

## **“THE GREAT CONTRAST”**

**HOLINESS**  
**DON MAURER**  
**1 Peter 2:4-10**  
**November 14, 2014**

**Don:** What do the French Revolution and a kitchen being shot through with a hand grenade have in common? (*Laughter.*)

**Participant:** You’ve got me.

**Don:** One is Napoleon Bonaparte. The other is linoleum blown apart! (*Laughter, groans and boos.*)

**Participant:** That’s a Sig joke.

**Second Participant:** Bring back Sig. (*Laughter.*)

**Don:** I want to profusely, and from the bottom of my heart, thank you. The official, fully functional version of JAWS is up and running! (*Cheers and applause.*)

**(Transcriber’s Note:** JAWS™, *Job Access With Speech*, is software for the blind which enables them to participate in the cyber world using keystrokes.)

So there’s no excuse now for me making any mistakes on the transcripts. (*Laughter.*) Thank you. Seriously, thank you so very, very, very much for the love of Christ that is so evident here, in this place.

Shall we pray? Our Father and our God, we thank You for another opportunity to get together here, to be instructed in Your word. And Father, we do pray for all of the people that Sig mentioned today, and that I’ve mentioned—for Roger’s mom, for Randy’s relatives, Lord, for Diane, for Bruce. Oh, Lord Jesus Christ, we know that these people are in Your tender care. For Linda Calabro’s husband as well. And so, Father, we just pray, Father, that you would work in them mightily, that You would perform healing, and give them strength, Lord, and whatever problems they have—physical, emotional, or whatever—Father, that they would lean upon Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And Father, we pray that, as we examine this passage in 1 Peter, that, Father, You would instruct us, Father, that all I would do and say, Lord, would be in conformity to Your word. If there is anything that I say that is not, Father, please forgive me. Please nullify that, and may only Your truth shine, that we may behold You more clearly, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**Men:** Amen!

**Don:** Okay. Bruce gave me a lot of leeway here today, and so I’ve entitled this study in 1 Peter “The Great Contrast.” And so what I’d like to do, first of all, is to read 1 Peter 2:4-10, and I’ll be concentrating on verses 6-10, and I’m reading from the ESV, but I have a lot of other references that I’ll be asking some of you guys to read this morning, from the New King James Version. So here we go.

1 Peter 2:4-10. “As you come to Him, a living stone, rejected by men, but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.”

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“So the honor is for you who believe. But for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”” They stumble, because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Don:** Amen. Okay. Well, we’re talking about the great contrast, or, as John MacArthur says, “the saints and the ain’ts” this morning, (*laughter*), because that is the contrast that Peter makes in this passage.

Now there are five headings here, on your handout. Let’s just try to dissect them.

The first one is “**The Preciousness of Christ to God.**” All right? Obviously, Christ is the God-Man, and He is precious to God the Father. Now Peter, of course, in verse six, in saying that Christ is chosen and elect and precious, is making an allusion to Isaiah 28, verse 16. You see how rich these verses are in Scriptural content and quotations. That, to me, shows the regard that Peter had for the word of God, that he believed, indeed, that it was the very word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Now this cornerstone, Christ, is precious. Now I don’t know what you think of when you think of the word “precious.” You probably think of your loved ones. Maybe women might tend to think of their loved ones, yes, but also maybe jewelry, or something of great value. I looked it up in Wictionary, and the word “precious” has two primary definitions. One could be “great, or of inestimable value,” and the other “tender, or beloved.” And both of those categories fit our Savior, don’t they? To God, Christ is chosen, elect, and precious. And I’d like someone—let’s see, Tom Hansz—to read Matthew 17:5. Could you read that for us, please?

**Tom:** “While He was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!””

**Don:** Okay. This is the second time that God the Father spoke those words. The first time was at Christ’s baptism. And now, He says, “Hear Him!” He says it again! The Father Himself testifies of the preciousness of, and His love for, the Son.

And Peter never forgot that. In 2 Peter 1, he talks about that experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. And, you know, I can’t help but think, what would I have written if I were so privileged to write about Jesus? I probably would have written something like, “Oh! You should have seen what happened! He fed the five thousand! And He raised the dead, and He healed the blind and the deaf!” But no. Peter doesn’t do that. The singular experience he points to is the Mount of Transfiguration. (*Paraphrase.*) “We weren’t following cleverly devised myths or fairy tales here. I saw Him! I heard the voice of the Majesty on High speaking.” You know, he never, ever forgot that. That just testifies of the preciousness of Christ to God. Okay, let’s see.

**Participant:** Don?

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**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** What was that Scripture ascription? 2 Peter 1?

**Don:** Oh—

**Participant:** 1:17.

**Don:** 1:17, yes. All right, very good. You have a good memory, Ted.

**Ted:** Actually, I had somebody that just showed it to me.

**Don:** Oh, okay, all right. (*Laughter.*) Well then, he has a good memory. All right.

Okay—

**Ted:** He’s very sanctified. *Laughter.*

**Don:** Well, okay. Good. Well, not so sanctified Ted, (*laughter*), would you read John 5, verse 20, please?

**Ted:** I am the greatest of sinners.

**Don:** Me, too. No, I am. Go ahead.

**Ted:** No, I’m greater than you. (*Laughter.*)

**Participant:** I’ve got you both beat. (*Laughter.*)

**Ted:** “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does. And He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.”

**Don:** You know, those are some of the most profound words in all of Scripture, aren’t they? So many times, particularly for those of us who have been brought up in churches that teach the doctrine of the Trinity—and it’s good that we were—but for so many people it’s just a dry, academic doctrine. But nothing could be farther from the truth, if you really think about it. It’s so rich and profound, because it shows the three Persons—Father Son, and Holy Spirit, one God—it shows the intimacy of the three members of the Godhead. Love has always existed. Their love for one another is eternal! There are people who mistakenly think that God created because He was lonely. No, nothing could be farther from the truth. He had all sufficiency and all love within Himself. And so the doctrine of the Trinity is just a tremendous, tremendous well spring of glory, and something to just meditate upon. The love between the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit is absolutely precious, and it has been communicated to us.

Christ says in John 10 that the love that He has for us is identical to the love that the Father has for Him. Absolutely precious! It’s a mirror, of course, of what love is supposed to be like for us, whether in marriage, or, in this context, the love that we are supposed to have for each other in the body of Christ.

All right. “And whoever believes in Him,” (and, of course, the way Bruce would say it is “DART”—depends upon, adheres to, relies upon, and trusts)—“whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.” And, at this point, Peter paraphrases Isaiah 28:16, instead of quoting it directly. It could be a Septuagint issue. That is the Greek translation of the Old Testament that Peter used. And so, sometimes, the New Testament writers will do that. They won’t quote a Scripture directly, but they’ll paraphrase it.

But the important point is this, that if we believe in Jesus, we will not be put to shame on that great day of judgment.

**Participant:** Amen.

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**Don:** You know, there are things that I have said and done and thought, even as a believer, that I am deeply ashamed of, and will always be deeply ashamed of. And, even though we’re going to have to give an account, and we’ll stand before the judgment seat of Christ on Judgment Day, one thing we know for sure. We will not be put to shame. We will not be naked, exposed, or condemned, because we will be robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And you know, brothers, the thing that is so amazing to me is the reverse of that, as Hebrews 2 points out, that Christ is not ashamed of us, that Christ is not ashamed to call us brothers! That is just so wonderful, and it just boggles my mind, because there are certainly a lot of things that I’ve done and said that would make Him ashamed of me. But, no! He is not ashamed to call us brothers. So praise God!

**Participant:** Amen.

**Don:** Okay.

**Participant:** Don?

**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** I just want to write down those attributes. What were those?

**Participant:** DART.

**Don:** Oh, DART. Depend upon, adhere to, rely upon, and trust. Bruce says that frequently.

Okay. Now, secondly, **Christ is precious to us.** You notice, in verses 7, 9 and 10, that Peter uses the plural form of “you.” If he were from Pittsburgh, he would have said “younz.” *Laughter.* It shows the absolute importance of the church, the body of Christ. It’s not just me and Jesus. It’s the body of Christ that is so very precious to Him.

All right. Now there are some differences in some of the translations in verse 7. The ESV and the NASB say that the honor, or value, is for you who believe. The King James, New King James and NIV say, “To you who believe, He is precious.” I like that a little better because it’s a little clearer. The other translations seem to suggest, though I don’t think they are saying that, but they seem to imply that the honor is for you, and that you receive the honor. But no, it’s Christ who receives the honor. It’s Christ who is precious. He is of inestimable value. He is beloved.

How precious, how valuable, is Christ to you? I think of the 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary, Henry Martyn, who was a missionary to Muslims in Africa. One day he entered a mosque where Jesus, in some way, was depicted as subservient to Mohammed, taking orders from Mohammed at the last judgment, or something like that, and Henry Martyn’s eyes filled with tears. And somebody in the mosque asked, “Why are you so upset?”

And he said, “Because my Lord and Savior is being desecrated.”

Guys, how do you react when you hear the name of God, or Jesus Christ, taken in vain, which is so commonplace in our society, on television, and everywhere you go? It cuts through me like a knife.

Is Jesus precious to you in worship? Do you esteem Him? Do you reverence Him—joyfully, yes,—but do you come to Him in great awe and reverence? Or does your mind wonder, like mine does so often? Some people think, “Oh well, when will this be over so I can go home and watch the football game,” or whatever? Is Jesus precious to you in

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worship? There are many people from the past, and many, many today, to whom Jesus is so precious that they will suffer unbelievable torture and die rather than renounce Him.

And also, He is precious in the sense of being tender and dearly loved. Jared, would you read 1 Peter chapter 1, at the end of verse 7, and verse 8?

**Jared:** “... Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.”

**Don:** Joy inexpressible and full of glory! Have you ever had times of unspeakable and glorious joy when contemplating Christ? You know, we’re so busy, and so often our lives are so cluttered. But there are times, maybe when you’ve read a Scripture passage and meditated upon it, or listened to your favorite hymns or gospel songs. That happens to me, and oh, you wouldn’t trade that time for the world. It’s kind of like the mountaintop experience, when Peter and James and John are on the mountain. “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” Great and inexpressible joy! I can’t wait till next month. Of course, I can listen today, January, February or whatever. But next month, when I’ll listen to those great carols, oh, I can’t wait! It’s just an incredible thing when that happens.

And, of course, it’s interesting to me that the intimacy that Christ has for us—and it’s hard for us men to relate to—but our relationship to Christ is compared in Scripture to that of a bridegroom and a bride! That is how Christ regards us!

And it is Christ who makes heaven heaven, isn’t it? Streets of gold? Can’t relate to that. But, whatever else the pleasures are, we should come to the point where, if Christ were not there, it would be hell. Christ is what makes heaven so wonderful.

Okay. Number three. **Christ is a stumbling stone for unbelievers.** You know, all of these things that we’ve been saying, about Christ being so precious to us, for the unbeliever, it’s the exact opposite, isn’t it? These are quotations from Psalm 118, verse 22, and Isaiah 8:14. And, of course, Jesus also cites this Scripture in His parable of the vineyard. After the Pharisees say, (*paraphrase*), “Oh, those terrible vinedressers! The fate that awaits them is going to be awful!” And then Christ points it right back at them. “Have you never read “The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?””

Jesus was a stumbling block to Israel. Rich Clark, would you read John 1:10-11, please?

**Rich:** “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”

**Don:** Yes. It’s still true, for the most part, of Jewish people today. There are some glorious exceptions, and Scripture seems to indicate that, before Christ comes back, many Jews will turn to the Savior. But, for the rest of the world as well, let me just give you a few contemporary examples.

My pastor went to Penn State, and he took a class on comparative religions. And he told us, in a sermon, that they were painstakingly thorough with Islam, and Hinduism, and Buddhism, and Judaism, and all the rest. They talked about their beliefs, their practices, etc. What did they do when they came to Christianity? All the contradictions

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in the Bible, that’s what they focused on. They talked about all the supposed contradictions in the glorious Resurrection accounts—just tore them to shreds.

You know, there was a *New York Times* article, and I hope I’m accurate with this. If anybody read it, maybe you can correct me. But it was last Easter. Of course, all of the secular magazines have to make their little contributions at Christmas and Easter, debunking the virgin birth and the resurrection. You know how that is. But *The New York Times* featured an article on the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and this is what they had to say. (*Paraphrase.*) “The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is the church people flock to every Easter, and it is the site where Christ is believed to be buried.”

Well, when someone had the good sense to point out to *The New York Times* that this isn’t what Christians believe, but that Christ is alive, and that He was resurrected, they made a little correction a week later. They said, (*paraphrase*), “We’d like to make a correction to the article we published last week about Easter. Easter is the time that Christians believe that Christ was resurrected into heaven.”

Now, come on! I mean, even from a journalistic standpoint, that’s inexcusable! But this is the state of our culture, that Christianity and Christ is held so lightly in our culture, even with contempt. So wow, it’s just unbelievable! Christ is a stumbling block to unbelievers, until Christ opens their eyes, until the Holy Spirit regenerates them.

And that gets us into our fourth point. Yes?

**Participant:** Excuse me. I had another point there. I think about a hundred fifty years ago they found, maybe at another site, I think in Golgotha, where they found another gravesite. We actually visited that known island. John Guest was over there.

**Don:** Mm-hmm.

**Participant:** And we bore witness that the tomb was empty. (*Laughter.*)

**Don:** Okay, I’m glad. Thank you. (*More laughter.*) Oh, my! It’s just unbelievable what lengths people will go to in order to deny the resurrection, isn’t it? It’s just incredible!

Well, why do they do this? “They stumble, being disobedient to the word.” Okay. So far, so good—or bad. But then, these last six words, “as they were destined to do,” or “appointed for.”

Now these six words have caused, and do cause to this day, great controversy in the body of Christ. Now, you know, a lot of people will just ignore it. I’m not going to do that, but I come at it with fear and trembling. But, for the next few minutes, we’re going to discuss number four there on your handout, **the doctrine of double predestination or reprobation.**

Jokingly, I said to Sig yesterday that I’ll either be thrown out for the joke I told this morning, or for this. Hopefully not. I want to examine it in light of Scripture.

It’s interesting that this is called “Calvinism.” Poor Calvin! I don’t know how he got saddled with this. I really don’t. If you read Calvin’s *Institutes*, it’s not till Book Three, (and Jared, you can verify this, I’m sure)—it’s not till Book 3, and chapter 21 that he even mentions predestination! It’s incredible, but somehow, he’s gotten the reputation of being this stern, rigid predestinarian. If you read his works, you’ll find out otherwise. But anyway, you know—

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**Participant:** Luther teaches the same thing.

**Don:** Yes. Luther, Augustine, yes. Absolutely.

**Participant:** The apostle Paul taught the same thing. *(Laughter.)*

**Don:** Yes. Amen! I believe that! Jesus, yes. preach it, brother!

**Participant:** God taught the same thing. *(Laughter.)*

**Don:** Thank you, Ted, thank you. That says it all. But Bruce often talks about that you don't take unbelievers to the university of election. You take them to the college of faith and repentance. Well, let's go a little bit this morning to the university of election and reprobation.

Let me just give you a little personal history that I have of it. When I was in high school, I took Advanced Placement European History. Our book was talking about the Reformation, and it talked about John Calvin, and it said that Calvin believed that you were saved or damned from birth, and that there was nothing you could do about it. No further explanation, no clarification, and I thought, “Oh, how horrible!” And that stuck with me for years and years. But then, after Christ found me, and I began to read the Bible, in my Roman Catholic Bible, of all things, I read Ephesians 1, and Romans 9. Oh, it *is* there! And, you know, the footnotes there, trying to minimize it or explain it away, despite those, I thought, “Oh my, it's still there!” And now the doctrine of election is something that I've come to love dearly.

But on your handout, you'll notice that I have WCF, the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 3, sections 3-4. Let me just read this to you, and you can follow along.

“By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either decreased or diminished.”

Now where would someone get such an idea? Are these just the machinations of these ivory tower theologians who had nothing better to do? No. They get it from some Scriptures that I think they rightly interpreted. Bishop Rodgers, would you read Proverbs 16:4, please?

**Bishop Rodgers:** Proverbs.

**Participant:** It's on the next page.

**Don:** I knew that. *(Laughter.)*

**Bishop Rodgers:** “The LORD has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.”

**Don:** Whoa! Wow! Okay. In Romans 1—I don't have it on your handout—but in Romans 1, in verses 24, 26 and 28,—look it up for yourself,—for the reprobate, for those who will not be saved, there is the constant expression “God gave them up,” or “God gave them over” to their sin. In Exodus, “I will harden Pharaoh's heart,” God tells Moses. Okay, let's see. Bill McCoy, Romans 9:22, please?

**Bill:** “What if God, wanting to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction?”

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**Don:** “He endured with much long-suffering.” We’ll be getting more into that in just a few minutes, all right? And then, let’s see, who haven’t I called on? Sig, Revelation 22, verse 11.

**Sig:** “He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still. He who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

**Don:** This is hard stuff, folks. I’m not minimizing that at all. But it’s interesting to me that the same word used in Acts 13:48—“those who were appointed to eternal life believed”—is used here, that those who were disobedient to the word, that this is what they were appointed to, or destined for.” You know, this is the prime rib of the Word. My first pastor said that. You know, we talk about the milk of the Word. We’re to crave that, as Bruce has gone over. We talk about growing up into the meat. Well, this is the prime rib, because it’s very hard for a lot of people to digest. But I would like to give some considerations here.

First of all, as Luther responded, saying, “Let God be God.” When people asked him, “Well, why is there so much suffering in the world? Why is there so much evil in the world? Why doesn’t God save everybody? Why are some appointed and predestined to eternal life, and not others?” And Luther said, “Let God be God.” There are some questions that we just can’t answer this side of glory. You know, the question that we should be asking isn’t why doesn’t Christ save everybody?, but why does He save anybody? Why does He save me? That’s the question. It’s like the old country western song. I think Johnny Cash wrote it, and Kris Kristofferson sang it.

“Why me, Lord?

What have I ever done

To deserve even one

Of the pleasures I’ve known?”

Especially eternal life. You know, we sing “Amazing Grace.” It’s sung at everything from football games to state fairs to funerals, and most people who sing it have no idea of the import of the words, particularly the second verse. But is grace amazing, or is it something that we take for granted? Or do we think that it’s amazing debt? You know, if God owes us salvation, it’s no longer grace, is it? We have to keep that in mind.

But, having said that, secondly, our God is extraordinarily compassionate. Tom Hansz, would you read Ezekiel 33:11, please?

**Tom:** “Say to them, “As I live,” says the LORD God, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways, for why should you die, O house of Israel?”,”

**Don:** Did you hear that? “I have no pleasure in the death,” (that is, the perishing, the damnation “of the wicked.” He says that in several places in Ezekiel. And I put in your handout, though I did not put the exact Scripture passages there, 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9. Now I think, in context, particularly in the 2 Peter 3 passage, where it says that God is not willing that any should perish, I think he is talking about the elect. However, there are those who interpret that passage, and the 1 Timothy passage about God wanting all men to be saved the way Ezekiel says it—that God does not delight, that He doesn’t get His jollies, as R. C. Sproul says, out of the death and damnation of anyone. He



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executes it. He must, to demonstrate His wrath. But it’s like a judge who executes a death sentence, or a prison sentence upon a criminal. I’m sure that a judge does not enjoy doing that. But he has to do it. And so that interpretation is certainly valid, though I do believe that, in the context of 2 Peter 3:9, it is talking about the elect.

All right. Number three. The elect, the number of the elect, is presented in terms of many, a great multitude. Ted, would you read Matthew 20:28, please?

**Ted:** “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

**Don:** Many. Many is a lot of people, folks. It may not be the majority. Christ said that there are few who find eternal life. But that few are many. The Bible does promise in Isaiah that “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” All right?

**Participant:** It’s too great to be counted.

**Don:** Yes. It’s too great to be counted. Would you read that for us, Bishop?

**Bishop Rodgers:** “After these things, I looked. And, behold, a great multitude, which no one could number, all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, those with white robes, palm branches in their hands, crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!””

**Don:** Oh, hallelujah! Oh, I can’t wait! I can’t wait till that great day. Yeah! I mean, this is absolutely wonderful—that this is a multitude that no man can number, from every tongue and tribe and nation.

We tend to get discouraged because we’re so Americanized. We tend to look only at our country, and the decline of our culture, and Islamic terrorism and secularism. But I was reading, or listening, actually, to a commentary by Al Mohler, the great Reformed Baptist. And he says that the church is just exploding in China! There are estimates that Christians in china now outnumber those in the Communist Party, despite, or maybe because, of persecution. Pollsters and statisticians have said that Christianity has been increasing in china at a rate of 10 per cent annually since 1980. And, believe it or not, many of our English Bibles are printed in China! God has a sense of humor, doesn’t He? (*Laughter.*) You know, it’s like Voltaire, who said that after a hundred years of his death that Christianity would no longer be around, and then they used his house to print Bibles. (*Laughter.*) So God has a sense of humor

**Participant:** Don?

**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** I have a question for you. My secular humanist friends always ask, “Why did God have to kill His Son in order for us to be made right with Him?” And I ask the question. Why is Christ a stumbling block? Why couldn’t God, in all His power make it evident that He is the Christ, and that He came to save us? Why this twist? Why do we go through this, and have to deal with predestination? God is powerful. He could make it simple and obvious and wonderful at the same time. Why doesn’t He save everybody?

**Don:** Let God be God. (*Laughter.*)

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**Participant:** That’s it? That’s your answer? (*Laughter.*)

**Don:** Well, I think that what Calvin said is very appropriate here. “Where God has shut His holy mouth, I will desist from inquiry.” And I’m not trying to pick on you, Sig. And I—

**Participant:** Please do. (*Laughter.*)

**Don:** You know, for an unbeliever there really isn’t a satisfactory answer, is there?

**Participant:** Don?

**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** I think we can say this. We know who God is in Christ. He is the revelation and the truth. So we know God is wise, and righteous, and loving, and good. Therefore, if He does something that we don’t understand, we at least have grounds to trust Him to have good reasons.

**Participant:** Amen!

**Don:** Well, that’s exactly right. Bringing it down to this, why is my buddy’s wife—why the cancer? Why do Christians, a lot of times, suffer more than others? Why the persecution? I don’t know. But we know that God is good, and we have to trust His promises. You’re absolutely right, Bishop, and I think that we have to realize this. If God only came, and gave the word, and saved everybody, or made it obvious to the whole world who Jesus is, and if there were no cross, if there were no payment or sacrifice for sin, yes, we might know God’s mercy, but we wouldn’t appreciate it, would we? We wouldn’t know the fullness of God. God is the sum total of His attributes, including justice and wrath. We wouldn’t know those things if we didn’t know the sacrifice of Christ, and what He went through.

And, on top of that, Muslims say that Allah is loving. Allah doesn’t exist, but how in the world is that love demonstrated?

**Participant:** Blowing everything up--

**Don:** Yes, right. I mean, there is no concrete example of that. Allah, in the mind of the Muslim, is unknowable. You can’t have an intimate relationship with him. A Muslim would think it would be blasphemous to say you could! But how did Christ not only demonstrate the wrath of God, and the justice of God for sin,—and sin had to be punished—but the love! He died for me! He died for His people! He gave Himself! He became man! Yes, Doug?

**Doug:** I think it was C. S. Lewis who said, “God, through Jesus Christ, entered into our humanity. He became a human being, so He could know,” and, like you say, prove that God knows.

**Don:** Absolutely!

**Doug:** He knows the human existence, and He entered into humanity. And not only did He enter into and experience everything, but He also experienced the awful rejection heaped on Him by people.

**Don:** So He knows! Those who are going through persecution right now, Jesus is right there with them. And because of our union with Christ, He is right there with us. He knows what we’re going through. In some way, to quote one of our Presidents, “He feels our pain,” in the utmost sense. He knows what it’s like to be spat upon, scorned,

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rejected. He knows what physical pain and horrible temptation is like. And so, Sig, I don't know if that helps. Like I said, until God opens the eyes of an unbeliever, there is really nothing that you can say.

**Participant:**

**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** If I could just read a verse—

**Don:** Sure, Jay.

**Jay:** Regarding Sig's question, and it just ties into this whole teaching here, but in Romans chapter 9, verse 20, it says, “But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing say to Him who formed it, “Why have you made me like this?””

“Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump, to make one vessel for honor, and another for dishonor?” But just even in the context of everything that we're talking about, it's just like we need to give God the glory—

**Don:** Yes.

**Jay:** And to be submissive. I'm just thinking about how dare we question God. But just in the context of the unbeliever, I believe that, in this whole thing, even at the end of Revelation, it says, “Whoever is thirsty, come and drink.” So we don't know who the elect are.

**Don:** Amen! Amen!

**Jay:** We are to share the gospel, and even in that particular circumstance, just share the gospel, because whoever is thirsty, come and drink.

**Don:** Thank you, Jay. Jared, would you quote that quote from Spurgeon, please, that you told me the other day. Remember it?

**Jared:** Yes. He was talking about why do you preach the gospel if people are either elect or non-elect? And he said that that is how you find out who they are, and if the elect had a green streak going down their backs, we'd go around picking up shirt tails.

*(Laughter.)*

**Don:** Yes. Absolutely. The caricature is, well, you know, I'm a Christian, but I'm afraid that on Judgment Day I'll find out that I wasn't one of the elect. No, no. What's the sign that you're elect? It's that you love Jesus, even with a mustard seed of faith. And I want to end up here with—

**Participant:** Don?

**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** Just one question. In the first passage, from 1 Peter 2:4-10, in the first sentence it says to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

**Don:** Yes.

**Participant:** Does anybody have any explanation or understanding of that, what the spiritual sacrifices are?

**Participant:** Praise and thanksgiving.

**Don:** Yes. Praise and thanksgiving, good works that we do, worship, that kind of thing—all of those, really. Hebrews 13:15-16 says the same thing.

**Participant:** Raking a neighbor's leaves.

## ***“THE GREAT CONTRAST”***

**Don:** Sure, yes. Whatever the Lord in His grace leads you to do. I’ll talk about that in just a little bit. I want to end this real fast.

**Who We Are In Christ.** Verses 9 and 10. Who younz are in Christ. “A chosen race,” (or generation; both words are acceptable.) Generation can mean the same thing as a family, or whatever.

“A royal priesthood.” And, of course, Ted and Tom and Bruce have been doing a great job with that concept.

“A holy nation.” Sorry, folks! America is not a holy nation. Sorry, Ted! England is not a holy nation. (*Laughter.*)

**Ted:** You’ve just crossed the line. (*Laughter.*)

**Sig:** You didn’t say Ireland. (*Laughter.*)

**Don:** Right, right. That would fall into the category, too. The state of Israel is not a holy nation, or anywhere else. But the church, the body of Christ, is “a holy nation, a people for His own possession,” or God’s peculiar treasure. Oh, boy, do you understand how God feels about you? It’s absolutely fantastic!

For what end? “That you may proclaim the excellencies,”—the praises—“of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.” And that call is not just a general call, but it’s an effectual call. He called you, and that call is effective. It does what it accomplishes. We worship corporately. And we witness corporately and individually.

“Once you were not a people,” as it says in Hosea, “but now you are God’s people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” By the grace of God, walk in it. Live like it.

Let us pray. Father, what a tremendous passage this is! Father, we are just continually blown away by Your word! Father, it is just a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet. Father, what tremendous treasures we have here, and I just thank You, and we all thank You, Father, for Your word that is powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. And Father, we’ve studied some hard things this morning. I pray, Father, that You would help us to contemplate these things, to the end, Lord, not that we would impress others with our knowledge—heaven forbid, Lord, that we would be puffed up with pride!—but, Father, that we would be humble before you and fall down on our knees, and worship You, You who are Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to Your praise and honor and glory. And all of these things we ask in Jesus’ name. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen!” (*Applause.*)