

**“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” (1 Pet. 2:9-10.)**

**“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.” (Deut. 14:2.)**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.” (Tit. 2:11-15.)**

The apostle in the preceding verses speaks of the great difference between Christians and unbelievers, on account of their diverse and opposite relations to Jesus Christ. The former have Christ for their foundation, they come to Him as a living stone, a stone chosen of God, and precious; and they also as living stones are built up a spiritual house. The Christian church is the temple of God, and particular believers are the stones of which that temple is built. The stones of Solomon's temple, which were so curiously polished and well fitted for their places in that building, were a type of believers. And Christ is the foundation of this building, or the chief corner stone. On the contrary, to the latter, to unbelievers, Christ, instead of being a foundation on which they rest and depend, is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; instead of being a foundation to support them and keep them from falling, He is an occasion of their stumbling and falling. To believers Christ is a precious stone; *“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.”* But to unbelievers He is a stone that is disallowed, and rejected, and set at nought. They set light by Him, as by the stones of the street; they make no account of Him, they disallow Him; when they come to build, they cast this stone away as being of no use, not fit for a foundation, not fit for a place in their building. In the eighth verse the apostle tells the Christians to whom he writes, that those unbelievers who thus reject Christ, and to whom He is a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence, were appointed to this.

***“And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.” (1 Pet. 2:8)***

It was appointed that they should stumble at the word; that Christ should be an occasion not of their salvation, but of their deeper damnation. And then in our text, he puts the Christians in mind how far otherwise God had dealt with them, than with those reprobates. They were a chosen generation. God had rejected the others in His eternal counsels; but themselves He had chosen from eternity. They were a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. As He distinguished the people of Israel of old from all other nations, so He distinguishes true Christians. It is probable the apostle had in mind some expressions that are used in the Old Testament, concerning the people of Israel. Christians are said here to be a chosen generation, according to what was said of Israel of old.

***“Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.” (Deut. 10:15)***

Christians are here said to be a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, agreeable to what was said of old of Israel. ***“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”*** (Exod. 19:5,6.) But There is something further said here of Christians than there of Israel. There, it is promised to Israel that, if they obey, they shall be a kingdom of priests; but here Christians are said to be a priesthood of kings, or a royal priesthood. They are a priesthood, and they are also kings.

I propose to insist distinctly upon the several propositions contained in the words of the text. 1. True Christians are a chosen generation. Two things are implied here; First, That true Christians are chosen by God from the rest of the world, to be His. Second, That God’s people are of a peculiar descent and pedigree, different from all the world besides. Again, True Christians are chosen by God from the rest of the world. God does not utterly cast off the world of mankind. Though they are fallen and corrupted, and there is a curse brought upon the world, yet God entertained a design of appropriating a certain number to Himself. Indeed all men and all creatures are his, both before the fall as well as after the fall; whether they are elected or not, they are His. God does not lose His right to them by the fall, neither does He lose His power to dispose of them; they are still in His hands. Neither does He lose His end in creating them. God hath made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil.

It possibly was Satan’s design, in endeavoring the fall of man, to cause that God should lose the creature that He had made, by getting him away from God into his own possession, and to frustrate God of His end in creating man; but this Satan has not obtained. But yet in a sense the wicked may be said not to belong to God. God doth not own them; He hath rejected them and cast them away; they are not God’s portion, they are Satan’s portion; God hath left them, and they are lost. When man fell, God left and cast off the bulk of mankind; but He was pleased, notwithstanding the universal fall, to choose out a number of them to be His, whom He would still appropriate to Himself. Though the world is a fallen world, yet it was the will of God still to have a portion in it, and therefore He chose out some and set them apart for Himself.

***“But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.”*** (Ps. 4:3)

***“God’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.”*** (Deut. 32:9)

Those who are God’s enemies, and to whom He is an enemy, are still His. But those who are His friends, His children, His jewels, that compose His treasure, are His in a very different manner. God has chosen the godly out of the rest of the world to be nearly related to Him, to stand in the relation of children, to have a property in Him, that they might not only be His people, but that He might be their God; He has chosen these to bestow Himself upon them. He hath chosen them from among others to be gracious to them, to show them His favour; He has chosen them to enjoy Him, to see His glory, and to dwell with Him for ever. He hath chosen them as His treasure, as a man chooses out gems from a heap of stones, with this difference, the man finds gems very different from other stones, and therefore chooses them. But God chooses them, and therefore they become gems, and very different from others.

***“And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”***  
(Mal. 3:17.)

***“For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.”*** (Ps. 135:4)

God hath chosen them for a most noble and excellent use, therefore they are called vessels unto honour, and elect vessels. God has different uses for different men. Some are destined to a baser use, and are vessels unto dishonour; others are chosen for the most noble use, for serving and glorifying God, and that God may show the glory of divine grace upon them. Several things may here be observed concerning this election of God, whereby He chooses truly godly persons. First, this election supposes that the persons chosen are found among others. The word election denotes this, it signifies a choosing out. The elect are favoured by electing grace among the rest of mankind, with whom they are found mixed together as the tares and the wheat. They are found among them in the same sinfulness, and in the same misery, and are alike partakers of original corruption. They are among them in being destitute of any thing in them that is good, in enmity against God, in being in bondage to Satan, in condemnation to eternal destruction, and in being without righteousness. So that there is no distinction between them prior to that which the election makes, there is no respect wherein the elect are not among the common multitude of mankind.

***“For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?”*** (1 Cor. 4:7)

***“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”*** (1 Cor. 6:11)

Secondly. No foreseen excellency in the elected is the motive that influences God to choose them. Election is only from His good pleasure. God’s election being the first thing that causes any distinction, there can be no distinction already existing, the foresight of which influences God to choose them. It is not the seeing of any amiableness in them above others, that causes God to choose them rather than the rest. God does not choose men, because they are excellent; but He makes them excellent, and that is because He has chosen them. It is not because God considers them as holy that He chooses them; but He chooses them that they might be holy.

***“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”*** (Eph. 1:4,5)

God does not choose them from the foresight of any respect they will have towards Him more than others. God does not choose men and set His care upon them because they love Him, for He hath first loved us. ***“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*** (1 John 4:10.) ***“We love him, because he first loved us.”*** (1 John 4:19.) It is not from any foresight of good works that men do before or after conversion; but on the contrary, men do good works because God hath chosen them.

***“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”*** (John 15:16)

Nor did God choose men, because He foresaw that they would believe and come to Christ. Faith is the consequence of election, and not the cause of it. ***“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.”*** (Acts 13:48.) It is because God hath chosen men, that He calls them to Christ, and causes them to come to Him. To suppose that election is from the foresight of faith, is to place calling before election, which is contrary to the order in which the Scripture represents things.

***“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”*** (Rom 8:30)

It is not from the foresight of any, either moral or natural qualifications, that God chooses men, nor because He sees that some men are of a more amiable make, and better natural temper, or genius, nor because He foresees that some men will have better abilities, and will have more wisdom than others, and so will be able to do more service for God than others; nor because He foresees that they will be great and rich, and so possessed of greater advantages to serve Him.

***“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.”***  
(1 Cor. 1:27,28)

Nor is it from any foresight of men’s endeavors after conversion, because He sees that some whom He chooses will do much more than others to obtain heaven; but God chooses them, and therefore awakens them, and prompts them to strive for conversion.

***“So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”***(Rom 9:16)

Election in Scripture is every where referred to as God’s own good pleasure. *“Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.”* (Matt. 11:26.)

***“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”***(2 Tim. 1:9)

Thirdly. True Christians are chosen of God from all eternity; not only before they were born, but before the world was created. They were foreknown of God, and chosen by Him out of the world. *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”* (Eph. 1:4.)

***“According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.”***(2 Tim 1:9)

Fourthly. God in election set His love upon those whom He elected. *“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”* (Rom. 9:13.) *“The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”* (Jer. 31:3.) *“We love him because he first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19.) A God of infinite goodness and benevolence loves those that have no excellency to move or attract it; the love of men is consequent upon some loveliness in the object, but the love of God is antecedent to, and the cause of it. Believers were from all eternity beloved both by the Father and the Son. The eternal love of the Father appears in that He from all eternity contrived a way for their salvation, and chose Jesus Christ to be their Redeemer, and laid help upon Him.

It is a fruit of this electing love that God sent His Son into the world to die, it was to redeem those whom He so loved. *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* (1 John 4:10.) It is the fruit of the eternal, electing love of Jesus Christ, that He was willing to come into the world, and die for sinners, and that He actually came and died.

***“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”***(Gal. 2:20)

And so conversion, and glorification, and all that is done for a believer from the first to the last, is a fruit of electing love.

I love you. Amen.