

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

Volume 7, Issue 4

April 2009

Called—Chosen—Faithful

Art Nelson

Introduction

This issue will look at a tricky subject. Please, read the entire article before reaching any conclusions. Don't let your traditions or doctrinal dogma prevent you from hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying in this.

Revelation 17:13-14 NASB

- (13) "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.
- (14) "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the called and chosen and faithful.*"

At the close of the age when the "Beast Kingdom" is operating and the Ten Kings give their authority to the Beast, they will wage war against the Lamb and those who are with Him. We have in the verse listed above the characteristics of those who are with Him and who overcome with Him. They are *the called, the chosen, the faithful*. This is not only their description but it also seems to be an illustration of the process of becoming an overcomer. If this is the case then we need to understand this process in order to yield to the Holy Spirit who is conforming us to the image of Jesus.

Some of the teaching and traditions that some of us have received tell us that we all fit into this category, that by simply being a believer we are overcomers because Jesus is an overcomer. But, is that true? What if it is not true? This Present Truth Teaching Letter will examine this from the Scriptures.

Many Are Called

To begin to examine this, we will start with "the called". We have used this word in a special, religious way that doesn't really seem to fit with the Scriptural definition. I am sure that you have heard the phrase, 'called to the ministry', or something similar, meaning that the person feels a particular or special 'leading' or 'word from God' to enter into the 'ministry'. Scripturally, we are

all 'in the ministry', that is, service to the Lord.

Jesus said, "**For many are called, but few are chosen.**" (Matthew 22:14 NASB) What does this mean? We'll look at the context in a moment but first the word definition. The Greek word for 'called' has as its roots the meaning of 'invitation'. So, Jesus said many are 'invited' but few chosen.

There are two parties to an invitation—the one inviting and the one who is invited. We have put a lot of emphasis on the Lord inviting or calling us but very little on the responsibility of the one invited. There is more to the invitation than simply accepting it—you still have to go to the function to which you were invited and you have to go in appropriate attire for the occasion.

Is it possible to lose out on the invitation? Peter seemed to think so. He told us that we needed to be diligent to make certain about the 'invitation'.

2 Peter 1:10-11 NASB

- (10) Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;
- (11) for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Few Are Chosen

Now let's look at 'the chosen' in the context of Jesus words, "many are called, but few are chosen". Jesus made this statement after speaking of the parable of the wedding feast.

Matthew 22:1-6 NASB

- (1) Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying,
- (2) "**The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.**
- (3) "**And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.**
- (4) "**Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are *all* butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast."**
- (5) "**But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business,**
- (6) **and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.**

This is a direct reference concerning the Jews. They received the first invitation to the wedding feast; however, they didn't pay any attention to the invitation and went about their business as if it didn't matter. Some even mistreated or killed the messengers of the King. This infuriated the King so he exacted judgment against them

Matthew 22:7 NASB

- (7) "**But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.**

This is a direct reference to the coming destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The Lord brought judgment to Jerusalem and the Jewish Nation.

After the first invitees didn't respond, the invitation was extended to the rest of us, the Gentiles.

Matthew 22:8-10 NASB

- (8) "Then he *said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.
- (9) 'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find *there*, invite to the wedding feast.'
- (10) "Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

This is where we are now. The wedding guests are being invited to the wedding. However, there is a potential problem.

Matthew 22:11-13 NASB

- (11) "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes,
- (12) and he *said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless.
- (13) "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

There was an invitee that was not dressed appropriately for the wedding feast. As a consequence he was removed from the wedding feast and thrown into 'outer darkness'¹. In other words, he was not 'chosen' to participate in the wedding feast. The next verse is Jesus' statement, "For many are called, but few are chosen".

This should cause us to pause and think. We have received an invitation to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. His Bride makes herself ready by clothing herself in fine linen. She dresses appropriately for the occasion.

Revelation 19:7-8 NASB

- (7) "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."
- (8) It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

To respond to the wedding invitation requires preparation for the wedding feast. Appropriate attire is required; it is the righteous acts that we do. What are they? Care for one another, care for the widows and orphans, helping the poor, giving water to the thirsty and food to the hungry, and the other things mentioned in the Scriptures. These things do not 'earn' us an invitation; but, they do dress us for the occasion. Otherwise, we may find out what 'outer darkness' really is.

1 NOTE: Outer Darkness is not referred to as Hell.

Faithful

After being called, after being chosen, we must then persevere in faithfulness. When you read the parables, the reward is always to the 'faithful' servant. These are those who continue in the Word and in the work to which they have been 'called'.

Jesus is called the Faithful One. This is His primary characteristic. It is required of those who are chosen by Him that they also have faithfulness as their primary characteristic.

God does His choosing by His foreknowledge. This is the key to understanding how free-will and predestination can both be true. God only chooses those who, in His foreknowledge, He knows will be faithful.

Romans 8:28-30 NASB

- (28) And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.
- (29) For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;
- (30) and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

There is a progression in these verses. Those whom God foreknows are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus. This is expressed in time as our being called – justified – glorified.

At the end of the age, may we be with Him as overcomers who are called, chosen, faithful.

© 2003-2009 by Art Nelson and [Lifestream Teaching Ministries](http://www.LifestreamTeachingMinistries.com)

Previous issues of Present Truth are on the website: www.Lifestreamteaching.com

For comments or questions contact Art Nelson at this address:

artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com

You have permission to copy and distribute these materials provided:

- 1) no changes are made to the content, and, 2) they are not sold.

Removal instructions:

This is a free teaching letter, without cost or obligation.

If you have received this teaching letter in error or if you desire not to receive "Present Truth" teaching letter please reply with "remove" in the subject area.