

Second Stage: Chosen



Secure in God's Choice (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. Our theme this week has been "Secure in God's Choice." I do trust you have found it helpful. If so, please let me hear from you. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you, so please take time to write, even if it is only a brief, personal note. Write today.

Now, back to our theme, "Secure in God's Choice."

In my previous talks I've been explaining that God has a plan for the life of every one of us. It's just part of the total plan that He has for the whole universe but in some certain sense, as God's children through faith in Jesus Christ, we are the very center of that plan. This plan was conceived in eternity, before creation took place, before time began. It has seven successive stages. The first I spoke about yesterday: God foreknew. Everything in the plan proceeds out of God's foreknowledge and everything is based on His foreknowledge.

Today I'm going to speak about the second stage in God's plan: God chose. First He foreknew, then He chose.

We'll go back and look at some scriptures we looked at yesterday in this connection. Ephesians 1:3-4:

> "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him." (NAS)

Notice that everything in those verses centers around the fact that God chose us. His plan is being worked out. It's based on His choice. He chose us that we should be hold and blameless before Him. I have to say that if God hadn't chosen us, I'd have no faith that that could ever happen, My faith is based on the fact that God, not I, made the choice. And if God made the choice then in a certain sense I can say with reverence, "It's His responsibility to see that it happens."

And then in 1 Peter 1:1-2:

> "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..." (NAS)

I pointed out yesterday, but I'll reaffirm that first, God knows or foreknows and then he chooses. His choice is always based on His knowledge. That should relive us of a lot of anxiety. If God has chosen us to do something, He has done it because He knows that by His grace we will be able to do what He chose us to do. You see, it's a very important thing to understand that in all God's dealings with man, as a matter of fact, with the whole universe, God always retains the initiative. The initiative never passes out of God's hands.

This is true in various aspects of God's dealing recorded in the New Testament. And let me just give you a few examples because I think today so many of us scarcely leave the initiative with God. We are inclined to think that everything depends on what we do and that if we don't do it, it won't happen. That is true in a certain sense but it's not the real truth. The real truth is God set it all in being. For instance with regard to the new birth or salvation, the initiative is with God. A lot of people think that they got born again because they decided. That's not really the truth. We are born again because God decided. We have to respond to God's decision but without His decision it could never have happened by us alone. James 1:18:

> "In the exercise of His will [that's God] He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the firstfruits among His creatures." (NAS)

Notice in the exercise "of His will [God] brought us forth." We were born again because God chose to make it so. And another translation says of the same verse, "He chose to give us birth through the word of truth." But bear in ind the new birth proceeds, not out of our choice but out of God's choice.

And then this is true of salvation, which is another aspect of the same experience. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul says to the Christians there:

> "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." (NAS)

Notice, God chose you for salvation. You didn't get saved because you chose it, you got saved because God chose it. Never wrest the initiative out of God's hands. As long as you see the initiative is in God's hands, you can rest, you can feel confident. But if you think that everything starts with you, you'll never have real inner rest and peace. You'll always be uneasy.

This is true about apostleship in John 15:16. Jesus said to his apostles:

> "You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you." (NAS)

Jesus said, "You didn't choose Me to become apostles, I chose you." And that's true of every function in the Body of Christ. It doesn't happen because we choose, it happens because the Lord chooses. Peter applied this to his own experience in Acts 15:7, talking to the council held in Jerusalem. It says:

> "Peter stood up and said to them, 'Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.'" (NAS)

Peter didn't go to the household of Cornelius because he chose to, he went because God chose. Everything significant in the Body of Christ and in the service of the Lord proceeds out of God's choice, not out of man's choice.

The same is true of the apostle Paul. He had that marvelous revelation of Jesus on the Damascus Road, went into Damascus and was there for three days without sight, without food or drink and God sent another disciple, Ananias, to go in and pray for him that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Spirit. And when Ananias came in, this is what he said in Acts 22:14-15:

> "Then he said [that's Ananias speaking to Paul], 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of his mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.'" (NKJ)

Paul didn't become an apostle because he chose. In fact, he would never have chosen. Let to himself it would have been the furthest thing from his thinking. Furthermore, no one in the early church would ever have chosen Paul to be an apostle. He would have been at the bottom of the list. They would have crossed his name right off. God made the choice.

God, "the God of our fathers," Ananias said, "has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Righteous One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men…" Do you understand? There's a certain confidence when it's God's choice. It's not "God wants you to be His witness," it is "you will be His witness." Why will you be His witness? Because God chose you. If we could have that attitude in our lives instead of trying to be something, if we could find out what God chose us to be then we'd have a quite confidence that we'll be whatever God chose us to be.

Again, I want to go back to this fact and emphasize it once more that God's choice is based on His knowledge of His foreknowledge. Foreknowledge simply means "knowing in advance." There's a very clear example in the case of Abraham. In Genesis 18:17-19 the Lord says this about Abraham:

> "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." (NKJ)

Why did God choose Abraham? Because He'd known him. He knew that here in Abraham was a man in whom He could fulfill His will, a man who would do the things that He wanted done. It's so comforting, so important to understand, God's choice in our lives is based on His knowledge of us. Never get the attitude, "Well, God has chosen me to do something but I can't do it." God knows you can do it. If He didn't know you could do it He wouldn't have chosen you. He hose on the basis of His knowledge.

It's very interesting, an alternative modern translation of Genesis 18:19 says not "I have known him," but "I have chosen him." Those are two different ways of translating the same word. I can't go into all the reasons why you could translate it either way, although the normal translation is certainly "to know," not "to choose." But it brings out so very clearly that God's knowledge leads to His choice. We need to apply that to our own lives. Don't try to be something that God has not chosen you to be. Don't make your own plan. Don't work out the bet that you can do because that is not sufficient. Find out what God has chosen you to be. It may be very different from what you have anticipated or what you had planned for yourself. But when you discover what God's choice is, then you can know for sure that it's based on His knowledge of you and that He knows you well enough to know that by His grace, not without his grace but by His grace, you can be and you can do what He has chosen you to do.

Let me close by making this, it could be a rather controversial statement. I think it's very opposite to much of the thinking in the contemporary church, God makes His selection. He does not call for volunteers. I think a lot of people in the church have got the idea they can volunteer for something and God will accept that. It's not true. God makes His choice and He doesn't ask us to volunteer. He asks us to respond to His choice.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll continue with this theme, "Secure in God's Choice." I'll be explaining the remaining five stages of God's plan.

Radio Program

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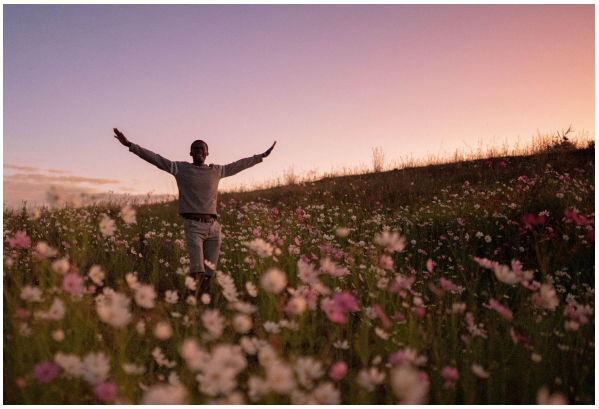

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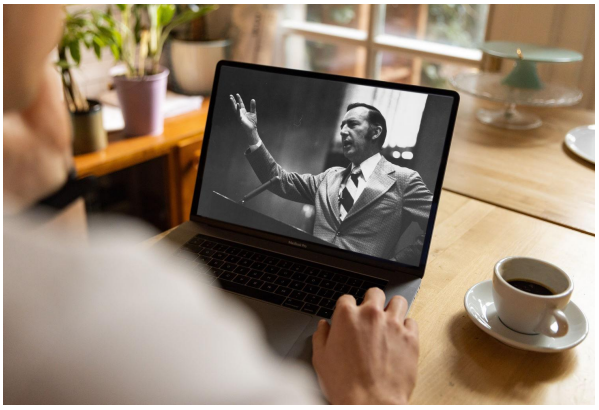

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