

# Choosing Jesus



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*Message by; By Leroy Surface*

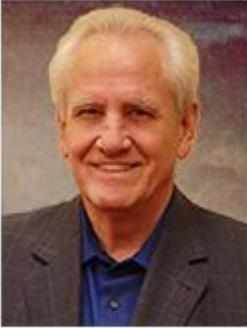
**John 15:16:** *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."*

What a wonderful thing it is to be chosen by the Lord. But what if those Christ has chosen never choose him? Have you ever given love that was not given back? What a heartbreak it is when that is the case. What if the disciples whom Christ chose to go into all the world and preach the gospel never chose him? Would he have forced them to do his will? And if they had never chosen him, would they have known or experienced the outpouring of God's Spirit and the revival that followed which *"turned the world upside down"* for Christ?

In this message, Leroy Surface examines the struggles, doubts and failures that were the experience of the chosen apostles until the day that they *"chose Him."*

# Choosing Jesus

Message by: Leroy Surface



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**John 15:16:** *“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.”*

Five chapters in the gospel of John, chapters thirteen through seventeen, are dedicated to giving us an inside view of what took place at the last supper in the last full day of Jesus’ life with His disciples. The apostle John tells us of things that were said and done in secret, and in so doing gives us a true and honest account of the state of affairs among the disciples the day before Jesus died on the cross. Things were not all that good. It is easy for us to take the view that this was a blessed and sacred time between Jesus and His chosen apostles in which Jesus prepared them for the event of His death by crucifixion. It is true that several of the most wonderful teachings were given during this last full day of His life, but interwoven in chapters thirteen through sixteen is evidence that things were not as they should have been among the chosen few. This is the basis for the words of Jesus, *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you....”*

## **One of the “Chosen Disciples” will betray Jesus**

The words *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you”* are commonly quoted to support the doctrine of predestination and selection. I have heard people rejoice in testimony services, *“I didn’t choose Him, He chose me,”* as though to say, *“I am predestined! I can’t miss heaven regardless of what I do.”* Even if the doctrine of predestination as taught by Calvin were true, this is

not the meaning of the words Jesus spoke to His disciples that day. A companion verse is John 6:70; *“Jesus answered them, **Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?**”* Jesus chose Judas Iscariot! He was the disciple that betrayed Him and sold Him into the hands of His enemies for thirty pieces of silver, yet Jesus had chosen Judas to be His apostle, and sent him to preach his gospel. The problem with Judas was, though Jesus had chosen him, he never *“chose Jesus,”* and though he had walked with Jesus for three years as a trusted disciple, the one who *“carried the bag”* (Judas took care of the money), yet he who was *“chosen to be an apostle”* was, in the end, *“the son of perdition.”*

It was during the last supper, after He had offered the Passover sacraments, and after He had risen from the table to wash His disciples feet, that Jesus sat down to finish the feast and exhort them to serve one another just as He had served them. As He was speaking the scripture says that He became *“troubled in spirit.”*

**John 13:21:***“When Jesus had thus said, **he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.**”*

In Matthew’s gospel we learn a little more about this same event:

**Matthew 26:21-22:** *“And as they did eat, he said, **Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.** And they were exceeding sorrowful, and **began every one of them to say unto him, LORD, IS IT I?**”*

What an incredible turn of events this is! Jesus is troubled because He knows that one of His chosen apostles is going to betray Him, and He knew who it will be, but every one of His chosen apostles asked Him, *“Lord, is it I?”* Not everything is as it should be if Peter, John, James, and the rest of the twelve are wondering about themselves. How can this be? By this we know that Satan had secretly spoken to every one of them, enticing them to betray Jesus. I remember the words of Jesus to Peter, as recorded in the gospel of Luke:

**Luke 22:31-32:** “*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*”

Satan desired to have Peter. Peter was the natural leader among the disciples of Jesus. He was the outspoken one that everyone knew and respected. He was also the one Satan had chosen to betray Jesus. Judas Iscariot was not “*predestined*” from eternity past to betray Jesus; he betrayed Jesus only because he chose to be the one, and Jesus knew it. Judas was not “*possessed by the devil*” when Jesus chose him to be an apostle. The scripture tells us the very moment when it was sealed that Judas would be the traitor.

**John 13:23-27:** “*Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved (John was speaking of himself). Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And AFTER THE SOP Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.*”

Some would erroneously believe that Jesus “*chose*” Judas to betray Him. Not so, because, as Peter would later tell us, “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (II Peter 3:9). Satan had desired Peter and had tempted each of the disciples, but Judas was the only one among them that was willing to betray Jesus. Certainly it came out of his lust for money. Only days before the other disciples had suspicions that Judas was stealing from the money bag for his own purposes (John 12:3-6).

## **One of the “Chosen Disciples” will deny Jesus**

**John 13:37:** “*Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt*

***thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.***

Luke's gospel tells us a little more about this sad incident with Peter. Jesus had said to Peter, "*Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*" This seems to be an affront to Peter, an open and public rebuke from Jesus. First Jesus tells him before them all, "*Peter, Satan has desired you, but I have prayed for you.*" In Peter's boldness and self confidence it is almost an insult to think that he needs prayers, even those of Jesus. Then to hear Jesus say, "*When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren:*" has not Peter already established himself as a leader among the disciples? What does Jesus mean, "*When thou art converted?*"

I have seen those who believe they are very spiritual get upset when someone tells them, "*I am praying for you.*" Peter was not far from that point in his self confidence that day. He responded to Jesus with words of reassurance that he is okay; that he is converted, dedicated, and faithful to Jesus. "*Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death*" (Luke 22:33). Jesus then tells Peter directly, "*I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me*" (Luke 22:34).

Matthew reveals a little more of this discourse between Jesus and Peter. In his self-confidence, Peter did not believe the things Jesus said he would do.

**Matthew 26:34-35:** "*Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.*"

What a horrible mess we make of things when we think we know ourselves better than Jesus knows us; when we have such great confidence because of "*who we are*" instead of "*who Christ is.*" The

apostle Matthew gives the best blow by blow account of Peter during the night of Jesus' trial before the high priest.

**Matthew 26:69-70:** *“Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.”*

This was Peter's first denial, a simple sidestepping of the issue. *“I don't know what you are talking about.”*

**Matthew 26:71-72:** *“And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, ‘This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.’ And again he denied with an oath, ‘I do not know the man’.”*

Notice the second time Peter denied Jesus, did not simply sidestep the issue, but he flatly denied knowing Him and he backed it up with an oath. *“I swear to you, I do not know the man.”*

**Matthew 26:73-74:** *“And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, ‘Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.’ Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, ‘I know not the man.’ And immediately the cock crew.”*

Jesus had told Peter that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed in the morning. In the heat of the moment, Peter did not recall the words of Jesus. In the heat of a great trial, especially when a person fears for their life, they cannot remember the “commands” that were given to us. If they are not “written in our hearts” as the nature that God gives to His children in the covenant of grace, we will do exactly the things that we boasted we would never do. Peter would not have believed it possible that he could deny Jesus, but his confidence was in himself and not in Christ. Peter not only denied Jesus this third time, but he did so with “curses and swearing.” In plain south Texas language, he began to “cuss” Jesus, swearing before God and man that *“I know not the man.”*

**Matthew 26:75:** *“And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, ‘Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.’ And he went out, and wept bitterly.”*

## **Two of the “Chosen Disciples” do not know who Jesus is.**

**John 14:5-7:***“Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. **If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also:** and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.”*

Consider Thomas on this last day before Christ would die for us. I’ve often wondered why Thomas is called *“Doubting Thomas”* when there is no record in the scriptures that any of the disciples believed the reports of Jesus’ resurrection until they saw Him with their own eyes and heard Him speak. Mark speaks of the general unbelief of the disciples in his gospel; *“Afterward he (Jesus) appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and **upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen**”* (Mark 16:14). Thomas was the one that had absolutely refused to believe. He said, upon hearing the report of Jesus’ resurrection, *“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, **I will not believe.**”*

Thomas’s unbelief was much broader than simply not believing in the resurrection. Jesus gave evidence of Thomas’s unbelief at the last supper when He said to Thomas, *“If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.”* The Jews believed in the Christ, but they did not believe that Jesus is the Christ. They also believed that the Christ would be simply a man, the son of David, but not the Son of God. Thomas followed Jesus because he believed Jesus to be the Christ, but his doubt and unbelief was centered on the virgin birth, the Holy Ghost conception, and whether Jesus was the Son of God or the son of Joseph. That is the

reason Jesus said to him, *“If you had known me, you would have known my Father also,”* and added, *“From this time forward, you will know my Father.”*

Phillip was listening as Jesus spoke to Thomas, and because of the fact that he shared the same doubts that Thomas held, he entered the conversation; *“Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us”* (John 14:8), literally saying, *“We’ll be satisfied as to who you are if we see your father.”* This is an incredible circumstance that has come to light in His last day with His beloved disciples. One will betray Him; one will deny Him, and at least two others express doubts as to who He really is. Consider Jesus’ answer to Phillip; ***“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?”*** Over three years before, when Phillip first met Jesus, he ran to find his brother Nathaniel, crying aloud, *“We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, **the son of Joseph.**”* Phillip’s excitement knew no bounds. He believed with all his heart that he had found the redeemer that would come to Zion (Isaiah 59:20); he had found the lamb that God would provide (Genesis 22:8); he had found the seed of the woman that God had promised (Genesis 3:15); He had found the Christ who would make an end of sins (Daniel 9:24-25). Phillip was right in each of these assessments, but he also believed that Jesus was the *“son of Joseph.”* Has there been nothing seen or heard in these three years to persuade Phillip who He is? Jesus continues in verses 9-11 to speak directly to Phillip;

**John 14:9-11:** ***“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake.”***

Every miraculous work that Jesus did shouted aloud to those who could hear, *“This is the Son of God.”* He did the works of God, but it

was *“the Father”* that was in Him who did the works. He spoke the words of God, but again, it was the Spirit of the Father who was in Him that spoke (Matthew 10:20). Some have erroneously believed that Jesus told Phillip that he was the Father; *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”* No! He was showing that He is indeed the Son of the living God. The apostle Paul tells us that Jesus is *“the image of the invisible God”* (Colossians 1:15). Again, in Hebrews 1:3, He is *“the brightness of God’s glory”* and *“the express image of His person.”* *“Phillip, when you see Jesus, you see His Father. Does He look like Joseph? Or does He look like God?”*

## **Is there anyone who believes?**

**John 16:29-30:***“His disciples said unto him, Lo, **now speakest thou plainly**, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: **by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.**”*

At last, Jesus had spoken plainly to them, not using parables. Now they could believe, or so they thought. Jesus had just told them, *“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father”* (John 16:28). Nothing could be clearer than these words to them. *“Now we can believe...by this we believe.”* This wasn’t only Thomas and Phillip speaking. This was the majority of the twelve, those who had walked with him for over three years, hearing His words, seeing His miracles, even partaking of His authority when He sent them out. How is it possible that any among them did not know from the *“beginning of miracles (John 2:1-11)”* that He was in fact the very Son of God? He turned the water into wine. He multiplied the loaves and fishes. He open blind eyes, caused the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and raised Lazarus from the dead. How could they not know? Peter knew who He was; *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”* Jesus had never told Peter, but he knew. Jesus answered Peter, *“Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but the Father which is in heaven.”* Most likely Peter never *“heard a voice”* or *“had a dream”* telling him who Jesus is, but in every word Jesus spoke, Peter heard God. In every work He did, Peter saw God. Peter had

never had a doubt until the night of the betrayal and denial, and even then his doubts were not about Jesus, but about himself.

There were three disciples that made up the “*inner circle*” of Jesus’ ministry. These were Peter, James, and John. These were with him in those special times. Why would Jesus seem to have favorites? It was because these were the “*believers*” among his disciples. These were the ones who really “*knew Him.*” The rest could entertain friends and relatives endlessly, telling the wonderful stories about Jesus, the things they had seen and heard firsthand, but they did not really “*know Jesus.*” It was to them that Jesus spoke these last words before leaving the supper to enter the agony of Gethsemane; “***Do ye now believe?***”

**John 16:31-33:** “*Jesus answered them, **Do ye now believe?** Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that **ye shall be scattered, every man to his own,** and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*”

Jesus had told them only minutes before, “*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*” (John 16:12). They could not believe the elementary things He had told them; how could they believe if He spoke to them of the mysteries of God? Jesus had told Nicodemus, “*If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*” (John 3:12). They professed to believe Jesus when He told them, “*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world...*” (John 16:28). What if He had told them, “*I came into the world to bruise the head of the serpent and destroy the works of the devil?*” What if He had told them, “*I came into the world to make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness?*” What if Jesus had said to them, “*I will do all these things through my death on a roman cross, and I will do them before the sun sets tomorrow?*” Who could have believed such things? Very few in the church today can believe them.

## **Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you**

In the light of the events of the day, it is easier to understand the words of Jesus to His chosen disciples; *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.”* Remember that Jesus was speaking with greater clarity on this day that ever before to His disciples. There is not some *“great mystery”* found in these words. They do not establish the doctrine of predestination and they were not words for the disciples to rejoice in. In fact, they were a reproof to His chosen disciples. Over three years before, He had *“chosen them.”* He had chosen Peter and Andrew off of their fishing boat. He chose John and James as they were mending their nets. He chose Matthew out of his tax office. To each of them, He simple said, follow me, and they followed. Peter later told Jesus, *“We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?”* (Matthew 19:27). Each of the twelve had followed Jesus for over three years, but on this last day with His disciples Jesus said to them, *“You have not chosen me.”* There were many wonderful things that Jesus had set before His disciples, but they would never know or experience them until the time they *“chose Him.”*

**John 15:16:***“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.”*

## **A horrible day**

Within three hours after Jesus left the place of the last supper, the sequence of events that He had laid before His disciples began. Judas had left the supper early to arrange with the high priests the terms of his betrayal of Jesus. The price was thirty pieces of silver, which had been prophesied hundreds of years before by the prophet Zechariah (Zechariah 11:12-13). Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, calling Him his Lord while marking Him to be arrested by the temple guard. Peter immediately drew his sword to fight for Jesus, seeking to prove his love for Jesus that he was indeed willing to die for Him. During the melee that followed, Peter cut off a servant's

ear, and Jesus told him to put away his sword. *“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?”* (Matthew 26:53). What followed for Peter was total confusion and disillusionment. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, had prophesied that we would be *“...saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.”* How could Jesus be that *“savior”* if he was unwilling to fight to save His own life? Jesus answered Peter’s question in Pilate’s judgment hall later that same night. *“My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight...”* (John 18:36). Earlier in this same night, however, while Jesus was still standing in judgment before the high priest, Peter had denied knowing Jesus, and he had done it three separate times. What a horrible time this was for Peter as he went out and *“wept bitterly”* because of his own unfaithfulness and weakness.

David, writing a thousand years before Jesus was born to Mary, described this day perfectly in the twenty second Psalm, beginning with the words, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.”* A thousand years before the event, he describes Jesus death on the cross in much detail. Whether David understands what he is doing, I do not know, but he tells of those who mocked Jesus, even quoting their very words;

**Psalms 22:1:** *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

**Matthew 27:46:** *“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

**Psalms 22:7-8:** *“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, **He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.**”*

**Matthew 27:43:** *“He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”*

**Psalms 22:9:** *“But thou art he that took me out of the womb (thou art my Father).”*

**Psalms 22:16:** *“For dogs (roman soldiers) have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: **they pierced my hands and my feet.**”*

**Matthew 27:35:** *“And **they crucified him**, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, **They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.**”*

**Psalms 22:18:** *“**They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.**”*

I have shown a few of the prophecies from David and their fulfillment from Matthew’s gospel. Three hundred years after David, the prophet Isaiah began to see the *“sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow”* (I Peter 1:10-11).

**Isaiah 52:14-15:** *“As many were astonished at thee; **his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.**”*

The face of Jesus was marred beyond recognition. His back and body was torn to shreds by the roman whipping. Isaiah said of this, *“So shall He sprinkle many nations.”* This is the way that Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, loved the world and saved as many as will believe and trust in Him. He poured His life blood out to sanctify of the people (Hebrews 13:12), to *“wash them from their sins”* (Revelation 1:5). This is the way He *“saved us from our enemies.”* Isaiah continued in the fifty third chapter;

**Isaiah 53:3-4:** *“**He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.**”*

Isaiah writes over six hundred years before Jesus was born, but he writes about the events at Calvary as though he was there. It is

obvious as He hangs on the cross that He is *“despised and rejected of men.”* He is a *“man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.”* The words, *“surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows”* refer to His ministry for three years among men. Peter says He *“went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil.”* He healed the sick, opened the blind eyes, and caused the lame to walk and the dumb to talk. He delivered men and women, and little boys and girls from unclean spirits that tormented them. This is what it means that He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. In spite of all the good that He did for the poor, the sick and maimed, and the sinner, the multitude that He loved and gave Himself for, stood at Pilate’s judgment hall crying, *“Let him be crucified.”* Many of those who watched as He suffered on the cross had once believed He was the Christ of prophecy; but on that horrible day, they were thinking differently. How could He be the Christ and come to his end on a cross? The Christ would rather sit on the throne of David. If He were the Son of God, why did God allow this to happen? Isaiah recorded their conclusion hundreds of years before; ***“We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”*** They believed that He was dying as a liar, a deceiver, and a blasphemer. God Himself had rejected him, and in their eyes it was God who was destroying him. *“How could we have been so wrong when the chief priests, the scribes and the Pharisees had warned us about him all along?”*

In the next verse, however, it is as though Isaiah sees something the others cannot see.

**Isaiah 53:5:** *“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*

Back to David and the twenty second Psalm; in verses thirty and thirty one, he tells of the glorious result of the sufferings and death of Jesus, the Christ, at Calvary. Both David and Isaiah spoke of His resurrection and the wonderful new creation that would follow. David spoke of the *“new creation”* in this way;

**Psalms 22:30-31:** *“A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.”*

David had seen the coming kingdom of the children of God; those who would be *“born of God.”* They would serve God, as Zacharias prophesied, *“...that we **being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life**”* (Luke 1:74-75). It was not understood until after the resurrection that our enemies are not *“flesh and blood,”* but they are *“sin and Satan”* and He destroyed them both for the believer through His death on the cross (Hebrews 2:14, Romans 6:6).

## **A day of gross darkness**

**Matthew 27:45:** *“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.”*

**Isaiah 60:1-2:** *“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, **the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people:** but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”*

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, each testify that there was darkness over all the land for three hours. In our reckoning of time, this would have been from 12 noon unto 3 in the afternoon. This darkness was not caused by a solar eclipse, because the moon was full, as it always is at the time of the Passover. Whatever was the cause of the darkness on earth, the darkness that settled on the hearts and minds of the people was much greater. Isaiah called it *“gross darkness.”* In the day of Jesus’ death, there was not one who saw the events of the day whose faith that Jesus was *“the Christ, the Son of God”* was not shattered. Remember the words of the two disciples that walked the road to Emmaus with Jesus immediately after His resurrection, but did not know Him; *“We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done”*

(Luke 24:21). Jesus had told them He would rise again the third day, but they could not believe because of the darkness of their hearts that blinded their eyes. There is no record in the scriptures that anyone believed when they were told that Jesus was risen from the dead. They had to see Him with their own eyes and hear Him speak before they could believe. Even Mary, the mother of Jesus was among the women who went to the tomb early in the first day of the week to anoint His body with spices. This act on their part testified of their love for Him, but it did not testify of faith in the one who had said, *“I will rise again the third day”* (Matthew 16:21). After His resurrection, Mark tells us of His first meeting with His chosen apostles;

**Mark 16:14:** *“Afterward **he appeared unto the eleven** as they sat at meat, and **upbraided them** with their unbelief and hardness of heart, **because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.**”*

Mark says that Jesus *“upbraided them,”* which is pretty strong language for our Lord. The Greek work that was translated *“upbraided”* is *“oneidezō,”* which is defined by “Strong’s Concordance and Greek Dictionary” as *“to **defame, that is, rail at, chide, taunt.**”* Christ had come into the world exactly as the prophets said He would and had accomplished everything He came to do through His death and resurrection, but among those *“chosen men”* that He had prepared to take His message to the world, there was not one who believed. He had questioned their faith the night before going He went to the cross (John 16:31), but now He knew; they did not believe beyond that which they could see.

## Light shines through

The apostle John gives the sequence of events better than the others even though he left out the *“upbraiding”* that Mark spoke of.

**John 20:19-20:** *“Then the same day at evening, being **the first day of the week**, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst,*

*and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."*

This was the same day that Jesus was resurrected. He began immediately to tell them of wonderful things that were prepared for them. In John 20:21: "*As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*" Verse 22: "*He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*" Verse 23: "*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*" These were the chosen ones, and their joy was without bounds upon seeing and knowing that He had risen again. Paul wrote in Romans 1:3-4, "*Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*" There could be no more doubts that He had risen from the dead. They had seen Him, heard Him, and handled Him. The resurrection proves beyond every doubt that He is the Son of God with power. They had once believed, but in the darkness of the hour, they had ceased to believe. Now, He has risen from the dead. Their sun was shining again, and they do not doubt that He is the Son of the living God, and He has chosen them. Amazing as it may seem, however, they have not yet chosen Him.

Thomas was not there on that first day with the others. We do not know why he wasn't there, but it is worthy of note that Thomas was one of at least two among the twelve that did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God even though they all accepted Him as "*the Christ*" of prophecy. The other disciples told Thomas that Jesus was alive, and he absolutely refused to believe; "*Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*" Thomas's unbelief was much deeper rooted than the others. Peter and the others wanted to believe, but Thomas, though he was willing to believe, did not want to believe, shown by his emphasis on the words "**I will not believe.**"

It was on the eighth day that Jesus appeared to them the second time, and Thomas was there. He went immediately to Thomas and said, *“Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. **And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God**”* (John 20:27-28). This was the day Thomas understood for the first time that Jesus is *“both Lord and Christ.”* He is the Son of God, proven to be so by the resurrection.

## **It’s time to choose**

**John 15:16:** *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you....”*

**John 21:14:** *“This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.”*

Peter and six of the other disciples had returned to Galilee. Peter told the others one day, *“I’m going fishing,”* and they answered, *“We will go with you.”* The scripture says they entered a ship immediately, and toiled all night but caught no fish. When the morning came, they saw Jesus standing on the shore, but they did not recognize who He was. He called to them, *“Have you any meat?”* and they answered, *“No.”* He told them, *“Cast your net on the right side of the ship and you will find.”* Do you know what *“déjà vu”* is? It is the strange feeling people get that *“I’ve been here before...I’ve seen this before...”* They must have had that feeling from the beginning, but when they brought up a huge catch of fish, they knew, and John said it to Peter, *“It is the Lord.”*

Over three years before, this identical thing had happened when they had first met Jesus. They had fished all night and caught nothing. Their ships were at the dock and they were washing their nets when Jesus came on board one of the ships and taught them. When He was finished teaching, He told them to launch out into the deep and lower their nets. They had protested, but at the words of Jesus they did as He said. They were all amazed when they brought up more fish than the nets could hold. Luke 5:9-11 tells the rest of the story; *“For he (Peter) was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had*

taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. **And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.** And when they had brought their ships to land, **they forsook all, and followed him.**”

Matthew gives an abbreviated version of this same story.

**Matthew 4:18-20:** “And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.** And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.”

This was the day Jesus chose several of those who would become His apostles. He called Peter off his fishing boat with the words “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” and Peter immediately forsook everything at that time to follow Jesus. Three years later, knowing that Jesus has risen from the dead, knowing that He is indeed “*the Christ, the Son of the Living God,*” and knowing that Jesus has chosen him to reach the souls of men, Peter has gone back to fishing. After all, it was his occupation before he met Jesus, he loved fishing, fishing is not a sin, and after all, everyone has got to make a living, so I’m going fishing. Six other of the “*chosen apostles*” have gone with him. Christ came into the world “*to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness*” (Daniel 9:24-25) and Jesus has done it all through His death on the cross. Now it is time for Him to ascend to His Father as He told His disciples He would, and they have “*gone fishing.*” The apostle Paul would explain the importance of this hour almost a generation later;

**II Corinthians 5:17-18:**“*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, AND HATH GIVEN TO US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.*”

Jesus died on the cross to reconcile a lost and sin filled world back to God by “*taking away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). He did

this by destroying sin (Romans 6:6), the devil (Hebrews 2:14), and all the works of the devil (I John 3:8). Reconciliation to God was made for every person living on the planet through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ has finished forever His work of reconciliation, and has given the ministry of reconciliation to us who have believed. The apostle Paul said a little more about this “*ministry of reconciliation*” in the next verse;

**II Corinthians 5:19:** *“To wit, that (for example) God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not (lest) imputing their trespasses unto them; and **hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.**”*

The Greek word that was translated “*committed*” in this verse is same word that was translated “*ordained*” in our text for this message. “*...I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go...*” (John 15:16). Christ has chosen us to reach the lost world with the gospel of Christ. More than that, Christ has “*committed (ordained) us to go, and to bring forth fruit (souls, reconciled to God).*” Oh that God would open our eyes to the gravity of the situation. Doctrines of men have caused many to rejoice within themselves, “*I’m chosen...I can’t miss heaven...wheeeee!*” They look to a lost world and think in their hearts, “*You are lost because you are not chosen.*” We must understand that nobody is chosen to salvation except through “*sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth*” (II Thessalonians 2:13). When Jesus told His disciples, “*I have chosen you,*” He was saying “*I have chosen you to go into the entire world, to every nation. I have chosen you to reconcile the lost world to God through the word that I will give you. Not only have I chosen you for this, I have ‘committed’ you to do it.*” It was in the same discourse that He told them, “***Ye have not chosen me.***”

## **The hour of decision**

In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed “*with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death*” (Hebrews 5:7). He prayed for three hours, until “*his sweat became as great drops of blood.*” He came into Gethsemane saying “*My soul is exceeding*

sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38). The scripture says He "...fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39). Jesus was in the agony of decision, and that is what "Gethsemane" has come to represent. It was during the second hour of prayer that Jesus began praying, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42). Throughout the night, however, Jesus had ended His prayers with, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). It was that night in Gethsemane that Jesus "died" to His will to do the will of the Father. It was there that He "laid His life" down for us. He had told the disciples in John 10:18, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." In Gethsemane, Jesus laid His life down for us. The next day, He suffered died on the cross for us.

Gethsemane is the hour of decision for all of us. It is not the decision whether to "be saved" or not, but whether we choose Christ and His life for us, or whether we choose our own will and way. Sitting around a campfire and eating bread and fish with Jesus became Gethsemane to Peter and six other "chosen" apostles. Will they choose the will of Jesus Christ to do what He has already chosen them for, or will they choose their own will, and let the world, whom Christ died for, literally "go to Hell?" Come, sit with us around that campfire were Jesus has prepared bread and fish, and consider that this day, after Gethsemane and Calvary, is the most critical day since the world began for the salvation of the lost and dying world. Jesus has died to take away the sin of the world, but if these "chosen apostles" do not choose Jesus this day, the world will die in their sins while the apostles continue doing their own thing.

This is the third time Jesus has met with His chosen apostles after His resurrection, and it has become very obvious that they have no desire to do what He has chosen them to do. This is the hour of their decision. This is their Gethsemane. The salvation of the entire world is at stake. Jesus has chosen them, invested three years teaching them, but if they do not choose Him today,

everything He has done to save sinners and reconcile the world is in vain.

Jesus had bread and fish on the fire, and he called to His disciples, *“Come and dine.”* As they sat down to eat, He told some of them to bring the fish they had caught. What happens around this campfire this day has eternal ramifications. He had chosen these men over three years before to *“follow Him”* and *“become fishers of men.”* Will they choose Him today for what He has chosen them for?

**John 21:15:** *“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, **lovest thou me more than these?** He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; **thou knowest that I love thee.** He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs.**”*

The scripture tells us that Jesus asked the disciples to bring some of the fish they had caught. Peter, proud of the catch, personally brought them to Jesus, a hundred and fifty three large fish. After they had eaten, Jesus asked Peter, *“Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these.”* **First**, it was unusual for Jesus to speak to him as the “son of Jonas.” In Mark 3:16, the scripture tells us that Jesus gave him the “*surname*” of Peter (Mark 3:16), thus he became *“Simon Peter.”* To call him “Simon, son of Jonas” indicated the displeasure that Jesus had with Peter on this day.

**Second**, when Jesus asked him, *“Lovest thou me more than these,”* He was referring to the fish that Peter had just caught. Peter tried to overlook what seemed to be inferred, and answered simply, *“Yes Lord, you know that I love you.”*

In order to understand what took place this day we must understand the definition of the two words for “love” that were used in this text. When Jesus said to Peter, *“Lovest thou me,”* the scripture uses the Greek word *“agapao,”* which means *“to love.”* It is the highest form of love that a human is capable of. *“Agape,”* on the other hand, is the higher love, which only God can produce. Agape is not used in this text. When Peter said to Jesus, *“Thou knowest that I love thee,”* he used a different word than Jesus used. The Greek word is *“phileo,”* which means *“to be a friend.”* Jesus

was asking for the highest love that a human is capable of. Just under the “*love of God*,” it is a love that would cause a mother to die for her child, and husband to die to save his wife. Jesus was asking for the love that would cause Peter to lay down his life to do what he was chosen to do. Peter answered Jesus with words that literally say, “*Yes, Lord, you know that I am your friend.*” Peter could not say that he loved Jesus with the kind of love He was asking for. Peter thought he possessed that kind of love when he boldly said at the last supper, “*I will lay down my life for thy sake*” (John 13:37), but Jesus quickly answered him, “*Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice*” (verse 38). It was when Peter came to himself after the third denial, when the rooster gave him his “*wakeup call*,” that he realized he did not possess the love that Jesus wanted from him.

**John 21:16:** “*He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.***”

This is the second time Jesus questioned Peter, “*Do you love me?*” and the answer is still the same; “*Yes, Lord, you know that I am your friend.*” Each time, Jesus has ended by speaking His will for Peter; “*Feed my lambs...feed my sheep.*”

**John 21:17:** “*He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, **lovest thou me?** Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, **Lovest thou me?** And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; **thou knowest that I love thee.** Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.***”

The translators obscured the meaning of this verse to the extent that the casual reader cannot see the power of what has just taken place in this text. This was the third time Jesus questioned Peter, but this time He changed the question and used the same word Peter had been using. Two times Peter had said, “*Yes Lord, you know that I am your friend.*” This third time Jesus asked Peter, “*Simon son of Jonas, **are you my friend.***” Jesus had questioned Peter’s love two times, but this time he actually questioned his

friendship. The scripture says that Peter was grieved because Jesus questioned his friendship. Peter was devastated. He answered, *“Lord, you know everything. You know that I am your friend.”* Tears at this point did not move Jesus as He responded a third time, *“Feed my sheep.”*

It isn't a matter of the *“warm feelings”* we have when we think of Jesus. We may sing a beautiful old song that speaks of *“Friendship with Jesus,”* but He wants more of us. It is easy to think the problem between Jesus and Peter was over at this point. Peter was grieved. Probably the tears began flowing, and in our minds we can see Jesus holding Peter in His arms to comfort him and reassure him of His love. That's not what happened. Jesus still said to Peter, *“Feed my sheep,”* and then He continued to tell of what manner of death He must die;

**John 21:18-19:***“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst:** but when thou shalt be old, **thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.**”* This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, **Follow me.**

Three years before, Peter had rejoiced to hear Jesus say to him, *“Follow me.”* He had immediately left his ship and nets to follow Jesus, and it was with great joy that he had done so. Now, after three wonderful years of following Jesus, the time had come for which Peter had been chosen and ordained by the Lord, and Peter did not want to follow any further. Turning away from Jesus for a moment he saw John, and said, *“Lord, what shall this man do?”* Jesus answered Peter one last time; *“If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? **Follow thou me.**”*

We know that the eternal Christ came into the world as a man for the purpose of offering his body and blood as a sacrifice that would *“Take away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29, I John 3:5). We know that God sent the angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel to tell him about the coming and purpose of Christ. He would *“Finish the*

*transgression, make and end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness” (Daniel 9:24-25)*  
We know that Jesus is the Christ, and that He did everything He was sent to do when He died on the cross and rose again from the dead. We also know that He does everything He came to do in the heart and nature of those who hear the truth of the *“gospel of Christ,”* and believe it. The apostle Paul reveals something extremely important for us to understand in the mystery of Christ;

**II Corinthians 5:19-20:** *“To wit, that **God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”***

In the previous verse 18, Paul said that God has *“given to us the ministry of reconciliation.”* Christ did the *“work”* of reconciliation through His death on the cross, but the *“ministry of reconciliation”* is given to us whom He has chosen. God was in Christ to do the work of reconciliation, and the same God will be in us for the ministry of reconciliation. We are *“In Christ’s stead”* when we *“beseech”* a lost world, *“Be ye reconciled to God.”* Everything that Christ came into the world to do was finished on the cross when He said, *“It is finished.”* The *“work of reconciliation”* was *“finished,”* but the *“ministry of reconciliation”* is not.

**Mark 3:14-15:***“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth **to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.”***

It is wonderful to be *“chosen”* by the Lord, but it is much more wonderful when we *“choose Him.”* If Peter and the other *“chosen apostles”* did not *“choose Him,”* everything Jesus had done was in vain. The *“Day of Pentecost”* would have been a *“dead ritual”* just as it had been for hundreds of years. God would not have *“poured out His Spirit,”* and the three thousand would not have been saved. The lame man at the gate beautiful would have died in his condition (Acts 3:6-8), and the five thousand would not have been saved. No one would have laid their sick in the streets of Jerusalem

for the shadow of Peter to pass over them for healing (Acts 5:15), because Peter would have been fishing on the sea of Galilee, maybe prosperous, but very unhappy, always wondering what might have been if he had chosen Jesus.

The world is lost today, but it is not the fault of Peter and the other chosen apostles. Certainly, it is not the fault of Paul, or Barnabas, or Silas; these were the ones of whom it was said, *“They have turned the world upside down.”* They chose Jesus. In the moment they *“chose Him,”* everything that Christ died for applied to them. Peter had denied Jesus with cursing only weeks before, but the *“cursing”* was immediately gone from his heart as *“sin”* was taken away in a moment of time. That is what Christ died for. The horrible fear of the Jews that had driven them behind locked and barred doors in Jerusalem was gone. They followed Jesus to the Mount of Olives for His ascension where they heard the promise of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. In obedience to Jesus, they waited in Jerusalem until the Day of Pentecost, and received the mighty baptism with the Holy Ghost. From this point, there was no stopping them, as they brought the greatest revival the world had ever seen to that generation.

I write to those whom Christ has *“chosen”* and *“ordained.”* When will the last great revival begin? When will God pour out His Spirit again? When will we see sinful men’s hearts pricked and turned to Christ again? When will we see the wonderful healings and miracles without the sham and pretense of men? These are the things Christ has chosen us for, and **we will see them after we choose Him.**

Jesus said, *“I have chosen you, and ordained you,*

- 1. that ye should go*
- 2. and bring forth fruit,*
- 3. and that your fruit should remain:*
- 4. that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”*

We who know the truth of Christ are so ordained by God that if we *“choose Him”* we will *“go”* (Mark 16:15), and if we *“go”* we will *“bring forth fruit.”* This *“fruit”* is the souls of men, harvested from every nation and brought to Christ. If we bring forth fruit, our *“fruit shall remain.”* Christ didn’t give us a philosophy or a step plan; He gave us His gospel, the *“truth”* that will make them free, and they will be *“free indeed”* (John 8:31-36). Those who are *“free indeed”* are the *“fruit that shall remain.”* Finally, He has ordained that those *“chosen ones”* who have *“chosen Him”* will *“ask the Father in my name,”* and He will supply the need. We are ambassadors for Christ. If He sends us, He will supply us. We need not fear, because our heavenly Father knows the things we have need of. Choose Him, and we will be the generation of those who will reap the greatest harvest of souls just before the return of Jesus Christ. He has chosen us and ordained us to this end. **“Choose Him!”**

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