

Many Are Called but Few Are Chosen

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Most Christian churches—churches which claim to follow Christ—believe that there exists a mighty war between God and Satan. They believe God is trying to save all of humanity at this time and Satan is trying to destroy humanity and prevent humanity from being saved. Most Christian churches believe that this is humanity's time of salvation; that this is their time of being called, of being given the opportunity for eternal life or they will die eternally. As a result, most Christian churches make a great effort to convert people. Signs on the highways, billboards, sending missionaries throughout the world, having altar calls at their services for people to come down and give their hearts to the Lord and be baptized. Their belief is that anybody who dies and is not converted is lost; never attains salvation. There is this great battle, this great race, between God and Satan to convert the world.

But is this belief true? Is it accurate? Is that what the Bible says? Is God dealing with all humanity at this present day? Is there this colossal war between the Father and Satan? If there is a colossal war, looking around the world today, it appears that God would be losing badly, if that was the metric. Or, is there something in the Bible that the Christian world has missed? Let's go to Genesis 2:8 and see how all this began and we can get an indication of our Father's plan for all of mankind.

Genesis 2:8 *And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

9) And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (KJV)

Continuing in Verse 16.

16) And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (KJV)

So, Jehovah, at that point was giving mankind a choice. He said:

"You can choose to follow Me and you can choose to accept my definition of what good is and what evil is—My definition—and you can live forever if you do that. Or, you can choose for yourself, decide for yourself what is wrong and what is right, what is good and what is bad. If you do that, you are going to have to suffer the consequences."

Now let's go to the next chapter, Genesis 3:17. We pick up the account after Adam and Eve have eaten of the forbidden tree. Let's see what God Almighty says to them.

Genesis 3:17 *And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee,*

saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; (KJV)

What He is saying is that Adam is going to continue to eat of it. Adam is going to continue to eat of the fruit of that forbidden tree. Of course, today all mankind continues to eat of the fruit of that tree, deciding for themselves what is right and what is wrong. It's gotten to the point where mankind is destroying himself and the earth. God's Word tells us that if the Father doesn't step in at some point, he will do exactly that.

Over the past 6000 years, our Father has allowed mankind to prove that his way does not work. We need look no farther than our neighborhoods, cities, towns and around the world, to see that the results are a disintegrating world indeed.

Continuing in Verse 22.

22) And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: (KJV)

The Hebrew word for *know* is Strong's #3045, the Hebrew word in English is *yada*; it means "to learn" (he's going to learn evil), it means "to comprehend" (or to discern evil) but it also means "to experience evil". Man is going to know, learn and experience evil. Adam and Eve, up to this moment in time, before they ate of the tree had not known or experienced evil. They had no concept of what evil was. But now, as we just read, Adam is going to continue to eat of it and now they would begin to learn evil and experience evil and incorporate evil into their lives. Because of Adam's choice, mankind in general has not been offered salvation since that very day; that's been withdrawn. The Father is allowing mankind, all these millennia, to decide his own way but also to reap the very bitter fruits of deciding his own way. Let's go to Galatians 5:19 and see what those fruits are and as we read through this, apply it to what we see around us today. I'm going to read this out of the New Living Translation; it's very interesting the way they translate this verse.

Galatians 5:19 *When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20) idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division ... (NLT)*

Do we see all of that around us today? We sure do.

21) envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (NLT)

Adam and his descendants have come to know all of what we just read. The desire of the sinful nature, the fruits of the flesh. From that time forward when Adam and Eve made that decision, Jehovah has called a very few. He has called a few to keep His way of life intact and to provide a record of good and a record of evil. Let's go to

Romans 11:7 and see that Paul is writing about a small group of people who have attained what Israel failed to attain.

Romans 11:7 *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (KJV)*

“The *election* has attained it.” The Greek word for *election* is Strong’s #1589 and it’s the Greek word *ekloge* and it means “divine selection” or “chosen”. What we’re told is those who have been “divinely selected”, those who have been “chosen”, have obtained what Israel could not.

8) (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.’ (KJV)

We get the idea now that there is a small group of chosen, of elected. Since Adam, it’s not our Father’s purpose to call all humanity at this time but their time will come later, which is pictured by the fall Holy Days and the great fall harvest. However, in the Old Testament, patriarch’s, prophets, judges, certain kings, were called and given our Father’s Spirit. Remember David pleaded with God after his sin. He said, “*Please don’t take your Holy Spirit from me.*” in Psalm 51. So He dealt with a few during the Old Covenant period time. After the Messiah’s death and resurrection, a small group has been called to salvation and has been offered the Holy Spirit. That group has been named by the Father as firstfruits or as the “elect” or as the “chosen”. They are pictured by the spring Holy Days and the smaller spring harvest. So, this Sabbath we want to look at the calling of these firstfruits, these “chosen”, these “elect”. The title of the sermon is:

Many Are Called But Few Are Chosen

We’re going to cover the subject in seven points.

1. The Father does the calling.

The Father issues the invitation to be among this group called the firstfruits. Let’s go to John 6:44, a very familiar scripture. Christ is speaking and John is recording it.

John 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *draw* is an interesting word, it literally or figuratively means “to drag”; to drag somebody. I have known various people in God’s church who, when the Father called them, He literally did have to drag them, kicking and screaming, into God’s church. With that in mind let’s go to Acts 2:39; we are intercepting Peter on the day of Pentecost and just want to read one verse. It’s very important to the subject. Peter is explaining to the Jews surrounding the house when all these miracles occurred, what was going on.

Acts 2:39 *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (KJV)*

Not available to all mankind, but those who are called. The Greek word for *call* is Strong's #4341 and it has a special meaning; it means "to call toward oneself". That is "to summon" or "to invite", "to come to one's self". So our Father sends an invitation to a human and He is saying:

*"I want you to come to me. I want you to get close to Me.
I want to have a special relationship with you."*

With that in mind let's go to 2 Timothy 1:7. We're still talking about point one, that only the Father does the calling. Paul is writing to young Timothy and there is a key word that is not translated here. It's the second word in the verse. If you have any interlinear you will see this.

2 Timothy 1:7 *For [then the next word is not translated, the Greek word "ho" and it means "the"] God [referring to the Father] hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV)*

Continuing in Verse 9.

9) Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose [He has a purpose for everyone He calls] and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ... (KJV)

The Greek word for *calling* is Strong's #2821, it's the Greek word *klesis* and it means figuratively, "an invitation". Our Father sends out a holy invitation to those with whom He wants to establish a close relationship. So, we see, closing out this first point that our Father chooses who will be given the invitation. But notice what He does next, after He makes the call.

2. Our Father gives those He has called to His Son.

He turns over those He has called to His Son. Let's go to John 10:11; this is the parable of the sheepfold. Christ is speaking. I'm going to read this out of the New King James.

John 10:11 *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. (NKJV)*

Now look at verse 27.

*27) My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.
28) And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.
29) My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. (NKJV)*

This verse tells us that Christ is the Good Shepherd. It tells us that those who are called become the sheep of His flock that the Father has given to Him and those

sheep have the opportunity to have eternal life. Let's go back to John 6:37. Christ is speaking and John is recording.

John 6:37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

38) For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (KJV)

Let's go to verse 44, which we read earlier in the first point.

44) No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (KJV)

As the Father raised the Son, the Son will raise those whom the Father has given Him, if (we'll find out more about that later) we do our part once the invitation is given. We see in this second point that after the Father calls, He turns those who respond over to His Son and they become His Son's sheep.

3. At this time, at this age, who are those being called?

Who is the Father calling and dealing with? Let's go to James 2:5 and see what James has to say. James is of course the half-brother of Jesus Christ.

James 2:5 *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (KJV)*

Who are the poor? The Greek word for *poor* is Strong's #4434 and the literal meaning of this word is "to crouch"; "to crouch down, that is to crouch as a beggar who is cringing, who is a pauper". We've been to Mexico several times—I grew up on the Mexican border—and you would go across the bridge and see beggars, crouching down begging for whatever you could throw their way. This is the meaning of this word. Paul tells us why the Father chooses the poor and the weak and those who are needy. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 1— you know where we're going—verse 23. A very familiar set of scriptures but let's read this by asking the question, why does the Father choose the poor and the weak and needy?

1 Corinthians 1:23 *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (KJV)*

And frankly, most of the educated Western world, like the Greeks, fashioned themselves as being educated and a step above other cultures. Preaching the truth about Christ and the Father is foolishness to most people these days. Verse 24, the big but:

24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men ... (KJV)

The Greek word for *wise* means “skilled” or “expert”.

26 continued) ... after the flesh, not many mighty [the Greek means “powerful” or “capable”], *not many noble, are called:* (KJV)

The Greek for *noble* means “well born” or “high in rank”.

27) But God hath chosen the foolish ... (KJV)

We’ve pointed out *foolish* before. This is the Greek word *moros* and it means “dull” or “stupid” and where we get our English word *moron*.

27 continued) ... things of the world ... (KJV)

Now we have to ask the question why; why did God do that?

27 continued) ... to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things [the Greek literally means “without adequate strength”] *of the world to confound the things which are mighty;*

28) And base things of the world [the Greek word for *base* means “of no name or reputation”], *and things which are despised* [the Greek word for *despised* means “contemptible” or “least esteemed”], *hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:*

29) That no flesh should glory in his presence. (KJV)

The Father calls the *weak of the world*, those without reputation, without credentials as we would say today, so that humans cannot boast about being called. We can’t say God called me because I’m a cut above everybody or because I’m more intelligent than everybody. God calls the weak so that all the glory goes to Him and not a human being. In addition, He chose the weak, the base, the despised, because they can be worked with. God Almighty can’t work with a narcissist. He can’t work with somebody who is so filled with themselves that they don’t have the humility to prostrate themselves before God Almighty. That is why God chooses the weak of the world. Those are the ones who are being called at this time.

That leads to the fourth point.

4. What actually happens when we are called?

For those of you who have yet to be baptized, this is something you can look forward to or analyze when it’s happening to you. For those of us who have been through this, we can look back and say: “Yes this is why this happened.” Let’s go to Acts 26:12. Paul is explaining his calling to King Agrippa and explaining the miracle of his calling because he wants to make an impression on King Agrippa that this is not something of a man but comes from God Almighty.

Acts 26:12 *Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, [to persecute Christians of course]*

13) *At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.*

14) *And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

15) *And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*

16) *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; (KJV)*

Christ did appear to Paul, face to face, taught him and trained him; totally apart from the twelve.

17) *Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee ... (KJV)*

What is Paul's mission? What are his marching orders? Why is he being sent to the Gentiles?

18) *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, [this is what happened when called] ... (KJV)*

Going on in the New Living Translation for the rest of the verse.

18 continued) *... Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.' (NLT)*

So, we see what happens when called, our mind, our eyes (figuratively) are opened to the truth and our Father's Word, to understand it. To understand our Father's plan of salvation. A miracle occurs where our mind is open to something that we were previously blinded to—that made no sense to us. With that in mind let's go to Ephesians 1:18.

Ephesians 1:18 *The eyes of your [the Ephesians] understanding being enlightened; (KJV)*

Continuing in the NIV.

18 continued) *... in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people ... (NIV)*

Thus begins the process of conversion. We'll cover what is meant by conversion in the last point. You see, this can end in eternal life, this glorious inheritance. If we do our part, it ends in eternal life. That is the promise from God Almighty. Let's go to Hebrews 9:15. The end of our calling, if we do our part and are faithful and do what is necessary, this is the result. I'm going to read this out of the New Living Translation.

Hebrews 9:15 *That is why he [referring to Christ] is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant. (NLT)*

So what happens when we are called? We don't know how it works, if our Father throws a switch somehow—a spiritual switch in our minds and our minds are opened up to the truth in His Word; to the truth that He has recorded for us.

That leads us to the next point.

5. Once we are called, what is our duty and obligation?

Peter has a lot to say about that, let's go to 1 Peter 2:9. When we think about it, it's such an awesome honor to be called and yet we don't deserve it. We are the *weak of the world* and yet somehow God has chosen and is choosing each one of us. This is out of the New Living Translation.

1 Peter 2:9 *But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. (NLT)*

The Greek word for *chosen* is *eklektos*. Remember this word *chosen*. It means “to be selected” or “elected”. You have been *chosen*. Like on election day and people fill out ballots and choose. Our Father has done that with us; we have been chosen or elected. This word is translated as *elect* in many other scriptures—same word.

9 continued) ... You are royal priests a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. (NLT)

Once we receive the invitation, our obligation is to come out of darkness. By our example, how we change, show forth our Father's goodness and His characteristics and the fruits of the Spirit. Paul reinforces this in 1 Thessalonians 4:7. It's just one short verse.

1 Thessalonians 4:7 *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. (KJV)*

We've been called to be holy people, as the Father is holy and His Son is holy. So when we are called, our obligation is to become holy and pure and blameless, but how can we do that? We obviously need help because we can't do that of ourselves. Let's go back to Acts 2 now—Peter preaching on Pentecost about the coming of the Holy Spirit which was signified by miracles. Peter is explaining to the audience about “*what on earth is going on?*”—what is happening.

Acts 2:36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly [the audience were Jews], that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

37) *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, [We've done an awful thing as a nation] , and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

38) *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (KJV)*

We know by other scriptures that comes by the laying on of hands.

39) *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (KJV)*

This only happens, it's only available to those who receive the invitation—this spiritual, Godly invitation. The key is, once we have been called, it is up to us to examine ourselves, to repent of the sins that we see, to seek baptism and to seek the receipt of the Holy Spirit. That is our duty and our obligation. When we receive the Holy Spirit, it gives us—like a grain of a mustard seed in the beginning—the Mind of our Father and the Mind of the Son. Their wisdom, discernment and instincts. We have a different mind. The Holy Spirit also gives us the will, as well as the power that we lacked before to be obedient to the commandments, that ancient Israel had lacked. Once we respond to our calling by receiving the Holy Spirit, then we become part of the very church of God; the church that bears our Father's name. Notice verse 47.

47) *Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (KJV)*

Those who were receiving the invitation. The Greek word for *church* we know is *ecclesia*, Strong's #1577 and the word means "a calling out". In The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Zodhiates says, *it means the called people; also "the church worldwide at all times, down through history."* We know those called during the Old Testament are called "*the church in the wilderness*". It is similar to the Greek word *ecclectos* which means "selected" or "chosen"; we covered that earlier, in 1 Peter 1:2—*the elect*. So, the church is actually the *elected ones*. The ones who have been called, who have responded to the calling and come into the very church of God. They are *the elect*. In this age, the only ones to be part of the church are the ones the Father calls. The calling has to be there. We have had those who wandered into the church out of curiosity or who knows why, but they weren't called and it was obvious they weren't. Not that they are bad people, it's just not their time.

Now we come to the sixth point.

6. What is the purpose of our calling?

We've seen what our duty and obligation is, but there's a purpose behind all of that. What is the purpose of our calling? Let's go to John 12:37. The Apostle John is writing about Jesus Christ and describing what he has seen, being the one who

Christ loved and the one who put his head on Christ's chest—there was a special bond between the two of them.

John 12:37 *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:*

38) *That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, [now John quotes Isaiah 53:1] Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

39) *Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again ... (KJV)*

Now he quotes Isaiah 6:9.

40) *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. (KJV)*

The purpose of our Father's calling is for us to be converted, to be changed. If water is boiled, it is converted to steam, it's converted into a different material in that regard. We are to be converted. It was not the Jews time to be called or converted. But it is indeed our time. We have been called and are hopefully in the process of conversion. To become converted from what we were before our baptism into the image of Christ Himself. Who came to the earth as a human and lived a perfect life without sin to set us an example. That's our standard—the gold standard for us. Let's go to Colossians 3:8 where Paul is writing about conversion and what it means. Paul gets down to the nitty gritty of it. Later we'll look at Ephesians 4 where he talks specifically about conversion and what it means to us on a day to day basis.

Colossians 3:8 *But now ye also put off all these; [this is what we have to get rid of; sweep our spiritual house clean of] anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

9) *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; (KJV)*

The old man or woman who existed prior to baptism.

10) *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him [the Father] that created him [the new man]: (KJV)*

Verse 12.

12) *Put on therefore, as the elect of God ... (KJV)*

This is the same Greek word Strong's #1588, *eklektos*, "select" or "chosen". It was translated "chosen" in 1 Peter 2:9 which we just read a little while ago. Here it is translated "elect", going on in verse 12, out of the New Living Translation.

12 continued) *... you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. (NLT)*

If you weren't this way before, you have to become this way through the power of the Holy Spirit. Notice verse 13.

13) Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. (NLT)

That is a command. There's no getting out of this. "*They did this horrible thing that can never be forgiven*"—that is not true. We must forgive others no matter the severity of the offense or how badly we have been hurt; we must forgive others.

14) Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

15) And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. (NLT)

And that is exactly why Pacific has the name it does; it means "*peaceful*".

15 continued) ... And always be thankful. (NLT)

We live like kings in comparison to most of the world. Now let's go to Ephesians 4 where Paul adds more to the description of conversion. He wants the church to understand what conversion is all about. We'll start off reading in the New Living Translation. Paul was a prisoner and suffered more than any of us who have suffered, so he speaks from experience.

Ephesians 4:1 *Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg [he's begging at the end of his life] you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.*

2) Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. (NLT)

We are all imperfect, we all have faults and sins and all fall short of Jesus Christ and we ought to, as my dad used to say: "*cut each other some slack*", because of that.

3) Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. (NLT)

Continuing in verse 4—out of the Amplified.

4) There is one body [of believers] and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when called [to salvation]— (AMP)

Continuing in verse 11—in the King James.

11) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (KJV)

Verse 13—out of the New Living Translation.

13) *This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. (NLT)*

This should be our daily goal. We should measure up to the full example, the full standard, of Christ; walk in His footsteps.

Continuing in verse 22—out of the NIV.

22) *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; (NIV)*

Back to the King James.

23) *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;*

24) *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

25) *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

26) *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

27) *Neither give place [the Greek means a home or opportunity] to the devil.*

28) *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

29) *Let no corrupt [the Greek meaning rotten or worthless] communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

30) *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

31) *Let all bitterness [not some] ... (KJV)*

I've seen God's people walk out of the church bitter because God didn't do what they wanted God to do. It didn't turn out the way they wanted and they became bitter over it and they walked out.

31 continued) *... and wrath, and anger, and clamour, [the Greek means screaming or screeching] and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

32) *And be ye kind one to another, [these keep coming back] tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (KJV)*

So we see that we are called—the purpose of our calling—is to change to be in the image of Jesus Christ. To convert from the old person to the new person. Between Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4, we have a lot of changing to do. I've been in the church almost sixty years and I think, there is so much more to change. If we do change, then we fulfill the ultimate purpose of our calling. We are called to change but what is the ultimate purpose? Let's go to Revelation 17:14. This is what our Father's goal and what His Son's goal is for us once the invitation is issued to us.

Down the road, whenever our life ends or whenever Christ and Father returns to this earth, this is the ultimate goal.

Revelation 17:14 *These [referring the ten kings in prophecy] shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen [that means elect or converted], and faithful. (KJV)*

That is our ultimate goal; spirit beings forever in the presence of the Father and His Son.

The seventh and last point is something that, as we go forward, we always have to be aware of and be on watch for because Satan takes no days off and is always after us; back to the parable of the sheepfold, to kill, steal and destroy.

7. Humans can accept their calling, or they can reject their calling, at any time.

Let's go to Luke 18:18. The Greek for ruler means somebody who is a chief of the area he is ruling. A ruler is coming to Christ and asking Him a question. We get down to the nitty gritty for the purpose of life.

Luke 18:18 *And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

19) *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, [here again the Greek word "ho" which means "the" is omitted] God.*

20) *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.*

21) *And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.*

22) *Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: (KJV)*

This is in addition to keeping the commandments, this isn't replacing the commandments, it's in addition. He has already done that. Christ says there is one more thing that you must do.

22 continued) *... sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. (KJV)*

Christ is eliminating the last stumbling block and this man had a big one. He has done that with all of us. Some of us have given up careers or jobs or whatever we put as an idol before God Almighty. At some point the Father says, you have to make a choice. He's saying that to this young man.

23) *And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.*

24) *And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (KJV)*

This very wealthy individual walked away from his calling. He just walked away from his calling. Now let's go to Matthew 22:1. Christ is giving us a parable about what the Kingdom of heaven is like and our ears should prick up.

*Matthew 22:1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,
2) The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son ... (KJV)*

This is obviously a parable between Christ's Father and Christ Himself.

3) And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. (KJV)

They rejected the invitation.

*4) Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.
5) But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: (KJV)*

Many excuses for rejecting the call.

6) And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. (KJV)

We know that Israel did that to the prophets of God routinely.

7) But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. (KJV)

Judah's religious leaders, many of them knowingly rejected Christ. Knowingly walked away; they could have followed Christ as the Messiah. The temple was destroyed forty years later.

8) Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. (KJV)

Because they rejected the call.

*9) Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.
10) So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. (KJV)*

The weak of the world responded to the call. We read that in 1 Corinthians 1:26.

Continuing verse 11—out of the NLT.

11) *But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding.*

12) *'Friend, he asked, how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?' But the man had no reply. (NLT)*

He answered the call to attend the wedding, but he was not prepared to attend the wedding. He had not done what he was supposed to do. In this analogy, to put on some clothes. We're told to put on the new person and he hadn't done that.

13) *Then the king said to his aides, [if you just take the parable on the surface this seems like a pretty bad punishment for someone just not dressed properly for a wedding, but this speaks to being prepared spiritually] 'Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'* (NLT)

Answering or rejected our Father's call is a life or death matter. Not only is it life or death, but those who desire to attend the wedding ceremony—the wedding supper—have to be prepared and the Father gives us time to prepare ourselves and become like His Son in character. Verse 14 in the King James version, where now we come to the nitty gritty.

14) *For many are called, but few are chosen. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *called* is Strong's #2822, it's the Greek word *klatos* and it means "invited to be a saint". So many are invited to be a saint; to come and follow Christ and have eternal life. To change from the old person to the new person. But it says *few are chosen*. *Chosen* is Strong's #1588, *eklektos*, *few are selected*, *few are elected*. We see the invitation goes out to many individuals comparatively speaking and some respond and some don't. Some ignore it and walk away as the Jews did. Those who respond and repent and become baptized, have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and begin to change and become converted—they are *selected*, *elected* or *chosen* as the firstfruits. In various New Testament scriptures, they are called *the elect*, *the chosen* or *the firstfruits*.

Why do some not respond? I ran across a translation of this verse called the *Mase New Testament*—I had never heard of that before—it translates verse 14 as:

Thus, many are called, but few are converted.

An interesting thought. Few fulfill the obligation of their calling. They don't follow through to repent, to examine themselves, to be baptized, to receive the Holy Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to become converted and to change. There are few that actually follow through with that to the very end. A minister told me—I hadn't been in the church ten years and I was asking him about God's plan of salvation—he said something I will never forget:

"Not everyone will be in the Kingdom of God. That's just a fact. Not everyone is going to be in the Kingdom of God. Few are chosen. If—the big if—if we answer the call, show fruits of the calling, we repent and receive the

indwelling of the Holy Spirit and overcome, then we are chosen, we are selected or elected.”

Notice what 1 Peter 1:1 says. Peter is writing to a general area of the Middle East.

1 Peter 1:1 *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
2) Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ... (KJV)*

This word “elect” is the same Greek word, Strong’s #1588 as in “many are called, few are *chosen*.” He’s saying this to God’s people throughout that general area. He is saying you are the *elect*, you are *chosen* because of the fact that you are here, you’ve been baptized and received the Holy Spirit and are overcoming and growing.

Going on in verse 2—out of the NLT.

2 continued) ... and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace. (NLT)

Once we respond to the call and we do our part, then we are chosen, we are elected to be the Firstfruits. As with Adam and Eve going back to the very beginning, our Father allows us the freedom to choose. Here is the scary thing. We can walk away from our calling at any time. I’ve seen people do it. I’ve been in the church for decades. Some trial happens, something doesn’t turn out the way they want and they are just done—they throw it all away and they walk away. We can walk away from our calling after we’ve been baptized, after we’ve received the Holy Spirit, after we’ve been in the church for decades and have grown and overcome. Still people walk away from their calling. We have the freedom to choose just as Adam and Eve did. This is why we have to foster a daily, closer relationship with our Father, with the One who called us. We have to get closer and closer. Certainly, in this day and time, as we come to the end of this age and what the Apostles had to go through with the Roman Empire and the destruction of the Temple and all that went on—the persecution—we have to daily get close to the One who called us. Peter gives us some encouragement in 2 Peter 1:10. It’s up to us; the help is available if we ask for it, if we act on it.

2 Peter 1:10 *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: [make it a certainty] for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: (KJV)*

The message is, we have to treasure our calling. We can’t take it for granted and we can never reject it. We have to make our calling and our election a certainty by our conduct, by our closeness to our Father and His Son and by how we treat other people—loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Let’s conclude now. The Bible reveals that the Father does the calling. Once He has called, He turns those over to His Son. We found out that the weak and the lowly are the ones He has called. We’ve also seen through God’s Word that the Father’s calling opens up our mind to the truth that we were blind to before. Our duty and

obligation, once we are called, is to repent and be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit and grow and overcome. The purpose of our calling is to change from the old man, the old woman, to the new and the end result being eternal life. The last thing—the scary thing that we learned—humans can keep accepting their calling or at any time they can walk away. We dare not get to that point.

So despite the trials and tribulations that come with our calling, as James pointed out last month, there are trials and tribulations that come with our calling. This very day we have a special blessing of being called. Let's go to Romans 8:28. We know this by heart, I'll just read it to you.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (KJV)*

Everything works together for good, no matter how hard the trial. Let's close with one final scripture, 1 Thessalonians 5:23. In this day and age we need things we can count on and our Father and His Son we can absolutely count on and trust in Him and this verifies that fact. I'll read this out of the New Living Translation.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 *Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul [which means your life] and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.*

24) God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful. (NLT)