

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

GOD'S
SELECTION
ACCORDING
TO HIS GRACE

WITNESS LEE

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

GOD'S
SELECTION
ACCORDING
TO HIS GRACE

WITNESS LEE

Living Stream Ministry

Anaheim, CA • www.lsm.org

GOD'S SELECTION ACCORDING TO HIS GRACE

In [Romans 1:9](#) Paul says that he served God in the gospel of His Son. This gospel includes many wonderful items: sonship, designation, resurrection, justification, sanctification, transformation, conformation, glorification, and manifestation. In this booklet we shall consider a further item—the selection of grace. If we would know the gospel of the Son of God thoroughly, we need to see that God's selection is included in it. This selection is the selection of grace. As [Romans 11:5](#) says, “So then at the present time also there is a remnant according to the selection of grace.”

GOD'S SELECTION

In society, selection is related to birth, upbringing, education, and success in the world. Divine selection is absolutely different. We were selected even before we were born, in fact, before the foundation of the world. Human selection depends upon what people are in themselves. Those who are good, promising, or successful, are likely to be selected. God's selection, on the

contrary, does not depend upon what we are; it depends entirely upon God and His desire.

In [Romans 9](#) Paul used the case of Jacob and Esau as an illustration of God's selection. Before they were born, God had told Rebecca, "The greater shall serve the less" ([Rom. 9:12](#)). God's choice was made before the children were born, before they had done anything good or bad. This was so that the "purpose of God according to selection might remain, not of works, but of Him who calls" ([Rom. 9:11](#)). Nevertheless, when he was in the womb, Jacob was struggling to be born first. It was of God's mercy that Jacob was not successful. If he had succeeded, he would not have received God's selection.

In a very real sense, we all are Jacobs struggling to be first. From our very birth, we have had the concept that we must struggle in order to gain something for ourselves. Even though we may fail again and again, we keep on striving. We are just like Jacob, the supplanter, whom God predestined to be second but who still struggled to be first. Praise God for the restraining hand of His mercy that has kept us from succeeding in our endeavors! He restrains us because He had already selected us long before we were born.

SELECTION, PREDESTINATION, AND CALLING

God's selection is related to His predestination and to His calling. Of the three, selection is first, followed by predestination and calling. Firstly, God selected us. Then He marked us out, that is, predestinated us. Both selection and predestination took place before we were born. Then at a certain point in our life, God came in to call us.

[Ephesians 1:4 and 5](#) prove that God's selection and predestination took place in eternity past: "According as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish before Him, in love, having predestinated us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Before the universe came into existence, God selected us and predestinated us unto sonship. We need to exercise our spirit in faith to believe this word written in the Scripture. On the day appointed by God, we were born. Eventually, also at the time appointed by Him, we were saved. Even though we may have had no intention of believing in the Lord Jesus, we came to believe in Him, because we had been selected and predestinated by God. This is the selection

of grace in which God's mercy is manifested. As Paul says in [Romans 9:16](#), "So then, it is not of the one who wills, nor of the one who runs, but of God, the One who shows mercy."

GOD'S ARRANGEMENT

If we look back upon our past, we shall worship the Lord. We shall realize that our steps have been not of ourselves, but of Him. Before we were born, He selected us and predestinated us and arranged everything related to us, including the time and place of our birth. Moreover, He appointed all our days and all the places where we are to be. According to God's arrangement, I was born in the twentieth century. Furthermore, I was born in an area where it was easy to have contact with Christians. This was altogether of God. Furthermore, my life with the Lord proves that our way is determined by Him, and my experience testifies it is not of the one who wills nor of the one who runs, but of the One who shows mercy. Everything that happens to us is a matter of divine mercy.

THE PROOF OF GOD'S SELECTION

I do not wish to enter into the theological

debate concerning man's responsibility in relation to God's sovereignty. I simply desire to emphasize the fact of God's selection. We all have become Christians because of this selection. Many of us do not even know why we became Christians in the first place. Some of us may even have tried to stop believing in the Lord, but we were not successful in doing so. On the one hand, it is wonderful to be a Christian; but on the other hand, it is extremely trying and difficult. We Christians are not only Jacobs, but also Jobs. Due to God's selection, we had no choice except to become Christians. Now that we have believed into the Lord Jesus, we simply cannot escape from Him. This proves that we have been selected by God.

Within us there is something that causes us to believe in the Lord, whether we want to believe in Him or not. This comes from the selection of grace. We may want to get a "divorce" from the Lord, but He refuses to sign the certificate of divorce. God is not afraid of any attempt we might make to escape from Him. He knows that however hard we may try, we cannot get away. This is the strongest proof that we have been selected by God. How marvelous is the divine selection of grace!

THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

We see God's selection in a practical way in our preaching of the gospel. A number of unbelievers may attend the same meeting and hear the same message; however, only certain ones respond. This is difficult to explain. We can attribute it only to God's selection, predestination, and calling.

I remember a story told about D. L. Moody. One day a student expressed the concern that through his preaching of the gospel someone could be saved who had not been selected by God. Moody told him not to be troubled, but to simply continue to preach the gospel. Furthermore, Moody said that he should allow anyone who is willing to believe to receive the Lord. Moody went on to say that over the entrance of heaven there will be written the words, "Whosoever will may come," but that after a person passes through the entrance, he will see inscribed upon the inside of it these words: "Chosen from before the foundation of the world."

ALL A MATTER OF GOD'S MERCY

If we would properly serve God in the gospel

of His Son, we must know that the gospel includes the selection of grace. The gospel is wholly a matter of God's sovereign mercy. Many years ago, I had some realization of this, but my realization is much stronger today. Through many years of experience, I have become strongly and deeply convinced that everything that happens to us is of God. All is a matter of God's mercy. The more we see this, the more we shall spontaneously bear our responsibility before the Lord.

However, even the bearing of responsibility is of God's mercy. Why is it that some believers are willing to bear their responsibility and that others are not? The answer lies in God's mercy. In [Romans 9:15](#) Paul quotes the Lord's words, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Because of God's mercy in His selection of grace, we responded to the gospel when others did not respond; we received a word about Christ as our life when others refused to receive it; and we took the way of the Lord's recovery today when others drew back from taking this way. Some can testify that although they are in the Lord's recovery today, those who brought them to this way did not come this way themselves.

Regarding His recovery, God has mercy on

whom He will have mercy. We are not in the Lord's recovery because we are more intelligent than others or because we seek the Lord more than others do. Our being here is altogether due to the mercy of God. If you consider how the Lord brought you into the church life in the Lord's recovery, you will worship Him for His mercy. I believe that we in the Lord's recovery are among the remnant according to the selection of grace ([Rom. 11:5](#)). Regarding the gospel, the ministry of life, and the church life in the Lord's recovery, God has had mercy upon us. How we must praise Him for His sovereign mercy!

We should have no trust in ourselves, and we should not think we are here because of anything that we are or that we have done. Our being in the Lord's recovery today is not of our willing nor of our running, but of God, the One who shows mercy. What a mercy that we are saved and that we are willing to take the Lord's way! Furthermore, it is a mercy that we are willing to be separated from today's evil age. The world is both attractive and attracting. Nevertheless, I can testify that I simply have no appetite for the things of the world. I am covered with a kind of divine insulation, an insulation that keeps me

from the world system. This is another aspect of God's mercy.

WORSHIPPING THE LORD FOR HIS MERCY

If we would serve the Lord, we must know the Spirit, the life in the Spirit, and the righteousness of God. Furthermore, we must know God's mercy in the selection of grace. In the past I dreamed of a flourishing work in north China, even in inner Mongolia and Manchuria. But that dream was never fulfilled, and instead, by the Lord's mercy I am in this country today. I look to the Lord that He will deeply impress us with the matter of His mercy in selecting us. Do not put your trust in what you are able to do or in what you plan to do. Rather, bow down before the Lord and worship Him for His mercy. The more you worship the Lord for His mercy, the more you will be uplifted. Instead of striving to bear responsibility, you will find that, in His mercy, the Lord is bearing you. We all need to know the Lord in this way. What a mercy that He has selected us, predestinated us, called us, and placed us in His recovery! For our future we trust not in ourselves, but in Him and in His marvelous mercy. Everything regarding us has been initiated by the Lord.

All is of Him; nothing is of us. I can testify that the more we worship God for His mercy, the more we are deeply in His heart and the more we are one with Him.

TRUSTING IN THE LORD'S MERCY

Do not strive to bear responsibility. Instead, worship God for His selection. If you do this, He will bear you in the bearing of responsibility. The more we try in ourselves to be responsible, the more we shall suffer inwardly. Our inward taste will be that of bitterness. But if we worship the Lord for His mercy and experience Him bearing us in bearing the responsibility, our inward taste will be as sweet as honey. One reason I am happy day by day is that I have learned to trust in the Lord's mercy and to worship Him for it. Years ago I used to ask the Lord to do so many things for me. But now I pray by thanking Him for His mercy. He said that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and compassion on whom He will have compassion. If we enjoy the Lord's mercy and worship Him for His selection, we shall be in the heavenlies.

Our going on with the Lord is a matter not of our willing or running, but of God's mercy. Our

willing is of no avail, and our running is in vain. God's mercy, however, works in a wonderful way. We are changeable, constantly fluctuating. It seems that, as far as we are concerned, our spiritual condition is like weather that is unstable. Hence, we need to see that the selection of grace does not depend on us, but depends on God's selection of us before the world began. What we are experiencing today is related to God's selection in eternity past. If we see this, we shall turn our eyes away from ourselves and from our circumstances and gaze steadfastly upon Him.

THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

The gospel in which we serve God is a gospel of grace, not a gospel of works. As [Romans 11:6](#) says, "But if by grace, it is no longer out of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace." However, the fact that God's selection is wholly a matter of His grace does not mean that we are free to do whatever we want. If this is our attitude, then we either have not been selected by God or we are backsliders from God's selection. Oh, let us forget ourselves and our situation and keep our eyes upon the Lord. Again and again, let us say, "Lord, we praise You for Your selection of grace. O Lord,

we worship You for Your mercy.” This is the gospel revealed in the book of Romans.

This booklet is compiled from
Life-study of Romans
© 1984 Living Stream Ministry

Please feel free to share this eBooklet with others.

See more titles in this series at
www.lsm.org/booklets.

SEE LINKS TO PURCHASE
Life-study of Romans
AUDIOBOOK • EBOOK • PRINT

Purchase *Life-study of Romans*

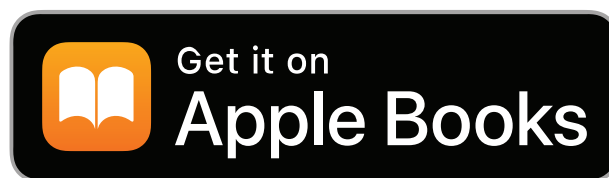
*Click on the badge for the format
you wish to purchase.*

Audiobook

available at



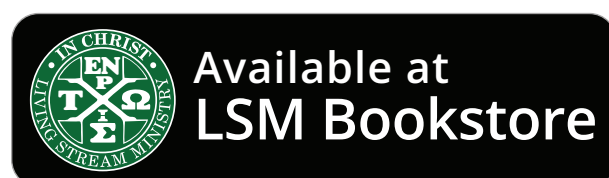
eBook



available at



Print



www.lsm.org/life-study-romans