

# Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

## An Expository Journey Through **1Peter** **1Peter 2:7-10**

### 18- Proclaiming the Excellencies of Jesus- Part 2

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May 6, 2018

#### **1Peter 2:7-10**

<sup>7</sup> This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "***THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,***"

<sup>8</sup> and, "***A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE***"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

<sup>9</sup> But you are ***A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION,*** so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

<sup>10</sup> for you once were ***NOT A PEOPLE,*** but now you are ***THE PEOPLE OF GOD;*** you had ***NOT RECEIVED MERCY,*** but now you have ***RECEIVED MERCY.***

To the Glory of God

Now this Sermon is going to offend some of you. And the *reason* that it is going to offend some of you is *not* because there is fault with the Sermon. I'm *not* going to preach false doctrine today. I'm going to faithfully, I pray, exposit what God the Holy Spirit moved along the Apostle Peter to write in the Passage that Brother Vern just read to us. And just *how faithfully* my words line up with what Peter wrote here will be a matter for you to determine in your own souls and minds.

But I want to be clear, the issue before us today is *not* whether we believe what I'm going to say, but whether we believe what the Bible says. Because, I am seeing something that is very frightening to me,

something that *should not be*, but is. During my journey with Jesus, there appears to be a seemingly increasing number of people in the modern church who feel the liberty to embrace *portions* of the Bible as being true, while *excluding* other portions that do not sit well with them. And nowhere is that better illustrated with the issue of the Love of God.

So, for example, you have, I would guess, a large percentage of the people who occupy the seating in most of the Churches today who believe, *passionately*, that God loves them. They believe it, they teach it, they preach it, they rejoice in it, they sing about it, and they are quick to tell everybody they meet that God loves them. And I *totally* agree with them. And I join in *with them* to exult and rejoice and marvel and proclaim the amazing and breathtaking Love of God toward sinners.

But when asked *why* they believe that God loves them, they proceed to quote from the Bible a large number of very familiar verses and passages, from both the Old and New Testaments, that teach that a perfectly Righteous Being loves them, even though they freely acknowledge that they are unworthy sinners.

But that isn't what I asked them. I agree that God loves us. And I agree that the Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that God loves us. And I agree that it is wonderful and amazing that God loves us. But, the question I am asking is, "*Why?*" And what is astonishing to me is that *most* of these people, who fervently believe and teach and rejoice in the fact that God loves them, are never curious enough to find out what the Bible actually says as to *why* God would love them. They just "know" that He does. And that would be okay, I guess, if the Bible was silent about why. But it isn't. Along with telling us clearly and repeatedly that Almighty God does, in fact, love us, the Bible goes on to tell us why.

And you would think that after 2,000 years, the Christian Church would have this "down pat". You would *think* that after all the Sermons and all the songs and all the Bible Studies and all the Catechisms and all the Confessions and all the Missionary efforts that everybody, who goes to Church today, would know two things:

1. God loves them
2. *Why* God loves them

... yet the reality is, most don't.

And I believe that it is the lack of knowledge about *why* God would love them as to *why* they are so quick to *reject* what the Apostle Peter teaches here. Those, who lay claim to be "Evangelical", those who lay claim to believe the Bible is the "Word of God", those who spend a lot of money and a lot of time and a lot of effort to "win souls for Christ", don't seem to be able to explain *why* God loves them. And I think that is amazing.

So, since they correctly know that God does loves them, but they really don't know *why*, they then go about to *manufacture* a reason that isn't true and that the Bible doesn't teach. And this is why, in many minds, it is *assumed* that since it is true that God loves His people that this must mean there is something *lovely* or *loveable* about His people that would *earn* or *deserve* God's Love.

Since they cannot deny that God loves them, they struggle to understand *why*. So, it must be the fact that they love God so much as to *why* God loves them. Or, maybe because they serve Him so faithfully, or obey Him so easily, or because they seldom, if ever, stray away from Him as to why God loves them. Maybe it is because they have turned away from so much sin, or maybe it is the earnestness of their prayers, or the fact that God "knows their heart" as to why the Immortal and Absolute Creator and Owner of the Universe "takes a fancy" to them.

And that makes sense on a lot of levels. Because, that is *exactly* the way that *we* love. We easily and consciously "set our love" on things that we like, things that please us, things that help us, things that add to our lives, things that give us joy and happiness. We usually don't easily or consciously "love" what brings us pain or what *detracts* from our lives or what costs us. So, we love what *inherently* has the ability to make our lives "better".

For example, I love my wife, Rhonda. But I love her because she's pretty and because she adds things to my life that I don't already have. Rhonda is not just "window dressing", she possesses qualities and character traits and attributes that I don't already have. And by being around her and by watching her and listening to her and hearing her, my life has been enormously improved. There is no doubt that Rhonda is God's Choice for me in this life.

But I never remember praying, *“Lord, since it is Your Will for me to marry Rhonda, let me submit to Your Will and forsake all and join in with her in Holy Matrimony.”* I never remember praying like that. I do, however, remember seeing Rhonda as the most beautiful woman I have ever laid eyes on. I do remember watching her spend her “Spring Break” locked in the Church, for three days, fasting and praying, and being very impressed with that. I do remember listening to her pray in Prayer Meetings. I do remember looking at the way her eyes sparkled and the way her hair flowed in the wind. And I really, really, really liked that. And I remember when Rhonda stopped being “Sister Rhonda” to me, because my heart was smitten and I began to *pursue* her with every fiber of my being, all the while praying *“Please Lord, give her to me. Please let it be Your Will for me to marry that one”. I promise I’ll take care of her, but my heart will break in two if Your give her to someone else.”*

And that is all perfectly human. But that is *not* the way that God sets His Love on us. First of all, God is not a man. And so, God is not “improved” by me being saved. God’s Person and His Cause and His Ways are not made “better” or more “glorious” because of me. And God isn’t lonely, either. God the Father is the most content and satisfied Being in the Universe. God is the happiest and most joyful Being that ever could be. As God the Father rejoices in the perfections that He sees in God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and as God enjoys the Beauty and Majesty that is radiated back to Him from God the Son, God is very delighted.

So, God has need of nothing. And yet, God loves me. But my sin offends Him. My rebellion fights against Him. And my sour heart dishonors Him. So, why would God love that? Am I to assume that there is something in me that God sees as being *lovely* or *loveable*? Is there some quality or character trait that I inherently possess that impresses God? What makes *me* attractive to God that He would move upon Peter to tell me:

**... you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION ...**

... and ...

**... you once were *NOT A PEOPLE*, but now you are *THE PEOPLE OF GOD*; you had *NOT RECEIVED MERCY*, but now you have *RECEIVED MERCY*.**

God has endless cherubim and seraphim who spend their day flying all through Heaven crying:

**Isaiah 6:3b**

**... Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.**

... why would He want *me*? You see, dear friends, if God chose to love me based on something that I initiated first or some "quality" that I possess or some ethnic bloodline or racial heritage, then only those who have those qualities or who do those things would be loved by God. Only those who have the good fortune to be born in the right family, or who serve faithfully and who pray earnestly, and who obey easily, and who seldom, if ever, stray, and those who have a "good heart", would be loved by God.

And we all, instinctively know that isn't true. But, if God loved me based on something, *anything*, that I did first, then God's Love for me would be a "payment" or a "wage" or a "reward" or a "response" for whatever it is that I did *first* in His Name and to His Glory. And that would mean that somehow, in my fallen and dreadful condition of being lost, I would have to *initiate* love and service toward God, and God would then see my efforts and respond to me with His Love.

But that would provide me with an avenue to receive the Glory for *myself*. And so, while what I just described is *exactly* what Islam and Buddhism and Hinduism teaches, it is *not* what Christianity teaches. And what I just described is exactly what Mormonism and the Roman religious system teaches, but it is *not* what Christianity teaches. Christianity teaches something entirely different than any other religion or human philosophy. And what Christianity teaches about why God loves us is inside what Peter said at the end of verse 8, that says:

**... they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.**

Peter is right in the middle of telling these "scattered aliens" that God loves them deeply and fully and completely, even though they are, at that very moment, being *horribly* persecuted, and have become, in fact, refugees in the ancient world. And as we have already found out, Peter calls them "scattered" because of what God has allowed the wicked Roman Emperor, Nero, to do to them. But they are called "Aliens" because of what God Himself has chosen to do to them.

But "locked in" to what the Apostle says about the unbelievers is the key to understand why God loves us. Look what Peter says again in verse 7:

**This precious value, then, is for you who believe...**

Peter says here that the infinite "Value", the "Worth", and the "Treasure" of Jesus Christ is for us who believe. Meaning, it is *not* for those who do *not* believe. So, the Beauty of His Holiness, the breathtaking Perfections of His sinless Life, the perfect Submission to His Father, His ability and desire to be perfectly led by God the Holy Spirit, His faultless obedience to the Will and Word of God, His precise fulfillment of every tenet of God's Law, His personal Glory as He sits in Majesty at the Father's Right Hand, all of Jesus is for us who believe.

So, this is simply another way of understanding that the *fullness* of Jesus Christ is for us who believe. And that tells us that going to Heaven when we die is *not* the "best" and the "highest" and the "final" Reward of Salvation. Yes, we are going to Heaven when we die. But the "best" and the "highest" and the "final" Reward of Salvation is "seeing" and "knowing" the very *fullness* of Jesus Christ, and being so transformed by what God alone has done for us that we truly *delight* in what we see and know.

But what about those who do not believe? Look what Peter says:

**7 ... but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,"**

**8 and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE..."**

So, instead of having the unspeakable blessing of being able to behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, the unbelievers see only the Stone which the builders rejected. So, they don't see the

Beauty of Jesus Christ. They see Jesus as a rejected Stone. And they take no delight in Him.

But what kind of Stone do they see Jesus as? Peter says two qualities:

1. A Stone of Stumbling
2. A Rock of Offense

So, instead of *marveling* at what they see, instead of *loving* what they see, instead of *delighting* in what they see in Jesus, the Bible says that the unbeliever sees Jesus as Someone, who causes them trouble, Someone Who causes them to trip and stumble, and Someone Who causes them offense. Believers see Jesus as the very Source of our Blessings and our Joy and our Forgiveness and our Salvation and our Happiness and our Comfort. But the unbeliever sees Jesus as a "roadblock" and a "hindrance" to the fulfillment of their plans, a "problem" that they need to ignore or sidestep or push past. Believers see Jesus as Someone they wish to please and serve and obey as they run to Him so that He may see what they're doing and approve of it. They unbeliever sees Jesus as someone to hide from, someone they hope doesn't see, and someone they wish would go away and leave them alone.

Jesus, in all His Perfections and in all that He said and did, stops the unbeliever from taking courage in himself. He silences those who have hope in their own self-righteousness. He disrupts the ability of anyone to think they can earn God's Favor by anything they do. Jesus causes the unbeliever much trouble. And so, they stumble over Him and they are offended by Him.

And that would be bad enough. But Peter goes on to say that this "Stone of Stumbling" and this "Rock of Offense" has now become:

... ***THE VERY CORNER stone,***"

... so, Jesus, in all His "offensiveness", is now the very One Whom all peoples must do business with. So, this is way beyond being simply about the Church. This is also about Eternity, going to Heaven, and of being in right standing with God. So, what Peter is teaching here is that since the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, no Jew can

take comfort in what He knows and believes about God. No Muslim or Buddhist or Hindu can take any comfort, at all, in his relationship with God. Now, *everything* goes through Jesus. A person is either in right standing with Jesus Christ, or he is not in right standing with God. So, there is no such thing as anyone knowing and loving and serving God, and not knowing and loving and serving Jesus Christ.

And that means that “believing” is now inextricably linked to the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. So, a “believer” is no longer defined only as a person who trusts in the Promises of the Old Covenant, but now that Jesus has been placed as the very Cornerstone, a “believer” is now a person who trusts in the fulfillment found in the New. So, when discussing either a believer or an unbeliever, that discussion centers around Jesus Christ and His finished Work.

So, how does a person become a believer? How does an individual suddenly begin to trust in Jesus and in His finished Work? How does a human being begin to love and enjoy Jesus? The key that Peter gives is found at the beginning of verse 9 that says:

***... you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION***

... with the word “Chosen”. Now contrast that word with another word that Peter uses at the end of verse 8:

**“Appointed”**

... so, we have two words, both highly unusual, both highly controversial, both highly debated that are the key that helps define either a believer or an unbeliever.

Now look again at how Peter defined a “believer”:

***... you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION...***

... and now look again at how Peter defines an unbeliever:

***... they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.***



... so, two things. First, Peter says that unbelievers stumble over Jesus. And that means that by virtue of what God has made Jesus to be the Rock of Offense and the Stone of Stumbling, Jesus has become to these people the very Source of their stumbling and the Cause of their offense. And that terrible reality is manifested or displayed or seen in one very important aspect:

**... they are disobedient to the word ...**

So, their negative relationship with Jesus, the absence of a loving and beautiful relationship with Jesus is seen or manifested in their disobedience to the Word of God. So, not loving Jesus, not treasuring Jesus, not marveling at Jesus, not seeing Jesus as the infinite Value He is, is displayed in premeditated rebellion to God's Word.

And we all understand that ongoing, blatant, continuous disobedience to the Word of God results in the eternal damnation of the soul after death. So, Eternal Damnation is the end game of having no love for Jesus. It is the final result of having their eyes veiled so that they *cannot* (and will not) behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. So not seeing Jesus as the infinite Value of the Universe is a sign of unbelief. And unbelief results in Eternal Damnation.

So, Hell is what is "earned" and "deserved" by those who *refuse* to believe. In other words, the horror of Hell, is the "payment" of rejecting Jesus as the Value that He is. And I would suggest that most people believe that. And it seems to be pretty clear. And, so, even though it's frightening, it is fairly easy to teach and fairly easy to believe. But now comes the hard part. Just about the time that we think we have the understanding of Eternal Damnation sewed up, Peter throws us a curve ball. A really fast curve ball. So, now look again at what else Peter says about Eternal Damnation and who experiences it from the end of verse 8:

**... to this *doom* they were also appointed.**

Here, Peter says that unbelievers are "appointed" to the Doom of Eternal Damnation. Appointed, Selected, Chosen, Predestined, Elected. And this time, he doesn't teach that people are chosen for Salvation.

This time the Apostle Peter was “moved along” by God the Holy Spirit to say that unbelievers are “appointed” for Doom.

Now what do we do with this? How are we supposed to understand this? This is a concept that has been called “Double Predestination”, and it is even *more* despised than the concept of “Predestination”. Double Predestination teaches that not only does God choose who will be saved, but He also chooses who will be damned. Another way of understanding this is, this is the answer as to *why* some people love Jesus and others don’t. This is *why* some people have eyes to see Jesus as the great Value of the Universe, while others see almost *anything* but Jesus as being valuable.

Now before we go any further, we need to settle in our minds a few things that should *not* be debatable:

1. The Bible is true
2. Peter said this

So, before we engage in a debate about the concept of Double Predestination, we need to come to the conclusion that the 66 Books of the Holy Bible are true. The Words found in the Bible are the most *unique* in all the world. Nothing else is like them, because these Words are *inspired*. And that means that while other words in other books may be *inspiring*, these Words are Infallible, Inerrant, Authoritative, Relevant, and Eternal. And that gives these Words a *distinction* from every other piece of literature.

No other words, in any other book, are like the Words of the Bible. And even though these Words were originally written down by 40 men over a 1500 year time frame, they did not *originate* from the mind and heart and mouth of human beings. The origination of the Words of sacred Scripture came from the Mind and the Heart and the Mouth of Almighty God. So, what the Bible says is true.

And, secondly, we have to agree that this is what Peter said in **1Peter 2:8**. We must agree that almost 2,000 years ago Peter was moved to originally write down a particular Greek word (*titheool*/Strong’s #5087) that means:

To ordain; to place; to set in or set up; to invest; to cause; or to establish

Now while this is the only time that Peter used this word, it is *not* the only time it is found in the Bible. The various writers of the 27 Books of the New Testament used this word (or *derivatives* of this word) 101 different times. And of those 101 instances, Dr. Luke used it 39 times by himself. So, it is hardly a foreign concept to Scripture. It is a biblical term. This word is in the Bible. And that means that we should love it and strive to understand it. And, like every other Word found in the Bible, we are to preach it and teach it and believe it, without apology and without being ashamed of it. Some examples of this word being used in other places, that will help us to understand what Peter meant when he used it, are:

**The Acts 17:31**

**because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."**

**1Thessalonians 5:9**

**For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**2Timothy 1:10&11**

**but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.**

**Hebrews 1:1&2**

**God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.**

So, it is clear that we simply *cannot* understand this word correctly without seeing it as God "doing" something *sovereignly* to "cause" something else to happen. So, in the case of what Peter is describing:

Before God ever made the Universe, He sovereignly appointed people for the "Doom" of Eternal Damnation

Now before you run off and say, "*Brother Blair believes in Double Predestination*", as though I just made up some weird, off-the-wall, man-made belief, what you *should* say is, "*The Apostle Peter taught that God has "appointed" people for the "Doom" of Everlasting Destruction, and Brother Blair takes confidence in the inerrancy of what Peter wrote.*" Or, you *should* say, "*1Peter 2:8 teaches that God has appointed people to Hell, and Brother Blair believes that the Bible is the inspired Word of the living God.*" Or, you *should* say, "*The Holy Bible says that some people are appointed to Doom, and Brother Blair believes that the Scriptures are true*". And, if you are a believer, you *should also* say, "... *and I believe what the Bible says, too!*"

Now I completely agree that what is commonly called "Double Predestination" is a frightening concept. The idea that God has ordained certain people to go to hell is not something I enjoy pondering. And I would guess that my sensitivity to this issue is part of the reason why God didn't allow me to write a single Book of the Bible.

But, I also agree that the notion that God has chosen some people for Eternal Damnation is entirely consistent with the notion that He has chosen some people for Eternal Joy. It is also entirely consistent with two themes that run all throughout Scripture:

1. God alone is entitled to receive all Glory
2. Man has nothing to boast about

... and so, while I might not like this, *evidently*, this is the way that God has set up the Universe. He has chosen to insert Himself into the lives of his chosen elect to change them so they will treasure Jesus. And He has chosen to leave the rest to do what they want to do, and thus has *appointed* them to the Doom of everlasting Destruction.

And that means that even though it is clear that God has appointed some for the "Doom" of Everlasting Pain, those who go there will be fully culpable. So, God didn't *force* them to disbelieve. God didn't *make* them to be rebellious. Those who suffer in the flames of Divine Wrath will be there because they did not love Jesus. And they didn't love Jesus because they didn't *want* to. So, even though Peter absolutely did say that God has "appointed" unbelievers to this Doom, it really doesn't change anything.

Because those who will spend all of Eternity in hell did not "see" Jesus as the great "Value" that Peter said that He is. And ,in spite of the fact that God "appointed" them for this Doom, they didn't see Jesus as that Value, because they didn't *want* to. So, we might want to say that not wanting to see Jesus as the great Value is what it means to be "appointed for Doom".

Those in hell didn't treasure Jesus as the most Beautiful and most Important Being of all. And they didn't treasure Jesus because they didn't *want* to. And so, *part* of what it means to be an "unbeliever" and someone "appointed" to Doom is to have no desire to treasure Jesus Christ. So, being an "unbeliever", being someone "appointed" to this Doom is *not* best understood by measuring how many "bad things" he does. Rather it is measured in his lack of desire and his *inability* to see Jesus Christ as this great Value and to treasure what he sees.

And, since that is true, the opposite is also true. Being a "believer" and being a:

**... CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION...**

... is *not* best understood by measuring how many "good things" we do. No, it is measured by being mercifully gifted to "see" Jesus as the great Value of the Universe, and then being miraculously empowered to *treasure* what you see.

So, what should startle us, what should frighten us, and what should amaze us is *not* that some "creatures from the dust" are "appointed to Doom", but that any of us believe and love God! We should not be astonished that God said "*Esau I hate*", because that is easy to understand. But what should make us to be absolutely speechless is that God said "*Jacob I loved*". Because those whom God loves are no more worthy or no less sinful than the people who will burn forever.

So, in reality, "Double Predestination" is simply another way of understanding "Predestination". And "Predestination" is simply another way of understanding why Grace is glorious and what God means when He says over and over again that He does what He does "For My Glory!"

So, what will automatically happen in you have been predestined by God for Salvation? Look again at the end of verse 9:

**... you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

Now I don't want to belabor the issue, but look at the word "may" here. This word has to do with *permission*, not power. This has to do with being *allowed* to do something, not having the *ability* to do it. So, being predestined by God for Salvation is what gives you the *permission* to proclaim the excellencies of Jesus Christ. So, being that chosen race, that royal priesthood, that holy nation, that people for God's Own possession is what gives you the entrance into the most privileged position on this earth, proclaiming the excellencies of Jesus Christ.

But why does it have to be that way? Look again at verse 10:

**For you once were *NOT A PEOPLE*, but now you are *THE PEOPLE OF GOD*; you had *NOT RECEIVED MERCY*, but now you have *RECEIVED MERCY*.**

Now the word "for" means "because". So, why do we have to be predestined for Salvation before we have the honor and privilege of proclaiming the excellencies of Jesus Christ? Because, we were not always the people of God. Because, we did not always have the Mercy of God on us.

When we were conceived in our mother's womb, the Bible teaches that we were entirely enemies of God. Human beings are "God-haters" by nature. And so, we had no eyes to see Jesus as the great Value of the Universe. And we delighted not in Him. We had no ears that could hear the sound of Amazing Grace. And we had no heart that could believe. And so, at that time, in our sins, we thought and we acted and we spoke and we trusted and we hoped no differently than those who have been appointed to Doom.

But, thanks be to God, we were *not* appointed for that Doom. We were chosen by God for Eternal Joy. We were appointed to be able to see Jesus as the great Value of the Universe, and to delight in what we see. We were predestined to hear the Truth and know it is true. And we were elected to be given a heart that has the capacity to believe in

Jesus Personally and in His finished Work. And Peter tells us that the reason that God did all of this was so that...

**... you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

But *why* were we chosen? *Why* were we elected? What is the *reason* behind God doing all of this? God's Love. But, unlike human love, God did not love us for what we had, that would make God better. God did not love us so that by loving us He would receive something that He lacked. Unlike human love, God did not love us because, by loving us, He would receive something that He wouldn't receive if He didn't love us.

No, God loved us, because by loving us, we would see. And by seeing, we would treasure. And by treasuring, we would then display and show and proclaim that Jesus is the Treasure of the Universe. So, by loving us, God would take away our sin and give us *permission* to proclaim the Excellencies of Jesus Christ.

So, *before* the foundation of the world, *before* we were born, *before* we did anything "good" or "bad", God set His Love upon us so that he alone would be magnified. And God determined to make us that chosen race, and that holy nation, and that royal priesthood, and that people for God's Own possession. And so, we are. But why did God have to do all of that? Because, we were *not* already His people. We were fallen and dead in our trespasses and sins. Why did God have to do all of that? Because, we had not already received Mercy.

But *why*? *Why* does God love us? Because He loved us. Here is the best explanation that exists anywhere in the entire Bible of the amazing mystery as to why a God, Who has need of nothing, loves us. And it is found in **Deuteronomy 7:7&8**, where Moses was "moved along" by God the Holy Spirit to say:

**7 "The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,**

**8 but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.**

Look closely to what Moses says here:

**The Lord... set His Love upon you... because the Lord loved you.**

The Lord loved us and chose to save us *because He loved us!* There *isn't* any other reason. You didn't *earn* it, you don't *deserve* it, and God is not *obligated* to give it. You don't make God to be more glorious than He already is. You don't bring to the table something that God lacked. You can't "do" something or "become" something that will make you attractive to God. And yet, God set His Love upon you. So, God doesn't *need* you, but He *wants* you. And the Lord chose to love you for no other reason than He loved you.

And because God's Love for us is *not* based on something we "are" or something we "do", and because it is based solely on God and His perfect Nature; you can't *enlarge* it nor *diminish* it. And that means that if you have experienced the amazing Love of God, you are in the safest place in all the world.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.