

Making Sure Your Calling and Election

And Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). The importance of the church cannot be over-emphasized. The Apostle Paul said, "to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10-11).

The church, those who have been called out of the world into service to God, should be of great importance to you if you desire and intend to be pleasing to God. Our consideration in this segment seeks to ask the question, "Do you realize that your attitude toward the church, the one Jesus built, will affect your eternal condition?"

Being "called out" of the world into service to God is the greatest calling mankind will ever receive. This calling is of such importance, the Apostle Peter said, "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). There are three terms we'll be considering, from this text: (1) Calling; (2) Election; and (3) Sure.

The "calling" of 2 Peter 1:10, 'is always used in the NT of that "calling" the origin, nature and destiny of which are heavenly (the idea of invitation being implied); it is used especially of God's invitation to man to accept the benefits of salvation' (Vine's). Of this calling, the Apostle Paul said, "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). It needs to be noted that in this text, the Apostle Paul is speaking to brethren, those who had been taught and had appropriately responded. If that does not define your condition, you need to realize that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and is the only means through which God has selected to call men: "For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith" (Romans 1:16, 17).

The "election" of 2 Peter 1:10, denotes "a picking out, selection." The Apostle Paul used the term, saying, "knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election, how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power" (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5), and 'refers not to the church collectively, but to the individuals constituting it; the Apostle's assurance of their "election" gives the reason for his thanksgiving' (Vine's), and thus Peter says, in 2 Peter 1:10, "Believers are to 'give the more diligence to make your calling and election

sure,' by the exercise of the qualities and graces which make them fruitful in the knowledge of God" (Vine's).

The "sure" of 2 Peter 1:10, denotes "firm, steadfast," thus, "the calling and election of believers [*was*] to be made "sure" by the fulfillment of the injunctions" stated in verses 5-7: "adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love." Now, Peter says, "for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:10-11). It was the Holy Spirit that put the "if" in the text. Is your Calling, and Election...Sure?

Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). The choice is yours. It is better to be "sure." ret