

Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

An Expositional Journey Through 2Peter

4- The Doctrine of Assurance- Part 1

June 7, 2020

2Peter 1:5-11

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge,

6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness,

7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

To the Glory of God

Now there is a great civil war going on today, within the modern Church, between two opinions concerning the “Doctrine of the Eternality of Salvation.” And the debate is whether our Salvation is “eternal”; or if a genuinely saved person can somehow *lose* his Salvation- due to some Sin; or Failure to achieve a particular level of Righteousness.

Now I don’t think that we are the first generation of believers, who have struggled with this Issue. I think many people have struggled with this

Issue due to several factors- such as:

- The realization that we periodically sin
- Very Bad Teaching

But what makes the Doctrine of the Eternality of Salvation so difficult is that many people get this Doctrine confused with another Teaching of the Bible- called, the “Doctrine of Assurance”. And I honestly think that it is fairly common for genuinely saved people to struggle over the Assurance of their own Salvation- also for a variety of reasons.

But, thanks be to God that God the Holy Spirit was mindful of our Struggle and so He carried the Apostle Peter along to pen down the Passage that is before us this morning that will help us to end that struggle forever- or at least greatly reduce it.

Now, first of all, let me say that the Doctrine of the Eternality of Salvation and the Doctrine of Assurance are NOT the same thing. One is *objective*- the other *subjective*. One is *propositional*- while the other is *experiential*. One is a fact of Scripture- while the other is our own personal *application* of the facts of Scripture. And so, we can’t teach them the same way nor may we overcome struggles with each one in the same way.

The Doctrine of the Eternality of Salvation is *objective, propositional, biblical* Truth. It is a *fact* of Scripture. But the Doctrine of Assurance is much more *subjective*; and *experiential*; and can only be realized as the facts of Scripture become *real* and *evident* in our own lives.

And the Apostle Peter was concerned about this Issue- which is *why* he wrote verse 10:

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you ...

So, here we have an “Apostolic Command”- which is the very *same* thing as God Himself commanding us- to “**be all the more diligent**” to do something. Now whatever you think this phrase means- let us agree that it goes *beyond* the normal, everyday Diligence that believers are commanded to have. Because Peter didn’t just say, “*Be diligent*” here. No, he said, “**Be all the more diligent**”.

Now the Command to “be diligent” is found four times in the New Testament. The *first* time is when the Apostle Paul counseled the

young Pastor of the Church at Ephesus- Timothy:

2Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Now the word, “**diligent**” comes from a Greek word (*spoudazoo*; *Strong's #4704*), which means: *to hasten; or make haste; to exert oneself; or to endeavor*. So, Paul is telling Timothy (and by extension ALL Church Leaders) to make haste and to exert himself; and to endeavor to present himself approved by God as a master craftsman- so that he will not be condemned by God- as He accurately exposit the Scriptures to the people.

The writer of **Hebrews** said,

Hebrews 4:11

Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through *following* the same example of disobedience.

So, we must labor; work exert ourselves; and endeavor- in order NOT to fall after the same example of the children of Israel in the wilderness- and to enter the final Rest of God. And the Apostle Peter used this same word two more times:

2Peter 1:14&15

14 knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

2Peter 3:13&14

13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

Now these kinds of Passages defeat the notion that Salvation allows the individual believer to “rest on his laurels” and sit and just celebrate his

eternal Life. No, the Call of God on the genuine believer is to *continually* “press in” to the things of God. We are to be absolutely assured that we are saved- but we are never to be satisfied with our own spiritual development. Hence the phrase, “be diligent”.

Now there is a lot of talk these days about Legalism. “Legalism” is the heresy of the Judaizers (**The Acts 15**). And Legalism is evil, black, dark and from the very pit of hell. Legalism teaches that the Grace of God is not enough- and so we have to “do something” to *earn* our own Salvation. So, to the Legalist- Grace is lacking and ineffectual. So, we should correctly condemn Legalism- wherever we see it; taste it; smell it; or feel it.

But there is another perversion of Grace; another heresy- that is *just* as dangerous; *just* as evil; and *just* as destructive as the heresy of Legalism. And that is the heresy of Antinomianism. “Antinomianism” is “Lawlessness” or the *absence* of Law. And Antinomianism perverts Grace by teaching that since we are saved by Grace alone- then it doesn’t matter how we live our lives after we are saved. So, an Antinomian rejects about 1/3 of the Bible that teaches what Peter teaches right here.

Now the Culture of the 1st Century in Israel was defined by Legalism. The Pharisees were all Legalists, who despised the Grace of God. But the 21st Century American Culture is defined by Lawlessness. Loose living; a rejection of Moral Absolutes; a condemnation of Sexual Purity- these are all trademarks that the heresy of Lawlessness or Antinomianism is alive and well.

But the mistake that people make- as they begin to see the *wrongness* of Antinomianism- and seek to escape it- is to run right into what they perceive to be- “the safety of Legalism.” And that is a terrible mistake- because all they have done is to swap heresies. So, people, who have seen the *destruction* that Lawlessness brings- wrongly perceive that if they can just become more disciplined- then they will be more pleasing to God.

But what we *should* do- is to run away from BOTH Legalism AND Antinomianism and run into the arms of Grace. Because while Grace absolutely does celebrate a Salvation brought about by what God alone does for us- it also rejoices with Passages like the one we are studying today.

Trying to deserve God’s Favor by doing good works and becoming more moral- in order to earn Salvation- is the heresy of Legalism and it insults the Grace of God; and spits in Jesus’ Face as He hangs screaming on the Cross. But putting forth effort to be diligent to the various things that the Bible talks about- after we are saved- is NOT

Legalism- **no matter how confining on the flesh it may be!** Putting forth a lot of effort to be submissive to the clear Teachings of the Bible- is NOT Legalism- it is Obedience. So, *any* effort to obey Jesus- after we are saved- honors God.

So, *whatever* the *common, everyday* Diligence looks like in your life- we need to “step it up” and “raise the bar” in order to obey Peter and be “*all the more*” diligent. But what is it that Peter wants us to be “all the more diligent” about? He tells us:

... to make certain...

So, the old fisherman tells us to be “**all the more diligent**” in order to “**make certain**”; or to prove; or to verify or to ascertain something. Well, what is it that we should be “all the more diligent to make certain” about?

... His calling and choosing you ...

So, we are to be “conscientious”; or “meticulous”; or “rigorous”; or “careful”; or “thorough”- to “**make certain**”; or to be “sure”; or “confirm”; or “establish” about something very important: God’s “*calling and choosing*” us for Salvation. So, we are to be very industrious to verify that we have been called and chosen by God for Salvation.

Now that seems to me to be a lot of effort on our part. And that tells me that this must be very important for Peter to instruct us to go through all this labor. Peter is telling us- *commanding* us- to possess the Assurance of our Salvation. He is NOT telling us to figure out whether or not Salvation itself is eternal. That is NOT what Peter says here- even though it is related. No, Peter is telling us to be sure; to make certain about the Call of God on *our* lives; and the fact that God has chosen *us* for Salvation. So, this is personal. We can’t do this in a group setting. And this is NOT some fact of Scripture that we are to merely believe and accept as true. This is something that we, as individuals, must *possess*. Each individual believer has to *do* this; and *believe* this; and *experience* this; and *know* this- for himself.

Dear friends, please make sure you realize that Peter is NOT leading us in a Study of whether or not Salvation itself lasts forever. Peter is giving us an Apostolic Command to become “certain” about *our own* relationship with Jesus. And whether Salvation is eternal or not (it is) is a

Study for another time. Peter wants every genuine believer to “be all the more diligent” to “make certain” about whether the Salvation that we read about in the Bible; that we sing about; that we hear testified about; that we have prayed about; and thought about- has actually been “appropriated” or “made real”- to us.

So, this is not some lofty theological discussion about elevated spiritual matters that only theologians and Pastors worry about. No, this is about where we all live. This is “where the rubber meets the road”. This is as “down-to-earth” as you can get. This is as practical as anything in all the world. This subject is what some of you have struggled with- the entire time you have been a Christian. And this is what countless millions of believers all over the world; and all throughout the 2,000- year history of the church- have pondered and discussed and struggled with. This has to do with whether or not the Issues that we read about in the Bible- are true in *our* lives. This is NOT about whether we are saved. It is about whether we have the *Assurance* we are saved; and *why* we have that Assurance; and *on what* that Assurance is based.

Peter tells us to “*be all the more diligent to make certain about God’s calling and choosing us*”. So, this is something that we are to do. Now, yes, we are to do in the strength that God provides; and yes, we are to do it with the Bible as our guide; and yes, ultimately, we only do this- because we are already truly saved. But we are to do this. And that is fascinating because back in **1Peter 1:3**- the Apostle said,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

So, Peter taught here that God CAUSES sinners to be born again. And that means that the *origination* and *design* of the new, spiritual Life that God gives to His elect- is from God and NOT from ourselves. So, this is something that we DON’T do. The New Birth is NOT the result of *anything* that we do. We do not call *ourselves* to Salvation. And Salvation does NOT come from something that we do for ourselves. God’s Call on us to be saved- is all from God. And the Power that actually gave us that new, spiritual Life- comes only through God.

We have no input at all into whether we are called and chosen by God. God alone has to call us; and God alone has to choose us. But since

that is true- then the opposite is also true. Since we are called and chosen by a Sovereign Act of God alone- then we can't do anything or stop doing anything- to make ourselves to be "uncalled" or "unchosen". And so, this deals with the "eternality" of our Salvation.

So, we must understand that we are NOT *rewarded* with new spiritual Life because we love God; or because prayed; or because we made a decision; or because we stopped sinning; or because we began to produce good works. No, we love God; and we pray; and we make godly decisions; and we hate our Sin; and we strive to refrain from it; and we begin to produce good and godly Works in our life- because God has *already* called and chosen us- and we have *already* experienced the Miracle of the New Birth.

We have no more to do with our New spiritual Birth than we did with our original, natural birth. Peter says here that God *caused* it. And this is what we mean when we say that "Regeneration (the New Birth) is a Sovereign Act of God." God did this- *all by Himself*- without any help or assistance or cooperation from us at all. In fact, we CAN'T do anything to initiate our new Birth; or cooperate with God in obtaining it- because, as lost people, we are fallen and spiritual dead. But it is this Sovereignty in Salvation that makes it to be eternal.

So, the Bible teaches that God gives this Regeneration to those He has *already* chosen to save. So, the Choosing comes *first*. But the Choosing is invisible- we can't see it. Nobody walks around with a large "C" on his forehead-signifying that God has chosen him for Salvation. And neither is it true that those who are chosen don't get into as much Sin as others. Some great men of God have been murderers and liars and the worst people in town before they were saved. And, for the most part, we didn't even know anything about this "Choosing"- until AFTER we were saved and began to read the Bible. God choosing people for Salvation is usually NOT discussed on talk radio; and it is usually NOT the topic of conversation at the Beauty Parlor; or the Barber Shop; or at the table at Thanksgiving. So, we are to accept the facts of Scripture about this Salvation and trust that what God says in Scripture- is true.

So, even though God was very busy, from the very beginning, our first memory of God and Salvation- is usually when we first believed and prayed and repented and trusted in Christ. And then, as we began to go to church; and hear Sermons; and read the Bible; and go to Bible Study- we ran into those verses that talk about God's Choosing us before the foundation of the

world; before we were born; and before we did anything Good or Bad.

Now this “Choosing” is sometimes described in various English versions of the Bible as being an “election”. So, God *purposefully* “elected” us to Salvation. He *voluntarily* elected us to have eternal Life. He *decidedly* elected us to be adopted; and to experience unbelievable Joy- forever.

And, like all Elections, God choosing us was a *thoughtful, determined, and decisive* Act. But God didn’t consult with anyone but Himself. There was no research conducted so God could pick the best candidates. There were no primaries; no trial runs; and no “do-overs”. But we also have to know that God was not *coerced* in His Choosing us. God chose us on purpose. So, even though God did NOT *need* us- He *wanted* us. And so, God “set His Love” upon us- to CAUSE us to be born again.

Now the Holy Bible teaches very extensively that there are two other aspects of this Sovereign “Calling and Choosing”:

- It is *Unilateral*
- It is *Unconditional*

Now for something to be “Unilateral” means it is “one sided”. For example, a life insurance policy is Unilateral- in that it cannot be changed or altered unless the policy Owner wants to make a change. The Insurance Company has no Authority to alter or change anything about the policy. As long as you pay the premium- the policy is in effect.

And God’s Choosing of sinners for Salvation is also “Unilateral” in the sense that God and God alone decides *who* He wants to save- and *why*. **Numbers 16:5** says:

the Lord will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring *him* near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself.

Human beings have no Authority or Ability to make themselves to be “chosen” by God. God Himself chooses those He desires to save. But that also means that no human can make himself to be “unchosen” once God has “set His Love” upon them. So, in that sense- the “choosing” of sinners by God for Salvation- is “Unilateral” or “one sided”.

But the Bible goes on to teach that this Choosing; this Election- is also “Unconditional”. And that means that there are NO Conditions that human

beings have to “meet”; or “accomplish”; or “do” or “be”- in order to be chosen by God. The Apostle Paul taught that this Choosing of sinners to be saved by God- is Unconditional in **Romans 9:10-15**:

10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac;

11 for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

12 it was said to her, "***THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.***"

13 Just as it is written, "***JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.***"

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

15 For He says to Moses, "***I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION.***"

Now this is one of the *deepest* and most *profound* Passages in the entire Bible. And it is also one of the most *important* ones- because, when rightly understood- helps us to possess the Assurance of Salvation. Here the Apostle uses the historical facts of the Old Testament to produce the most amazing Argument in favor of Unconditional Choosing- found anywhere in the Bible. So, Paul uses the birth of the twins, Jacob and Esau- many hundreds of years earlier, as the natural example of the spiritual Truth about how God's Choosing of sinners for Salvation (Election) is "Unconditional." And in verses 11-13, he says,

for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "***THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.***" Just as it is written, "***JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.***"

Now the best way to understand this passage is to read verse 12 first; verse 11 next; and then read verse 13. So, verse 12 says,

It was said to Rebekah (in **Genesis 25:23**), “The older of the twin boys that you have in your womb will serve the younger”.

Now to grasp the *significance* of this Promise- we need to understand Jewish Culture back during the days of the Patriarchs (Genesis). The first-born son was considered to be the “Gift of God” to that family. This older son held great Promise and Hope that the family name; the family heritage; the family business; and the individual members of the family (especially the women and the aged and infirm) would continue to prosper; and to be safe; and to even live- after the death of the father.

So, as the boy grew- the father would train the first-born son in the family business or instruct him in the family farm. And at the appointed time- the father would gather the elders of the city; the other businessmen; and other nobles of that community to a public gathering where he would formally announce to the crowd, “*This is my son*”. And by doing that- everyone would know that it was the father’s will that this firstborn son would eventually take over and conduct the business of the family. From that moment until his death- the father would fade into the background while the firstborn son would become more and more prominent. This is a natural example of what happened at the Baptism of Jesus- where God made a public Proclamation:

Matthew 3:17

This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.

So, here in **Romans 9**- we see two aspects of God’s Choosing in the life of these twins being Unconditional:

- They were not yet born when God chose them
- They had not done anything Good or Bad when God chose them

So, God didn’t choose Jacob for Salvation because of some “Goodness” He saw in him. Neither did God reject Esau because of some “Evil” He saw in him. But how do we know this? Because God chose them **BEFORE THEY HAD DONE ANYTHING GOOD OR BAD.**

But Paul goes on further to teach that Jacob was NOT a “better person” than Esau; and Esau was NOT a “worse person” than Jacob. So, how do

we know this? Because God chose them BEFORE THEY WERE BORN. And this same Apostle also taught, in **Ephesians 1:4** that they were chosen *before* God ever created the world:

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

And this illustrates one of the most humbling aspects of Unconditional Election found anywhere in the Bible. There is only one difference between people in Heaven and the people in Hell. One. The people, who are screaming in agony in Hell right now; who have *been* screaming for many thousands of years; and who will *continue* to be in agony forever- ARE NOT WORSE PEOPLE THAN THOSE WHO ARE REJOICING IN HEAVEN.

And the people, who are rejoicing in Heaven right now; and who have *been* rejoicing for thousands of years; and who will *continue* to rejoice forever- ARE NOT BETTER PEOPLE THAN THOSE WHO ARE SCREAMING IN HELL.

There is only one difference between those two groups of people. The people, who are rejoicing in Heaven were chosen (before the foundation of the world; before they were ever born; and before they did anything good or bad) to receive God's Grace. And the people, who are burning in Hell- were chosen to receive God's Justice.

Nobody receives Injustice from God- because everybody is a guilty sinner. And God was not "obligated" to save *anyone*. God would have been just as Holy; and just as Righteous if nobody was chosen to be saved and everybody went to Hell. So, we must understand that since we are all guilty sinners- *nobody* deserves Heaven. Anyone who goes to Heaven- goes there strictly on account of God being Kind and Gracious and Merciful- NOT because God felt pressure to give everybody a "chance".

So, then Paul draws a *Conclusion* to what he has been teaching about how God choosing to save sinners is Unconditional in verse 11 by saying,

... so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

So, Paul is teaching here that it was God's Will that His Purpose (to save guilty sinners by what He alone did for them) would "stand"; or "be

established"; or "be confirmed" BECAUSE OF HIM CALLING AND CHOOSING THEM- and NOT because off anything they did for themselves. And *this* is why God told Rebekah (before they were born),

"THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

So, the *reason* God sovereignly broke with tradition and protocol; and promised that, *in this case*- the first-born son would serve the younger son- was to allow God's Purpose in Salvation to "stand" or to "be confirmed" or "to be established" on the basis of God's Calling and Choosing whoever He wants to- and so that it would NOT stand on whoever works to earn it.

Now remember, in **Romans 9**- Paul is teaching all of this to people who lived at that time. And he uses the Old Testament examples to make his point for two reasons:

- The New Testament was not yet completed
- To prove that this is the way God has always operated

.. and then in verse 13, Paul quotes what God told the Prophet Malachi 400 years earlier in **Malachi 1:2b&3a**

Romans 9:13

JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.

Now, many times when discussing the Unconditional Choosing of God in Salvation- we think that the resistance we run into is unique to us. But look at what Paul asks in the very next verse:

Romans 9:14a

What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there?

... and that tells us that people in Paul's day didn't like this Teaching any more than people like it today. But the Issue is NOT whether we like it or not- but whether the Bible teaches it. And if the Bible *doesn't* teach it- we are to throw it out and condemn anyone who teaches it. But if the Bible teaches this Truth (which it does)- then as believers- we must humble ourselves to the Truth of Scripture and believe what God the Holy Spirit put into the Bible. And we are to not only believe it- we are to love it and defend it.

But *why* did Paul ask this Question in **Romans 9:14**? He asks this because it absolutely DOES look like God is Unjust in choosing some people for Salvation- unconditionally. Why? Because by choosing *some* for Salvation- it means that God did NOT choose *everybody*. And that appears to many people as being “unfair”. So, how does Paul answer this Question?

Romans 9:14b,15&16

... May it never be! For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

Now the phrase, “**May it never be**” is one of the strongest condemnations or denunciations that anyone could write in any language- back in the 1st Century. It is also rendered as, “*God forbid!*” So, in the strongest language known at that time- the Apostle condemns the thought that, God choosing *some*- but not all- for Salvation is, in any way, unjust. But then he goes further and, at some point around 55-57 AD (the date when **Romans** was written), in verse 15, Paul quotes from the Old Testament (**Exodus 33:19**) to prove to his readers that this is the way that God has *always* operated.

For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

But think about this for a moment. Paul is NOT debating whether God actually does this or not. The Question is NOT, “*Do you think God actually does choose some for Salvation- but not all?*” No, the Question is, “*Is God unjust by choosing some but not all?*” So, the Question is NOT “*Does God do this?*” Because, according to the Old Testament- God DOES do this. And He has ALWAYS done this. The Question is, “*Does God doing this make Him to be wrong; or bad; or unjust?*” And then in verse 16, Paul sums up what he has been teaching for the last 15 verses:

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

Now the “it” here is Salvation. The context of *everything* Paul has been teaching for the last 15 verses tells us that the subject is Salvation. So, here in verse 16- Paul sums it up and says,

Salvation does NOT depend on the man who wills or the man who runs...

So, Paul is teaching here that Salvation does NOT depend on “human choice”; or “human decision” (**the man who wills**); and Salvation does NOT depend on “human effort”; or “human works” (**the man who runs**). Okay, so what does Salvation depend on?

... on God who has mercy.

... so, Salvation is the sole result of the merciful and gracious “Unconditional/Unilateral Choosing” of unworthy sinners by God.

Now why in the world would God set up Salvation like this? One reason: So that He alone would receive all the Glory. Paul said it like this in **Ephesians 1:5&6a**:

He predestined [chose] us to adoption [Salvation] as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will [Mercy], to the praise of the glory of His grace...

God’s Grace has a “Glory”; or a “Value”; or a “Worth”; or a “Beauty” to it. But that Glory CANNOT be “seen”; or “understood”; or “appreciated”; or “valued”- unless the Grace is “shown”; or “demonstrated”; or “manifested”; or “revealed.” And it CAN’T be shown or demonstrated- unless it is needed.

So, in order to show or demonstrate the Glory or Value of His Grace- God allowed Adam to sin and fall in the Garden. This brought about guilty sinners- who NEED God’s Grace to be saved. So, as God chooses to save unworthy rebels- by what He alone does for them (at great Cost to Himself- the Death of His Son)- God’s Grace is shown or demonstrated. And when God’s Grace is seen- the Glory of that Grace is appreciated and marveled at- and God alone is glorified. And, evidently- saving sinners by Grace- glorifies God MORE than anything else He does throughout His entire Universe. And that is *why* God saves sinners in this way.

Another way of understanding this is to say that the only way that God

may receive all the Glory for Salvation- is Because Salvation is based on God's "Unconditional Choosing." If Salvation was carried out any other way- Man would be entitled to *some* or *all* of the Glory- and God would be a thief for wanting all of the Glory.

Yet God's Unconditional Choosing in Salvation is one of the most *despised* Teachings in the Bible. People from Jerry Falwell to Adrian Rogers have *publicly* and *repeatedly* taught that God choosing some but not all for Salvation- is "false" and "of the devil".

Since God is the One, Who does the Choosing- and since nobody can be saved unless God chooses them- then God is the only One, Who actually does anything in Salvation. And so, God is the only One, Who *deserves* the praise and the honor and the Glory. And that is what makes Salvation to be eternal. So, the Doctrine that people despise is the very Doctrine that explains why Salvation is eternal.

So, God was completely "free" and "unencumbered" in choosing some but not all for Salvation. And that means that all who are saved- are saved because God *chose* to save them. *Nobody* is deserving of it and God is not *obligated* to save *anybody*. So, God's Purpose in Salvation is NOT that He saves those who somehow *qualify* to be saved. Nor is God's Purpose to save people because they *earned* His Favor through their Obedience; or because they, somehow, made themselves attractive to God by their actions.

And the great wonder of this is that this means that God is NOT *deterred* by the depth of our Sin. The blackness of our hearts does not *hinder* the Grace of God. He senses no obstacles in Salvation with even the *worst sinner in the world* (which is me). But neither is God "helped" or "encouraged" in His Choosing- based on some "Nobility" that He sees in anyone. Nothing that would move us- moves God. Nothing that would hinder us- hinders God. This is the majesty of Grace.

Remember God is infinitely perfect in His Wisdom, Power, and Beauty. So, no so-called "good quality" in any human impresses Him. God has three pairs of six-winged Seraphim flying around Him all the time shouting,

Isaiah 6:3

Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory

.... And all day and all night- God has 4 living creatures and 24 Elders

around His Throne- each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of the prayers of the saints, singing the “new song”,

The Revelation 5:9&10

... Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.

... so God isn't impressed with some act of nobility on my part.

God does NOT purpose to choose anyone for Salvation based on them earning their Salvation; nor of them deserving it. But He chooses whom He will.

Now I said all of that to come to this Conclusion. Since all that I have been talking about is God acting *Sovereignly*- all by Himself- we must come to the conclusion that God choosing some but not all- is *part* of God acting- as God. So, we leave the Choosing and the Calling to God to choose *whomever* He desires and to reject *whomever* He desires.

And we are okay- until we read **2Peter 1:10** where Peter says,

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you;

... so just about the time we have struggled to understand that God choosing people for Salvation is a Sovereign Act of God alone- now Peter confuses things all over again and tells us to

... be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you...

... which is just another way of understanding- NOT that Salvation is eternal- but the *Assurance of our Salvation*. But since God choosing us is all a Sovereign Act of God- HOW are we going to do *anything* to make our own Salvation “certain” in our own minds? HOW can we add *anything* to what God has already done? And since God choosing us is all a Sovereign Act of God- WHY would we do anything to make our own Salvation certain in our minds.

And this is why so many people struggle with Assurance. Some

people have a disconnect with Salvation itself being a Sovereign Act of God; while others believe wrongly that Salvation is a cooperative effort between God and Man. And this is *why*, when asked, people try to verify their own Salvation by saying things like,

- I know what God has done in me
- I know what I used to be and what I am now
- I was serious when I prayed
- I asked Jesus to come into my heart

.. yet hardly anyone seeks to verify the Assurance of Salvation by talking the way Peter talks here:

Because I am saved- I am striving to continually apply all diligence. And in the Faith that God gave me- my Faith- is supplying moral excellence. And in this moral excellence- my Faith is supplying Knowledge. And in this Knowledge- my Faith is supplying self-control. And in this self-control- my Faith is supplying Perseverance. And in this Perseverance- my Faith is supply Godliness. And in this Godliness- my Faith is supplying brotherly kindness. And in this brotherly kindness- my Faith is supplying Love.

And because these Qualities are mine and I see them increasing (even though their increase is very minimal at times)- these Qualities are rendering me to NOT be useless NOR unfruitful in the true Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I know that anyone who lacks these Qualities is deceived; and can't see; and has become Self- absorbed; and has forgotten what it took to purge them from their Sins.

And that is WHY I am more determined than ever to be all the more diligent to make certain about God's Call on my life and the fact that God graciously and wondrously chose me- a wicked sinner- to be saved. And because I trust what the Bible says (not because I consider myself to be worthy) I know that, if I, by God's Help; and in the Power of the Spirit; and to the Glory of God alone- if I practice these things- if I struggle against the lusts of my flesh to strive to do and possess these Qualities every day- God has promised that I would NEVER ultimately

stumble.

And, because I won't ultimately stumble- I trust and place my Hope in the Promise of God- that "in this way"- by ongoingly submitting to this kind of life- the Entrance into the eternal Kingdom of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ- will be abundantly supplied to me!

So, I am suggesting to you that verses 5-9 gives us the Answer to the Problem of verse 10a:

How may I be all the more diligent to make certain about God's Calling and Choosing me for Salvation?

... which is the Assurance of Salvation. And then verses 10b&11 gives us the Promise that will come to pass- IF we do what verses 5-9 teach. So, Lord willing, next week, we will get into this in more depth.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729

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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.