpoint, showing that those who worship the anti-Christ and wonder after him are the same ones whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. The conclusion is that those who do not worship the anti-Christ and wonder after him refuse to do so because their names are written in the lamb's book of life from before the foundation of the world.

IV. Jesus' People.

The scriptures teach that some of the Jews and some of the Gentiles were chosen before the foundation of the world. The chosen were the "few" as contrasted with the "many," yet their number would be out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people – a multitude that no man can number (Matthew 7:13-14 and Revelation 7:9). Their names were then written in the Lamb's book of life. These are the people of God for whom Christ died. The angel, Gabriel, told Joseph (Mary's espoused husband) to name the child Jesus, for he would save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

To say that Jesus would save "his people" from their sins presupposes that Jesus already had a people. It could not have been the Jewish Nation for that nation as a whole rejected Christ. Obviously, it is not all the gentiles, for most of them do not believe. His people were the ones whose names were written in the lamb's book of life from before the

foundation of the world. These are the same people whom God foreknew and predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son.

V. From Foreknowledge to Glory.

Let us now consider the positive and wonderful thought that the elect shall be glorified. Let us return to Romans 8 and look at verses 29 and 30.

Romans 8:29-30 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

What do we see in these statements? The writer sees this:

- God foreknew some people.
- God predestinated those same people which he foreknew. That means that He marked them out to a destiny – to be conformed to the image of His Son. God’s Son is Jesus Christ.
- God called those same ones whom he foreknew and predestinated. There is a general “call” by the gospel that goes out to the world by the Lord’s church which was commanded to “preach the gospel to every creature.” The church preaches the gospel promiscuously because no man in this present age can know who the elect are until they believe. Only those who have “ears to hear” shall hear. They are called by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14). Many are called, but few are chosen.

God justified (declared righteous – a judicial declaration) the very same ones whom he foreknew, predestinated, and called.

God glorified (raised, set in the heavenlies with Christ) those same ones whom he foreknew, predestinated, called, and justified.

Someone has aptly called this the golden chain from foreknowledge to glorification. Beautiful, isn't it?

VI. Can we recognize the elect after they believe?

From a Scriptural and human standpoint, knowing that no man knows the heart of another, we can recognize the elect. The Apostle Paul recognized that Rufus was chosen in the Lord as this verse shows us.

Romans 16:13 *Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.*

Paul saw those in the church which was at Colosse as the elect of God. He knew also, that the people could have assurance of their election as 1 Thessalonians 1:4 show us.

Colossians 3:12 *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

1 Thessalonians 1:4 *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*

The apostle John addressed a lady to whom he had written in the epistle of Second John as the "elect lady."

2 John 1:1 *The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;*

These people, seen and recognized as God's elect were baptized believers in a church capacity. There were no believers "at large." Every person in the New Testament who came to believe with the single exception of the dying thief on the cross, was baptized. The thief on the cross could not, of course, come down from the cross to be baptized. He is the single exception so that none despair of a "death bed" profession; yet he is the only one, lest any presume of the grace of God. The pattern shows them baptized, then added to the church. These can be recognized as God's elect children insofar as human beings are able to recognize a person from his outward profession and obedience.

Are you one of God's elect? Have you believed and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son died on a cross for the sins of his people according to the scriptures, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the scriptures? Have you, after having done so, obeyed his command to be baptized? Baptism is the actual profession of your faith and identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.