

Chosen of God

Col. 3:12

INTRODUCTION:

Paul has shifted in Colossians 3 from what Christianity is NOT to telling us what Christianity truly is and what our lives should be like as a Christian.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Colossians 3:12-17 (NASB)

¹² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴ Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Prayer

Every once in a while we run across a word in the scripture that demands our attention! It is a word that might be easily overlooked or avoided. That is the case this morning. The word that we are talking about is found in verse 12.

Colossians 3:12 (NASB)

¹² So, as those who have been **chosen of God**, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

Notice that Paul did not elaborate to the Colossians in this letter about what it meant to be "Chosen of God". It was no doubt assumed, based upon previous teachings, that they would understand.

Some translations and other verses will use the term "God's Elect", Called, Predestined, Appointed, or the phrase "My Sheep", or some form of similar designation showing that Christ's people are distinguished from the rest of mankind

Although it is possible to avoid the topic of election in our preaching and teaching, it is not possible to avoid it when reading the scriptures. In fact, according to another's research, if you want to **avoid** the topic of election in the New Testament, you will have to **avoid** the following books in the New Testament. You may want to jot them down.

- Matthew, Mark Luke John
- Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians

- Galatians , Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians
- I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy
- Titus, (**Philemon**), Hebrews, James
- I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, (**III John**)
- Jude and Revelation.

Now you will be happy to know that you still have **PHILEMON** (PAUSE for Response) (Which has 25 verses) and **III JOHN** (Which has 14 verses) **where the subject is simply not mentioned!**

Do you think that God has determined that it is important we understand this truth?

BODY:

I. What Does it Mean to Be God's Elect?

SO, what does it mean to be God's ELECT? It means that you have been chosen.

ILLUSTRATION:

It so happens in the United States that every 4th year when the year is evenly divisible by 4, we have a **presidential election**. At the end of the election the person who wins the election is considered our **president elect** until he assumes office.

President Elect! What does that mean? It means that he is now the **chosen president**. The people have chosen him to BE president, but he is not yet the president, he is the "**president elect**".

The Greek word for "Elect" is "Ek-lek-tos". It literally means to be picked out or chosen. It means that one (or many) are selected or chosen out of a group.

Thus the process of election is choosing one or many out of a larger group.

- It is used concerning **Christ** in I Peter 2:4 where the **NIV makes it clearest:**

1 Peter 2:4 (NIV)

⁴As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but **chosen** by God and precious to him

- It is used with **angels** having a high rank in administration.

1 Timothy 5:21 (NASB)

²¹I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of *His* **chosen** angels, to maintain these *principles* without bias, doing nothing in a *spirit of partiality*.

- It is used when referring to the Jews (God's Chosen People)

Acts 13:17 (NASB)

¹⁷The God of this people Israel **chose** our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it.

- It is used as a choice of men by God or of a church for a special purpose.

Acts 15:22 (NASB)

²² Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to **choose** men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas

That is the word: "**choose men**". **To choose them out of the group.**

- In the great majority of instances, though, it is used to refer to God's eternal choice of individuals for everlasting life.

John 15:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ **You did not choose Me but I chose you**, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit,

Paul put it this way in

Ephesians 1:3-6 (NASB)

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.**

To speak very plainly, the scripture indicates that those who are saved out of this sinful world are saved because God **chose** to save them even before time began. God **elected** them! **They are God's ELECT!**

There is no deficiency of the evidence of this truth in the New Testament. The problem with the topic of ELECTION is that it is not sufficiently believed!

II. Why is it so Hard to Accept?

Why do so many people today both non-Christian and Christian strongly resist this teaching?

A. It is Very Humbling.

It is humbling to realize that you are not a Christian today because you are more open minded, more just, more intelligent in the scriptures, more sensitive, more spiritual, and more heavenly minded than your peers who have not believed.

You are a Christian today, simply because God graciously **chose** you before the beginning of time and opened your heart to the Gospel.

When Paul preached in Antioch, who believed?

The wise? The spiritual? The good? The Holy?

No, the scriptures say in Acts 13:48...

Acts 13:48 (NASB)

⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they *began* rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and **as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

Can God make it any more clear? "**As many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**"

We want to reject this because it is humbling. We say,

- "You mean my salvation wasn't because of anything that you saw in me?"
- It wasn't because of my goodness?
- It wasn't because of an indication that I might serve you well?

You just graciously bestowed your grace upon me!
You opened my heart and you gave me faith to believe!

The scriptures make it clear that God does not elect us because He sees Holiness IN us, but He elects us to make us Holy!

What did Ephesians 1:4 just say?

Ephesians 1:4 (NASB)

He **chose** us in Him **before the foundation of the world**, that we would be holy and blameless before Him

2 Timothy 1:9 (NASB)

⁹ 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 granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

A saving faith is itself a gift of God. It does not come from ourselves.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

If God did not give us a saving faith, we would never be Holy.

The scriptures tell us that there is none that does good, no not one. All of sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

B. It Seems to Make God Appear Unfair or Unjust.

To save some and leave others to perish does not seem to mesh with other Biblical teaching.

It would be unfair if we were not already all deserving of Hell. If we were all innocent and God chose to take some and let others go, it would be unfair.

Since all of us have sinned and we all are deserving of Hell. It is not unfair that God by His own good pleasure (which we do not understand) can chose those whom He wants to save.

ILLUSTRATION:

When a Governor of a state chooses to pardon some prisoners, those that remain in prison are not there because the Governor refused to give them a pardon. They are there because of the crime they committed and are serving the sentence for that crime.

I deserve Hell for my sins. If God chooses to send me there, it would only be justice. But God graciously opened my heart and gave me faith to believe in Christ and pardoned me by His own good pleasure.

It is a supreme presumption to accuse God of being unfair!

Romans 9:20-21 (NASB)

²⁰ On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? ²¹ Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

The potter could take this lump of clay and make an ashtray out of it or a spittoon. He could take that lump of clay and make a beautiful vase. The fact is we are already defiled lumps of clay. That's what you have to understand.

Doesn't the scripture say that God does not wish that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance? Yes it does!

God is not willing that any should perish. He doesn't WILL that any should perish. In the same sense that a good judge does not will that a man should ever be executed. But if the man is found guilty, the righteous judge will sentence him. He takes no pleasure in it. There is no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

You may say, "It is not in the power of the judge to change the heart of the defendant. It is in the power of God to change the heart of the sinner.

Why then does He not save everyone?

God could save the sinner. He did it to the Saul of Tarsus didn't He? It is evident that He could. Why then does He not?

Because He would not. Why He would not remains within Himself.

Get this point. It may help you. It is NOT ALL ABOUT US! It is not about your comfort, your pleasure, your happiness. It is not all about MAN, it is God's world.

We are the creatures. HE IS THE ONE TO BE GLORIFIED!

III. Why is God So Persistent that We Understand?

Why does God want us to understand?

A. It Should Cause You to Praise God.

Because once we realize that we have been chosen by God, we should fall on our knees and give praise to almighty God that He freely and mercifully poured out His grace upon you. After all, who are you? Just a sinner that deserves God's wrath. That's all! One who was

just one breath away from judgment and God graciously entered your life and gave you a new heart.

B. It Should Encourage You in Your Evangelism.

This truth in the Bible should encourage you in your evangelism. Because you are just an instrument for God.

"I planted", Paul said. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." (I Cor. 3:6).

What was it that kept these apostles going?

How could Paul go from city to city and be stoned, beaten, and shipwrecked?

It was because he KNEW that God would bless this message in certain hearts! He didn't know who, but he knew there was a power in the Gospel message.

He knew that God had His sheep. He knew His sheep would hear His voice. Sometimes it was surprising who would come. Sometimes it would be

- Pharisees
- Sometimes it would be Sanhedrin who would believe
- Or hard-hearted Jews
- Or Gentiles.

But what kept Paul going, was that HE KNEW that God would bless the Gospel message.

C. It Should Destroy the Pride Within Us.

God saved you. Not because of the good He saw you would do for His kingdom. He saved you **"according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace."**

Do you ascribe your change wholly to God?

Our mind is finite. God's mind is infinite. He knows the past present and future. We cannot possibly understand the mind of God. We don't know all things. God does! To try to understand how God chose us **"according to the kind intention of His will"** would be futile. Any pride that remains within us that we somehow "earned" our salvation through obedience should vanish away when we finally realize that we were chosen by God before the beginning of time. He chose us, we did not chose Him.

CONCLUSION:

The scriptures tell us that if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and ask forgiveness of our sins and are obedient to His Word that we will be saved. That offer is sincere and it is absolutely true. Just like the Gentiles in Acts 13:48, the fact that you believe is an indication that you also have been **chosen** by God. It is not something that is "forced" upon you because you were elected by God, it is a choice that you make of your own free will. In fact, if you, by your own free will, choose to believe, repent of your sins, and be buried in baptism, then you will know that you are God's elect because it is only through Him that you received the gift of salvation.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

He Is Lord!

He is Lord, He is Lord. He has risen from the dead and He is Lord.

Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, That Jesus Christ is Lord.