

#230 "It's not for everyone"

- 1 This morning I would like to take three scriptures for our text. If you will open your Bibles first to St. Matthew chapter 7 and we will read first from verses:13-14 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destructions, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
- 2 And then if you will skip ahead to Matthew 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.
- 3 And finally turn with me to the book of Galatians 4: 27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.
- 4 May the Lord add his blessing to the reading of His Word.
- 5 Let us pray... Dear Heavenly Father, we have read from Thy Holy Word this morning wherein You have shown us that This Message that You came down to deliver to us, is not for many but for the few in number. And as it was in the days of Noah wherein only 8 souls were saved so too is it supposed to be in this hour when You, the Son of Man, the prophet God, have come down to reveal yourself. Help us Father to be in that small number. Help us to live our lives in respect and reverence to the fact that you have singled us out to hear and to believe. And we thank you in advance for your great mercy and kindness that you have shown to us in opening our eyes, for we ask these things in the precious name of Your Loving Son, under whose Blood we live, in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.
- 6 In reading from brother Branham's sermon, the Spoken Word is the original Seed, we hear him say in paragraph 153 Let me say this not sacrilegious, but let me say that about the message that I'm preaching: If God don't vindicate this to be the Truth, then it's not; but if the Word vindicates I'm telling you the Truth, then believe the Word. They are what testify of whether I'm telling the Truth or not. They are the testimony; They testify for the ministry He gave me. He promised this in the last days. Here it is. He said what it would do. Here it is. We're going right into it now. You see whether it's the Truth or not. Let God do the testifying. If the works, the things that I'm preaching don't testify back that it's the Truth, then it's not the Truth; but if the Word speaks of this, and here it is, then what are you going to do about it?
- 7 154 Jesus said, "I know you; you think you know Moses. You might've known history of Moses, but you don't know his God; for I was before Moses. I was the One that talked to Moses. I'm the I AM; I'm the Word." They couldn't see it, 'cause they're of their father the devil. Their denominations wouldn't let them see it. That didn't stop the Word from going on just the same. It fell on some, and from that come a bride in that generation.
- 8 And so we hear him tell us that the seed that was sown only some fell where there was elect that would produce a bride for Christ.
- 9 Now, in order to get a better understanding of this from the Scriptures, let's turn to the Gospel of Mark and chapter 4.
- 10 Mark 4:1And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so

that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. 2And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine, 3Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: 4And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: 6But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. 9And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. 11And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. 13And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? 14The sower soweth the Word. 15And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

11 Now, notice that plenty of seed, or Word has been sown. William Branham prophet of God went around the world many times with his gift of healing to attract the people to the Word, and then he preached 1200 sermons and those sermons circled the globe as well. Still they do not believe. So God raised up a teacher, brother Vayle, and he sowed 1200 sermons that have gone around the world and still they do not believe. Then God raised up an apostle and sent him forth to water the doctrinal seed to the ministers face to face, nearly 3,000 of them, and there are nearly 1200 sermons of his that have gone around the world, and yet they still do not believe. Now there may be others, perhaps an Evangelist who has done the same thing somewhere, but this is the scenario that I see, and yet they still do not believe. So God must hew down the number, because many are called but few are chosen.

12 So the seed that has been sown, has been sown plenty, but some fell by the way side, some fell on the path and was trodden under foot, some fell on the hardened earth and the lack of moisture or Holy Spirit dried it out and it shriveled up and died. But there was still some that fell onto fertile soil, the truly heart felt, repentant Christian, who was open to the Doctrine, and it is producing a Bride for Jesus Christ.

13 And that is exactly the parable that Jesus Spoke of in Luke 13:22And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. 29And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. 30And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

14 1 Peter 3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of

Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

15 Strait is the gate 59-0301M P:80 Say, "Brother Branham, you say only eight souls would be saved?" I don't know how many will be saved; I couldn't tell you. But I'll say one thing: they'll be so few in a day like this. Just think, in that day where He was at, how many was saved. Think of the day of Noah, and the day of Lot, and all them; He said, "So shall it be in the coming of the Son of man, 'cause strait is the gate, and narrow is the way." You see, you go in by yourself, with Him; that's all. See? "And but few there'll be that find it." How many believes that's the Gospel Truth? Jesus Christ...?... "Few there'll be that find it," just a very few. Be one of those few. I know that's hard; it's strenuous. And it strains on me to say it, feeling a human love for you, but the love of God constrains me to tell you.

16 Court trial 64-0412 P:29 Like we claim to be saved. They say, "Well, show me how you're saved." My life proves I'm saved. The way I act proves whether I'm saved or not. No matter how much I testify, about a year you'll know how I live, whether I'm saved or not. Same way it is by healing. If you accept it and believe it, you're going to act like it. There's going to be such a change in you, there's nothing can take it out of your mind, no more than your salvation. It's God's Word. You've got to accept it on the same basis. By faith you are saved. Jesus said to the woman that touched His garment, He said, "Thy faith has saved thee." Now, I'm not a scholar by a long ways, but I have looked up a few words. Now, that word there comes from the Greek word, "sozo," which means "saved--just like materially saved, or spiritually saved." You're saved, sozo. He saved her from a premature grave, just the same as He saves you from hell. Sozo, the same Greek word is used. Notice, "Thy faith has (sozo) saved thee from the sickness that you had." Notice, same word every time.

17 Now, listen brothers and sisters, all of Cincinnati won't be saved, and neither will all who claim to believe God sent a prophet in this hour. That is the bare hard knocks truth, but as brother Branham said, The Love of God constrains us to tell you the truth. There will be millions of church members throughout this world that are going to perish with this world.

18 Now remember, God has promised in His Word that He has an Election, ones that He has predestinated before the foundations of the world to His Glory, His Doxa, His opinion, His Values, and His Judgments. And that is whose going to be saved from the wrath of man, and the end-time destruction.

19 And as for His election, there's not enough power in hell that could keep God's elect from coming to this Light. And there is not enough power in hell to save those who are not in God's election either. But that doesn't take away from what God has already done, nor does it take away from what God is in the process of doing right now.

20 God will manifest Himself just the same, and His plan will be completed right on time.

21

22 Look, God has come down in this hour with a Shout which is a Message, and how many of the world received Him? Huh? The whole world has been given their chance, but they wouldn't receive it. This Message was not done in a corner.

23 Jesus said: "Straight is the gate that leads to life, broad is the way to destruction, and many there be go in, and few there'll be, that'll be saved. He also said, "As it was in the days of Noah, and in the days of Lot, so will it be in the coming of the Son of man"." There's nothing that can break that. God said it, and that settles it. And His Word is just as Eternal as He is.

24 The Apostle Paul said in Rom. 11:33 "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out".

25 And in the book of Jonah 2:9 we read, "Salvation is of the Lord"; but the Lord doesn't save all. So why not? Why few there be that find it as we read for our text? Why Few? Now, we know the lord does save some. Then if he saves some, why not others? Is it because they are too sinful and depraved? No; that thinking is contrary to Scripture which tells us, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" as we see in 1 Timothy. 1:15. Therefore, if God saved the "chief" of sinners, then none are excluded because of their depravity. Why then would not God save all, then? Is it because some are too stony hearted to be won? No; because of the most stony hearted people of all it is written, that God will yet "take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh" as we see in Ezekiel 11:19.

26 Then is it because some are so stubborn, so immoveable, so defiant that God is unable to woo them to himself? Before we answer this question let's ask another.

27 Was there ever a time when you walked in the counsel of the ungodly, stood in the way of sinners, sat in the seat of the scorers? Was there ever a time when you "wouldn't come to Christ that you might have life"? Was there ever a time when you ran from God and wouldn't obey His calling? Perhaps with shame in your face you've acknowledged there was a time when you ran as hard as you could from the call of God. But how is it that all of that has changed? What was it that brought you from haughtiness and self-sufficiency to a humbleness and obedience, from one that was at variance with God to one that is at peace with him, from lawlessness to subjection, from hate to love? What happened? Was it your own free will that decided enough was enough? Or was it the loving hand of Jehovah?

28 As one who is born of the Spirit, you will most likely reply, "By the grace of God I am what I am" as Paul also said in 1 Corinthians 15:10. Then do you not see that it is due to no lack of power in God, nor to his refusal to coerce man, that others rebel and are not saved as you have been saved? If God was able to subdue your will and win your heart, and that without interfering with your moral responsibility, then is he not able to do the same for others? Most certainly He is. Then how inconsistent, how illogical, how foolish of those in seeking to account for the present course of the wicked and their ultimate fate, would argue that God is unable to save them, or that they will not let him. Do you think, "But the time came when I was willing, willing to receive Christ as my Saviour?" well, that may be true, but it was the Lord who made you willing as we see in Philippians 2:13 which says, For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. And if it is God in you making you to will and to do, then 14Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

29 Well, then you might ask the question, why then does he not make all sinners willing? Why, but for the fact that He is sovereign and does as He pleases!

30 So why is it that all are not saved, particularly all who hear the Gospel? Not because the majority refuses to believe? I mean that is only partly true. It is the truth from the human side. But we can not leave out the Divine side either. And this Divine side of the truth needs to be stressed or we rob God of his glory. The unsaved are lost because they refuse to believe; the others are saved because they believe. But why, do these others believe? What is it that causes them to put their trust in Christ? Is it because they are more intelligent than their fellows, and quicker to discern their need of salvation?

31 Forget that thought The Apostle Paul gave that thought a death blow when he said in, 1 Corinthians 4:7 " Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst

receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?". It is God himself who makes the difference between the elect and the non-elect, for of his own it is written in 1 John 5:20 "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true".

32 Faith is God's gift, and yet according to Paul in 2 Thessalonians 3:2 "all men have not faith"; therefore, we see that God does not bestow this gift upon everyone. Upon whom then does he bestow this saving favor? And the answer is, upon his own elect. In Acts 13:48 we read, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" And again in Titus 1:1 we read of "the faith of God's elect". But is God then partial in His distribution of his favors? Well, let me ask you, has He not a right to be partial? Did not Jesus tell us in Matthew 20:15 "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?".

33 You see, we should never forget that God is sovereign in all things, and especially in the bestowment of his gifts, both in the natural and in the spiritual realms.

34 What I would like for you to see this morning is that 1. God is Sovereign in Salvation.

35 Perhaps the one scripture which most emphatically asserts the absolute sovereignty of God in connection with his determining the destiny of his creatures, is the Romans 9:21-23 - "hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?"

36 This speaks of mankind as inert and as impotent as a lump of lifeless clay. This scripture tells us that there is "no difference", in themselves, between the elect and the non-elect: they are clay of "the same lump", which agrees with Eph. 2:3, where we are told, that all are by nature "children of wrath." It teaches us that the ultimate destiny of every individual is decided by the will of God, and blessed it is that such be the case; if it were left to our wills, the ultimate destination of us all would be the Lake of Fire. It declares that God does make a difference in our respective destinations to which He assigns His creatures, for one vessel is made "unto honor and another unto dishonor"; some are "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction", others are "vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory."

37 We readily acknowledge that it is very humbling to the proud heart to behold all mankind in the hand of God as simply clay in a potter's hand, yet this is precisely how the Scriptures of Truth represent the case. In this day of human boasting, intellectual pride, and the deification of man, we need to all understand that the potter forms his vessels for himself. Man may strive with his Maker and think he is getting away with it, but the fact remains that he is nothing more than clay in the heavenly Potter's hands, and while we know that God will deal justly with his creatures, we also know as Abraham said, Shall not the Judge of all the earth will do right, yet nevertheless, God shapes his vessels for his own purpose and according to his own pleasure. And God claims the indisputable right to do as He wills with his own.

38 Not only has God the right to do as he wills with the creatures of his own hands, but he also exercises this right, and nowhere is that seen more plainly than in his predestinating grace. Before the foundation of the world God made a choice, a selection, an election. Before his omniscient mind stood all of Adam's race, and from what He saw in His mind, He singled out a people and predestinated them "unto the adoption of children", And He predestinated them "to be conformed to the image of his Son", And He "ordained" them unto eternal life.

39 In Acts 13:48 we read, "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed". And yet it seems that every imagination of mans ingenuity has been employed to try and defuse this scripture and to explain away the obvious

meaning of these words, but man's reasoning have been in vain,

40 But let's face it, Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 2: that unless we have the same spirit as the author of this Book, we will never understand what is in it. 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 6Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

41

42 Now, as the scripture plainly tells us that we are predestinated unto the adoption of sons, and according to genesis 1:11 there is a law or reproduction that says every seed must bring forth after its kind.

43 Now, did you know that even science itself has come to the conclusion that even our decision that we make are not made in our mind, or brain, but are part of our makeup of who we are?

44 I have a couple films I want to show you on Wednesday night that will prove scientifically that God placed in you a genetic make up that you are predestinated beings, and even your decisions are made before your brain can go through the motions of choosing.

45 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufkrJkVqems&feature=related>

46 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6S9OidmNZM>

47 So again the Scriptures declare "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." Here we learn four things:

48 First, that believing is the consequence and not the cause of God's decree. In other words, it is something that we do as a result of what God first does. He reveals thus we believe. How could you believe if you did not know what to believe? How could you believe what you can not understand? So God gives you his spirit and thus you understand and thus you believe.

49 Second, we must understand that there are only a limited number that are "ordained to eternal life", because the Scripture says, " As many as" were ordained to eternal life, believed." And the words as many as is a qualification.

50 Third, that this "ordained to life" is not a mere external privilege but is to "eternal life", and not to service but to salvation itself.

51 Fourth, that all "as many as", means not one less than what God ordains, but those who are thus ordained by God to eternal life will most certainly believe.

52 The Apostle Paul also said in Romans 11:5-6 "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work". The words "Even so" at the beginning of this quotation refer us to the previous verse where we are told, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Notice the word "reserved. That Paul used" In the days of Elijah there were seven thousand, a small minority, who were divinely preserved from idolatry and brought to the knowledge of the true God.

53 This preservation and illumination was not from anything in themselves, but solely by God's special influence and involvement. This shows God's favor for such individuals to be thus "reserved" or set aside by God! And just as there was a "remnant" in Elijah's days "reserved by God", even so there is in this age.

54 He said, "A remnant according to the election of grace." Here we see that the cause of election is traced back to its source. The basis upon which God elected this "remnant" was not their faith that God had foreseen in them, because a choice founded upon foresight of good works is just as much on the ground of works as any choice can be, and in such a case, it would not be "of grace"; for, the apostle Paul said,, "if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace"; which means that grace and works are opposites, they have nothing in common, and will no more mingle than will oil and water. And this same Apostle said in Romans 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

55 Thus the idea of inherent good foreseen in those chosen, or of anything meritorious performed by them, is excluded. "A remnant according to the election of grace"; signifies an unconditional choice resulting from the sovereign favor of God; in a word, it is absolutely a gratuitous election.

56 In 1 Cor. 1:26-29 The apostle Paul says, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence".

57 Three times over in this passage reference is made to God's choice, and choice necessarily supposes a selection, the taking of some and the leaving of others. The chooser here is God himself, as the Lord Jesus said to the apostles in John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you".

58 The number chosen is strictly defined "not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble", etc., which agrees with Matt. 20:16, "So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen." The fact is that God's choice; mark the objects of his choice. And if you will notice how God chooses. The Scripture tells us, "the weak things of the world, base things of the world, and things which are despised." But why does God choose this way? I believe it is to demonstrate his Grace and to magnify his grace. We know that God's ways and his thoughts are utterly contrary with man's ways and thoughts. Men make their selections based on rank, intelligence, education, and experience, as well as influence, culture and wealth. But not so with God.

59 We are told in His Word as we see in Luke 16:15 "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God". God chooses the base things. He did so in Old Testament times. The nation which he singled out to be the depository of his holy Law and Word and the channel through which His promised seed would come, was not the ancient Egyptians, the imposing Babylonians, nor the highly civilized and cultured Greeks.

60 No; that people upon whom Jehovah set his love and regarded as "the apple of his eye", were the despised, nomadic Hebrews. So it was when our Lord dwelt among men. The ones whom he took into favor and intimacy and commissioned to go forth as his ambassadors, were, for the most part, uneducated fishermen. And so it has been ever since. Look at William Branham, what did he have, an eighth grade education? And why do you think that the cultured and educated ministered had such a hard time accepting him? Why do you think they had such a hard time accepting John the Baptist? Well, so it is today: at the present pace there will be more poor black brothers from Africa that believe the doctrine of Christ that William Branham taught than there will be in all of Europe, the Americas, and Oceanus combined. But that is God's choice, and the reason for the selection he has made is, "that no flesh should glory in his presence" Therefore being that there will be nothing whatever in the objects of his choice which should entitle them to his special favors, then, therefore, all the praise will be freely ascribed to the exceeding riches of his manifold grace.

61 The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 1 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ: 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 having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will ... In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will".

62 Notice we are told at what point in time, or actually before time when God made His choice of those who were to be His children by Jesus Christ. It was not after Adam had fallen and plunged his race into sin and wretchedness, but long before Adam was even on the earth, even before the world itself was framed, that God chose us in Christ. Here then we learn the purpose for which God had before in connection with his own elect: it was that they "should be holy and without blame before him"; and it was "unto the adoption of children"; and it was that they should "obtain an inheritance".

63 All this purposed and planned before any of us even was brought forth into material form. Then we can also see here the motive which prompted him. It was "in love that he predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself" Now, this statement refutes the wicked charge that, for God to decide the eternal destiny of his creatures before they are even born, is tyrannical and unjust. Not so, says the Scriptures. It tells us God did all this in Love. The Scriptures inform us here that in this decision God took counsel with none, but that we are "predestinated according to the good pleasure of his own will."

64 So Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification the Spirit and belief of the truth". And in conclusion I would like to bring out three things here which deserve our attention.

65 First, is the fact that we are told that God's elect are "chosen to salvation." God's Wording could not be any more clear. It is to "salvation" itself that God hath chosen us.

66 Second, we are warned here that salvation is reached through "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." It isn't true that because God chose certain ones to salvation that they will be saved willy nilly, whether they believe or not: nowhere does scripture speak any such thing. The same God who planned out and predestined our end, also appointed the means whereby we will be saved. The same God who "chose us unto salvation", decreed that his purpose should, be realized through the work of the Spirit and belief of the truth. So when we read in Philippians 2: 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

67 Third, that God has chosen us unto salvation is a profound cause for fervent praise. Note how strongly the

apostle Paul expresses this when he says, "we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation". Instead of shrinking in horror from the doctrine of predestination, the believer, when he sees this blessed truth as it is unfolded in the Word, discovers a ground for gratitude and thanksgiving such as nothing else affords, save the unspeakable gift of the Redeemer himself.

68 And he also says in 2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according, to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began". How plain and pointed is the language of God's Word. It would be impossible to state the case more clearly, or strongly, than it is stated here. Our salvation is not "according to our works"; that is to say, it is not due to anything in us, nor the rewarding of anything from us; instead, it is the result of God's own "purpose and grace"; and this grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. It is by grace we are saved, and in the purpose of God this grace was bestowed upon us not only before we saw the light, not only before Adam's fall, but even before that far distant "beginning" of Gen. 1:1. And here lies the irrefutable comfort of God's elect. If God's choice has been from eternity it will last to eternity! "Nothing can survive to eternity but what came from eternity, and therefore what has so come, will always be".

Let us bow our heads in prayer...