

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen
(Old Testament)

Deuteronomy 14:2; I Peter 2:9

Chosen

For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

My dad has taken up a number of hobbies in his retirement years, all of them related to the outdoors. The one he seems to enjoy most is metal-detecting. He's found all kinds of stuff – things he has never seen before, like jewelry and coins and watches. He even found a knife sheath I lost in a Kentucky woodlot, thanks to a single brass snap riveted to the leather.

I also have a metal detector but mostly use it to find empty brass and small gun parts I lose in the tall grass of cow pasture shooting ranges. In contrast to my dad's discoveries, these are things I own, things I have seen, things I have previously touched. Although we choose to use our detectors for different purposes, our discoveries – our treasures – are special.

The people God chooses for Himself are special treasures, special people. There are none like them on the face of the earth, whether they are people from the Old or New Testament. Both covenants have in common God's act of choosing His special treasures.

Embedded in the theme of God's choosing is the submissiveness of men's faith and obedience to God's exclusive sovereignty. Under the old covenant of the law, God chose people because of obedience which led to faith (Exodus 19:5). Under the new covenant of the blood of Jesus, God chooses people because of faith which leads to obedience (Ephesians 2:9-10). He chooses because He loves.

His love is an equal element in this matter. God loved the fathers of the children of Israel and *therefore He chose their descendants after them* (Deuteronomy 4:37). And, *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life* (John 3:16). God's demonstration of His love for us, sinful men one and all, includes the necessary death of Jesus (Romans 5:8). Clearly, outside of Jesus there is no way to connect with the Heavenly Father. God's choice, then, is that there is no way to get to Him except through His Son (John 14:6).

We see this salvific connection in the Old Testament with God choosing a people from whom the Savior would come. In other words, Israel was God's choice of the nation that would birth the King of glory into this world. God's perfect choice was an imperfect people. Yet the Savior walked among us, not imperfectly but perfectly. As Jesus always was, He was still then the King of glory, skin and bones upon His frame notwithstanding. Further good news: Jesus will always be the King of glory.

The connection continues under the new covenant of the blood of Jesus. Now, God chooses a people to whom the Savior goes. His choice to call people out of darkness into His marvelous light is a promise made to *whoever calls upon the name of the Lord* (Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13). He knew exactly who those would be and penned those names into the Lamb's Book of Life *from the foundation of the world* (Revelation 17:8). God is not surprised, therefore, when someone confesses his sins and confesses Jesus is Lord. This, I believe, is the zenith of His omniscience. The revelation of His choosing is for our benefit. Just so we can stand in awe of His awesomeness.

As I write this, I struggle with verb tenses but it really doesn't matter. God knows His chosen ones in a timeless, inexplicable way. They could not choose Him first, lest God should bend His sovereignty to their will, as He rhetorically asked Job, *"Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him?"* (Job 41:11). God chose His treasures first, before they knew for themselves that they would indeed choose Him and bend their will to His sovereignty.

I choose to use a metal detector to find my lost "treasures." God chose to use the Cross of Christ to find His lost treasures. I find my treasures in spite of junk like nails. God finds His treasures because of junk like nails. I choose every item that responds in a specific way to the magnetic field of my machine. God chooses every repentant person who responds to the magnetism of the Cross.

I will always be amazed at God's act of choosing – how He does (or did) it. More than anything, I'm just glad to be chosen. And that He knew it and did something about it before I knew it and messed it up.

God Moves in a Mysterious Way
William Cowper (1731 – 1800)

God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.
Deep in unfathomable mines of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs and works His sovereign will.
You fearful saints, fresh courage take; The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.
His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.
Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.

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Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Deuteronomy 14:2

Chosen

HOOK

1. What is the most expensive item you've ever found outdoors? What was it's value?

2. List two places you'd use a metal detector and the items you'd expect to find at each place.

3. Explain the benefits of choosing an outdoor activity over an indoor activity.

LINE

Under the old covenant of the law, God chose people because of obedience which led to faith. Under the new covenant of the blood of Jesus, God chooses people because of faith which leads to obedience. He chooses because He loves.

God loved the fathers of the children of Israel and therefore chose their descendants. God loved the world and sent His Son and gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.

God chose a people from whom the Savior would come and chooses a people to whom the Savior goes. His choice to call people out of darkness into His marvelous light is a promise made to all who call out to Him. God is not surprised when someone confesses his sins and confesses Jesus is Lord.

God knows His chosen ones in a timeless, inexplicable way. They could not choose Him first, lest God should bend His sovereignty to their will. God chose His treasures first, before they knew for themselves that they would indeed choose Him and bend their will to His sovereignty.

Have you experienced God's forgiveness? If not, will you choose right now to confess your sins to Him and confess Jesus is Lord? If you have been forgiven, write what this means to you.

How do you explain the action of God in choosing a special treasure, or people, for Himself?

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: God's love God's choice treasure
