

TITLE: Satisfaction in the Sovereign Source of Our Salvation (Part 2)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:2a

THEME: Hope in The Doctrines of Election and Foreknowledge

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Read Passage

If you were to ask me what underlying theme of God's work as it relates to His creation, I would w/o hesitation reply: "His sovereign glory."

By that: From Gen. to Rev. we find that all things (all of creative & redemptive history) work to t/glory of God as he sovereignly orchestrates t/happenings of t/universe.

I believe this is greatest revelation man can exper. – nothing greater than gaining a sense of God's sovereign glory (Isaiah 6 - Isaiah saw the Lord & declared "woe is me for I am ruined..." Angels didn't declare "Love! Love! Love!" but "Holy! Holy! Holy!").

Most of you are fam. w/story of Daniel. Dan was Heb. prophet taken into captivity by Babylon under rule of King Neb. in 605 BC. Dan. served as servant/interpreter of dreams to the King. After sev. encounters w/power of God, Neb. "came to his senses" and declares as it's recorded in 4:34-35 [what period?]==>

"But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, & my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?'"

Neb. "comes to his senses" & he doesn't declare how great God's Love is (tho true) // How God has a wonderful plan for everyone (for some people that plan isn't so wonderful). No, he declares glorious sovereignty of God! In does so in tones that sounds much like t/Psalmist in Psalm 135:6 ==>

Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. IOW - God is in sov. control over everything everywhere.

Can see how comforting this is to those who are rightly related to Him. As comforting for those rightly related to him as it is distressing to those who aren't!

That of course brings us back to 1 Peter

These believers were in need of comfort. They were suffering (suffering strangers, v. 1). Peter begins his letter on a bright note of hope for those who are hurting - a bright note related to God's sovereign plan for them (and for us). "Satisfaction in the Sovereign Source of Our Salvation"

My main idea ==>

Our Hope is Found in the Electing Grace of the Father, the Sanctifying Grace of the Spirit, and the Saving Grace of the Son. What we see in this single v. - actually a Trinitarian formula (Father Elects; Spirit Sanctifies; Son Saves)

We are going to cont. using our "S"==>

A. Selected by the Father (1:2a)

B. Sanctified by the Spirit (1:2b)

C. Saved for Service by the Son (1:2c)

I. Hope in The Sovereign Source of Our Salvation (1:2)

A. *[We have been] Selected by the Father (1:2a)*

We talked last week about how the word "chosen" (ἐκλεκτός) doesn't really occur in v. 2, but t/idea is carried over from v. 1. But overall emphasis falls on our justification before God and that our salv. was planned for us before we were ever born.

[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

To be ἐκλεκτός is to be chosen by God for Salvation. That simple! As I said last time, You responded to God because God responded to you first. He opened your eyes; He softened your heart; He made the foolishness of the Gospel the power of God to you for your salvation.

Then you freely responded to Him in faith. GREAT COMFORT IN THAT (I believe that's why Peter begins his epistle affirming this wonderful truth).

As Eric Alexander says: "The doctrine of election is neither a banner to be waved, nor a bomb to be dropped, but a balm for the soul of weary Christians."

2. Seven Scriptural Statements about the Selection of the Saints

Seven biblical facts about divine election

a. #1 Election is unto Salvation

We are individually elected or chosen for salvation.

(1) 2 Thessalonians 2:13

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

*Who does the choosing here? - God

*Who does God choose? - You (Individual believers)

*He has chosen indiv. believers for what? - For salvation (to be saved)

* When? "From the beginning"

b. #2 Election is Unconditional

It doesn't depend on anything other than God's good pleasure. Not dependent on our works // foreseen faith. It's based on nothing other than God's sovereign will to His glory. Ephesians 1:4-6==>

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

ἐκλεγει (v. 4 - "he chose us") is an aorist middle – God's independent or unconditional choice. Could be translated: "to pick for oneself." Of course we also have t/parallel statement in v. 5 [=>] (προορίζω - to predetermine, foreordain, predestine).

(a) Foreknowledge

We already looked at t/common argument that's used to deny God's absolute control over all things. It's an argument that often uses our passage in 1 Peter as a proof-text==>

[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...

IOW, the argument would say . . .

Last week we said that this argument isn't true for at least two reasons=>

i. #1 It's Bad Theology

God doesn't have foreknowledge in sense of prescience alone--He's not a celestial fortune teller who prognosticates future random acts. (God is active/not reactive). God at once has complete knowledge of all things past present & future. To say that God at some point "looked ahead" is an attempt to define God by our human terms/reasoning.

ii. #2 It's a Bad Interpretation of the Word

BTIM - foreknowledge doesn't simply mean "God knows what's going to happen next." I don't want to belabor t/point; we spent a lot of time on this last week.

Biblically, to foreknow implies relationship. "to foreknow is to forelove"

One scholar, commenting on this very passage in 1 Peter, writes==>

The first thing that strikes me about the Arminian interpretation of this verse is the utter absence of any reference to faith or free-will as that which God allegedly foreknows or foresees in men.

He goes on to say ==>

. . . . to "foreknow" on God's part means to "forelove." That God foreknew us is another way of saying that He set His gracious and merciful regard upon us, that He knew us from eternity past with a sovereign & distinguishing delight.

1 of my fav. NT scholars, Thomas Schreiner, who teaches at SBTS==>

"The word 'know' in Hebrew often refers to God's covenantal love bestowed upon his people The rich associations of that term continue into the New Testament. That foreordination also is involved [in the word] is clear from Acts 2:23, where foreknowledge is paired with predestination. Romans 11:2 drives us in the same direction. Paul queries whether God has 'rejected his people whom he foreknew' (NRSV). The terms 'rejected' (apostate) and

'foreknew' (proegno) function as antonyms. We could rephrase the verse, 'Has God rejected his people whom he chose?'" [Schreiner, 53]

(b) Even if you could strip the word of its meaning and limit it to simple prescience You still have a problem. If God does know the future (we would affirm that he does) then the future is already determined from His perspective.

If it's true as it says in John 6:64 that Jesus knew before time who would or wouldn't believe in time, then nothing can change that, right? IOW - If God knows that your neighbor will never come to faith in X can you change that? Of course not. ISW if God knows that your neighbor will come to believe in Jesus, can you change that?

Think about the Lamb's book of life where it says that the names of God's elect were recorded in that book from before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; 17:8). [Cf. my witness as a new Xn using this] If that's true, and it is, could anything have changed it? NO!

That's why, theologically, we say that what is foreknown is foreordained

Contemporary theologian Millard Erickson ==>

It should be noted that if certainty of outcome is inconsistent with freedom, divine foreknowledge, as the Arminian understands that term, presents as much difficulty for human freedom as does divine foreordination. For if God knows what I will do, it must be certain that I am going to do it. If it were not certain, God could not know it; He might be mistaken (I might act differently from what He expects). But if what I will do is certain, then surely I will do it, whether or not I know what I will do. It will happen! But am I then free? In the view of those whose definition of freedom entails the implication that it cannot be certain that a particular event will occur, presumably I am not free. In their view, divine foreknowledge is just as incompatible with human freedom as is divine foreordination.

This line of reasoning can be illustrated in the following syllogism:

1. What is foreknown is fixed.
2. What is fixed is certain.

3. What is certain is predestined.

Just comes down to who you want to credit for the predestination: God or blind chance. The God of the Bible knows no such thing as “chance”

So, men, knowing this have taken a worse step backwards & now you have so-called Xn scholars claiming that God doesn't know t/future w/certainty. I believe that they have allowed their prejudice against God's absolute sovereignty to cloud their thinking in such a way that they have devised an abhorrent theology.

2. Seven Scriptural Statements about the Selection of the Saints

[Election is Unto Salvation] –Restate

[Election is Unconditional] –Restate

c. #3 Election is Necessary Because of Sin

Colossians 1:21 you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,

Ephesians 2:1-3 . . . you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

We call this the doctrine of total depravity - that sin has adversely affected every facet of who we are (minds; affections; will)

Here are 10 truths about who we were before we came to faith in JC

1. Alienated, hostile, engaged in evil deeds (Col. 1:21)
2. Dead in sin, by nature a child of God's wrath (Eph. 2:1 ff.)
3. Under a curse - [the curse of the law] (Gal. 3:10-13)
4. An enemy of God (Rom. 5:10)
5. Darkened in understanding (Eph. 4:18)
6. Unable to please God, hostile to Him (Rom. 8:5-7)
7. Unable to understand the gospel (1 Cor. 2:14)
8. Unable to truly seek God (Rom. 3:11)

9. Blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:4)

10. Destined for hell--eternal separation from God (Rev 20:13).

"Why do people reject JC?" They choose to! Why do they choose to? Because they are: Alienated, hostile, Dead in sin, children of wrath, under a curse, darkened in understanding, unable to please God, hostile to Him, unable to understand the gospel, unable to truly seek God, blinded by Satan. Do we need any more reasons?!

In 1854 A Briton by name of Holmon Hunt painted a famous piece of Christian art called "Light of the World." I'm sure most of you have seen it; some of you may have it somewhere in your home. It's a picture of Christ at night, holding a lantern standing outside of a home, knocking at the old wooden door. [How many of you know what I'm talking about?]

It's said that Hunt showed his picture to a friend one day and asked him, "what do you think?" "It is a beautiful picture, but I think you have forgotten something," said the friend. "There is no latch on the door." Mr. Hunt replied, "Ah, my friend, you have missed the point of the picture. The man at the door is the Lord Jesus Christ. The door is the entrance to the human heart and the latch is on the inside. Unless the one on the inside opens the door, Jesus will never come in."

There's a problem w/this; problem is that one on t/inside--the guy on t/other side of t/door is dead! He's not opening any door until, as it says in Ephesians 2, God gives him spiritual life!

That's why I've said that every X'n is a spiritual Lazarus (John 11). You or I could have screamed at Lazarus from then to eternity ("Lazarus, come out; Lazarus wake up; Lazarus walk the aisle and be saved; Lazarus you're late for dinner") all to no avail. It takes a miracle to make a physical resurrection. ISW it takes a miracle to make a spiritual resurrection (Remember, Bible says that you were dead apart from JC).

That's why you have Acts 13:48 >>>>

And when the Gentiles heard this (that t/gospel wasn't only for t/Jews), they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been

appointed to eternal life believed.

Acts 16:14 >>> (Lydia).

And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

Luke used same verb "διδασκαλῶ" (to open) to describe Jesus' illumining the minds of the disciples to recognize Him (Luke 24:31) and understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45).

That's t/only way t/guy on other side of t/door is going to get up off t/floor & open it! We call it inability.

Can't understand how any X'n looking at his own exp. in coming to faith in X & even his exp. in wit. to others; can deny this. (mom's testimony).

[c. #3 Election is Necessary Because of Sin]

d. #4 Election is Presented as a Comfort to the Believer, not as a Reason to Question God's Goodness

So important. Scripture always speaks of predestination in terms of those who are X'ns as a comfort and encouragement to them. Comfort in knowing that their salvation is no accident, and thus it is secure. Again, that's why Peter begins this letter w/this comforting truth==>

[yes you are] **chosen strangers scattered throughout . . .** [but you have been chosen for all of this including your salvation] **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father** [a covenantal love relationship he had with you before the worlds began], **with the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling with His blood.** [The Trinity - the Triune God - has set his love on you & has a plan for you] **May grace and peace be multiplied to you.**

"We [believers] are a chosen people, the elect of God. The Greek term means selected out of a number. We have been called to be God's people, not because of our goodness, but because of His grace. This results in praise, not pride."

[Lloyd Ogilvie, Colossians, 107]

As one of my former seminary professors once said, when you teach this to the sheep, some of them are going to get what he called “sheep shudder” ==> ("Thaaaatss, nooooot fairrrrrrrrr")

In reality it's not “Fair” that anyone gets eternal life. “Fair” = “just” & God's perfect justice means that all who sin die (spirit., phys. etern.). Wasn't “Fair” that Jesus go2 t/cross. I don't want “Fair” I want “Mercy.”

(1) Romans 9:1-24a

Paul is wrestling with the problem of Israel as God's chosen nation that had rejected her Messiah. If salvation was from the Jews and for the Jews why did they reject Jesus as their Messiah? Is God done with Israel? Has God or His Word in some way failed? No - (11:26).

* Verse 3 - Voluntative imperfect - expresses hesitation due to the impossibility of the desire (hyperbole).

* Verse 19 - transition to a polemic (Same arguments that the church has dealt with for 1900 yrs.).

* Verses 20-24 - perspective!

Listen to what MacArthur says in his commentary on Romans==>

It is obvious from Paul's wording that the ones who might be asking such questions [that is questioning God's fairness] would not be seeking God's truth but rather self-justification. Attempting to excuse their own unbelief, sinfulness, ignorance, and spiritual rebellion, they would be apt to accuse God of injustice. But human understanding is so limited, even sincere questions about God's sovereign election and predestination ultimately must go unanswered. . . . it is one of the many truths about God that we must accept by faith, simply because He has revealed it in His Word. [Romans 9-16, 37-38]

As Bob Jones used to say, "The problem isn't with me, if you don't like what it [Scripture] says call up heaven."

[#4 Election is presented as a comfort for the believer, not as an

opportunity to question God's justice]

e. #5 Election is Grounded in Church History

By that I mean ==> From pages of Script. to early church fathers, men such as Tertullian (d. 220); Ambrose (d. 397); Athanasius (d. 373); & Augustine (d. 430), The CH. has upheld this doctrine as God's Word.

In fact, Aug., early in his min. held to cond. election accord. to God's knowing what people would do beforehand, but later, thru serious study, changed his pos. calling his former view, "The pest of the Pelagian heresy." [which denied depravity of man]

From Aug. to time of T Reform. where you have men such as Wycliffe, Calvin & Luther who tenaciously held to uncond. election (cf. Luther's The Bondage of the Will.). "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him." [Martin Luther, cited in Barclay, 169] Following Reform. you have many men/several church creeds, such as the Belgic Confession (1561); the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) & T 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith that all uphold a sovereign grace view of God's work in saving men. In fact, t/contrary view was contemned by the Synod of Dort in 1619.

Then you have contemporaries such as Spurgeon in late 1800s, & men such as John MacArthur/Charles Swindoll/R.C. Sproul/J.I. Packer/Warren Wiersbe (I could name dozens more pastors/writers/scholars/& theologians). Someone once asked me if a partic. theol. book I had upheld a pos. of predestination & I replied that you are hard-pressed to find one that doesn't!

W/exception of Rom. Catholicism & "natural theology" of Th. Aquinas, God's absolute sov. has been dominant pos. of t/CH from 1st c. onward.

While that in itself, doesn't nec. prove anything, it is a strong consid--esp. in light of fact that t/CH is called "the pillar & support of the truth."

Sixth, and so important==>

f. #6 Election doesn't negate Evangelism

This doctrine doesn't mean evangelism isn't necessary or a concern. Rather, I would say this; "on the contrary, election guarantees results in evangelism." If God was not in t/bus. of drawing men/women/children to himself, no one would come.

I've had people ask me, "If you believe in predestination, why do you believe in evangelism?"

*Why do I believe in predestination? It's biblical

*Why do I believe in evangelism? It's biblical (do I need any other reason?). Paul didn't; he spoke of both in 2 Tim. 2:10

For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen (ἐκλεκτος), that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. Evang. is t/means by which God calls people to Himself.

"Why there are some who preach the doctrine of election as though it were a line of sharp spikes to keep a sinner from coming to Christ, or as though it were a menacing battle-ax to be pushed into the breast of a coming sinner to keep him away from mercy. Now, it is not so." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 63]

While I'm quoting others, allow me to quote myself in something I wrote several years ago==>

To say that, because God is absolutely sovereign evangelism is unnecessary is like saying that because a true believer can't lose his salvation, there's no reason to live a godly obedient life. Don't lose sight of the facts. The Bible is clear that those who come to salvation do so because God chose them. The Bible is also clear that believers are commanded to evangelize with the results being solely up to God. To deny unconditional election is to misread the Bible. To deny personal responsibility in evangelism is not only to misread the Bible, it's downright disobedient.

That's a great comfort in evangelism. Knowing that t/results are not up to me, but that I'm to share t/Gospel w/the comfort & assurance that God knows those that are his & that His sheep will hear his voice.

I think it's a blessing that we are not privy to knowledge of God (who's elect; who will or will not ultimately come to faith in X). Admit it would make it a lot more simple. "Lord, tell me who t/elect are & I'll go win them for you." I think of Paul in city of Corinth. In Acts 18 Paul is involved in fruitful ministry. He sets up his ministry right next door to t/local synagogue & t/synagogue leader comes to faith in X. Many are believing and being baptized. But w/Gospel is an offense & people were offended. Apparently there were threats on Paul's life and God appears to him in a vision by night saying, "stop being afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."

God has his people; he knows those who are and will be His. We don't have that knowledge. Our respons, therefore, transcends that information, bringing us back to Script. And Script. is clear that we are to share our faith w/the results are up to God. Issue isn't whether or not the elect will come to salvation, the issue is whether or not we will be obedient in leading them there. That's the crux of the matter.

g. #7 Election doesn't Erase Human Responsibility

There is a balance between human responsibility and God's sovereignty. God's S. doesn't erase H.R. & H.R. doesn't trump God's S.

God doesn't violate our will; God makes us willing. [hear that?] Sometimes you get people who say, "Well, we must just be robots then." Biblically, we're not robots, biblically, we're claypots (Romans 9). Even in salvation God works to draw us to himself by t/power of the H.S. He doesn't do violence to our wills, he transforms our wills so that we freely desire what he has for us.

As a kid I used to love to read Aesop's fables. You might remember t/story where t/sun & t/wind decided to see who was more powerful. In their contest of strength, they chose a little boy walking thru a meadow wearing a coat. They would see who could get the boy to removed his jacket. The wind went first and it blew and blew and blew, but the harder it blew t/more tightly the

little boy clung to his coat. Finally giving up t/wind let the sun take a try. Easy for the sun; he began to shine more and more brightly. The temperature began to rise & before long the boy voluntarily removed his coat.

That's a little like how God works. He doesn't try to blow away our unbelief w/violence. Rather, he, by way of the warming power of His Spirit, removes our unbelief allowing us to freely respond to Him. That's why it's all of grace.

As John Piper once said==>

"You did not make the Cross of Christ effective in your life in the atoning of your sins. The cross of Christ has sovereignly become effective in your life by purchasing your faith. You owe your faith to the Cross! Your unbelief is a great sin--was it covered by the Cross, believer, or wasn't it? If you say it wasn't, you atoned for your own sin and you get to heaven on your own strength. If your faith was covered by the blood of Jesus (that is, your unbelief), then everything you are is owed to Christ. And His Cross purchased for you not only the forgiveness for all of your many sins but (also) your unbelief so that you would be a believer. . . . Christ tasted death for everyone who believes because the faith of everyone who believes was purchased by Christ." ["For Whom Did Jesus Taste Death," Cassette Message in Hebrews 2:9 dated May. 26, 1996, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"Men will never believe with a saving and real faith, unless God inclines the heart; and they will believe as soon as He inclines it." [Blaise Pascal, 1623-1662]

In Scripture there are often points of tension & paradox. But if you know me or have been part of this CH for any length of time you know that I am deeply committed to teaching what Script. means by what it says & that w/o compromise. I'm not going to compromise when something is "difficult." When I'm in a passage that places emphasis on God's absolute sovereignty that's what I am going to teach. When Script. emphasizes human responsibility (not free-will which isn't a biblical term) I will teach that. Since t/Bible upholds both with an apparent tension, who am I to do less? If Scripture lays these truths side-by-side without a problem, why can't we uphold them in the same way? If people brought the same attitude about predestination into issues such as t/Trinity, they would be heretics (believe in 3 gods or they would be modalists). We have to allow God's Word to have Lordship over its own

tensions & paradoxes. That includes areas related to God's sov. & man's responsibility. Classic example of Acts 4:27-28==>

“For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.

I have no problem with passages such as Phil. 2:12-13 [=>] I have no problem w/God's sovereignty & man's responsibility. I don't completely understand it, but I can't because I'm not God (Deut. 29:29 applies!).

I'm going to close this a.m. w/ a rather lengthy quote by John MacArthur. Listen to this quote and see if you can't rest in its truth >>>

God's sovereign election and man's exercise of human responsibility in choosing Jesus Christ seem opposite and irreconcilable truths--and from our limited human perspective they are opposite and irreconcilable. That is why so many earnest, well-meaning Christians throughout the history of the church have floundered trying to reconcile them. Since the problem cannot be resolved by our finite minds, the result is always to compromise one truth in favor of the other or to weaken both by trying to take a position somewhere between them. We should let the antinomy remain, believing both truths completely and leaving the harmonizing of them to God. . . . Because we cannot stand the tension of mystery, paradox, or antinomy, we are inclined to adjust what the Bible teaches so that it will fill our own systems of order and consistency. But that presumptuous approach is unfaithful to God's Word and leads to confused doctrine and weakened living. It should be noted that other essential scriptural doctrines are also apparently paradoxical to our limited capacity. It is antinomous that Scripture itself is the work of human authors, yet the very words of God; that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man; that salvation is forever, yet saints must remain obedient and persevere to the end; that the Christians's life is lived in total commitment and discipline of self, yet is all of Christ. Such inscrutable truths are an encouragement that the mind of God infinitely surpasses the mind of man and are a great proof of the divine authorship of Scripture. . . . It is not that God's sovereign election, or predestination, eliminates man's choice in faith. Divine sovereignty and human response are integral and inseparable parts of salvation--thought exactly how they operate together only the infinite mind of God knows. [John

MacArthur, Ephesians, 11 & 13]

John Chadwick >>> I sought the Lord, And afterwards I knew He moved my soul to seek Him, Seeking me! It was not that I found, O Savior true; No, I was found by Thee.