

Discipleship Training Course

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- The Old Testament tetragrammaton name of God (derived from the four Hebrew letters translated into English as YHWH) has been rendered LORD unless translated Jehovah or Yahweh
- Pronouns referring to the Trinity and some specific terms relating to the Trinity (such as Name and Word) have been capitalized
- Speech marks around entire quotes and at the beginning of new paragraphs have been omitted
- Anglicised spellings have been used
- All quotes begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop
- Some weights, measures and times have been replaced with easier to understand terms given in the footnotes using square brackets
- All verse numbers, footnote numbers and symbols have been removed
- Poetry has been indented and only new sentences start with a capital letter

Published in electronic format by Pastor Peter Samuels, Morecambe, UK

Version 2.0, July 2026

ISBN 978-0-9956916-1-2

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1. New Testament teaching

Even though we have made a decision to believe in Jesus and follow Him, **God has already chosen us** through His **foreknowledge**:

You didn't choose me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatever you will ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it to you.

John 15:16 (WEBPB)

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom He **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also **called**, and those whom He called He also **justified**, and those whom He justified He also **glorified**.*

Romans 8:28-30 (ESVUK)

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to

nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the LORD."

1 Corinthians 1:21-31 (ESVUK)

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, even as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without defect before Him** in love, having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His desire, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He freely gave us favour in the Beloved.*

Ephesians 1:3-6 (WEBPB)

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ:

*To the temporary residents dispersed in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **chosen** according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father and **set apart** by the Spirit for obedience and for sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ.*

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

1 Peter 1:1-2 (HCSB)

2. Old Testament examples

The concept of calling did not originate from the New Testament – it is also found in the Old Testament:

2.1 Noah

Noah was called to build an ark:

This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!"

Build a large boat from cypress wood and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior."

Genesis 6:9-14 (NLT)

Notice how when God wants to do a new work He will call someone.

2.2 Abraham

Abraham was called as an old man:

*Now the LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country, and your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. **I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who treats you with contempt. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you.**"*

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him. Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Genesis 12:1-4

Notice how Abraham was **sent** but Lot **went**. This led to a lot of problems for Lot later on after he moved to Sodom with his wife eventually turning into a pillar of salt and his two daughters committing incest.

The difference between Abraham and Lot is also seen in their different visions:

*Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, herds, and tents. The land was not able to bear them, that they might live together; for their possessions were so great that they couldn't live together. There was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites lived in the land at that time. Abram said to Lot, "Please, let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen; for we are relatives. Isn't the whole land before you? Please separate yourself from me. **If you go to the left hand, then I will go to the right. Or if you go to the right hand, then I will go to the left.**"*

Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw all the plain of the Jordan, that it was well-watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as you go to Zoar. So Lot chose the Plain of the Jordan for himself. Lot travelled east, and they separated themselves from one other. Abram lived in the land of Canaan, and Lot lived in the cities of the plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinners against the LORD.

*The LORD said to Abram, after Lot was separated from him, "**Now, lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for I will give all the land which you see to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can count the dust of the earth, then your offspring may also be counted.** Arise, walk through the land in its length and in its width; for I will give it to you."*

Abram moved his tent, and came and lived by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

Genesis 13:5-18 (WEBPB)

Abraham allowed Lot to choose which land to go to because he was operating according to his calling (spiritual sight), not according to his natural sight. Lot, however, was operating at the natural level and chose the plain of the river Jordan. He pitched his tent near Sodom then later started to live in Sodom. Notice also how God had remained silent towards Abraham until he parted company with Lot. Lot was unable to share in his blessing because he had not been called to travel with him.

According to Peter, Lot's **righteous soul was tormented** when he lived in Sodom:

But God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day.

2 Peter 2:7-8 (NLT)

Note: We should not infer from this that God does not want us to live near wicked people – Lot's problem was that he was not sent to live in Sodom. Wherever God sends us He also provides us with protection: physically, morally and spiritually.

2.3 Moses

Moses was called as an old man when he had given up any hope of fulfilling his destiny through his own strength:

Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to God's mountain, to Horeb. The LORD's angel appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the middle of a bush. He looked, and behold,

the bush burnt with fire, and the bush was not consumed. Moses said, "I will go now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

When the LORD saw that he came over to see, God called to him out of the middle of the bush, and said, "Moses! Moses!"

He said, "Here I am."

He said, "Don't come close. Take off your sandals, for the place you are standing on is holy ground." Moreover he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey; to the place of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me. Moreover I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Exodus 3:1-10 (WEBPB)

2.4 The nation of Israel

The nation of Israel was called by God:

*For you are a holy people to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession, above all peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD didn't **set His love on you** nor **choose you**, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He desires to keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 (WEBPB)

2.5 Gideon

Gideon was called to lead the nation out of a sense of inadequacy:

*The angel of the LORD came, and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained to Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. The angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." Gideon said to him, "Oh, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? Where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, 'Didn't the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian." The LORD looked at him, and said, "**Go in this your might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Haven't I sent you?**" He said to him, "O LORD, how shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." The LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man."*

Judges 6:11-16 (NHEB)

As we read in 1 Corinthians 1 above, God delights in choosing weak, lowly and despised people in order to accomplish His purposes. Notice also how the angel of the LORD was actually the LORD Himself – this is an appearance of Christ in the Old Testament.

2.6 Samuel

The Lord spoke to Samuel in the night as a young boy. This is traditionally seen as his calling:

*The child Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. It happened at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see), and the lamp of God hadn't yet gone out, and Samuel had lain down in the LORD's temple, where the ark of God was; that the LORD called Samuel; and he said, "Here I am." He ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am; for you called me." He said, "I did not call; lie down again." He went and lay down. The LORD called yet again, "Samuel." Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again the third time. He arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; for you called me." Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, **"Go, lie down: and it shall be, if He calls you, that you shall say, 'Speak, LORD; for Your servant hears.'"** So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, "Samuel. Samuel." Then Samuel said, "Speak; for Your servant hears." The LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone who hears it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even to the end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons were cursing God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be removed with sacrifice nor offering forever."*

1 Samuel 3:1-14 (NHEB)

Notice the connection between Eli's weak eyes, the flickering lamp in the temple, the rarity of words from the LORD and Eli's failure to realise it was the LORD calling Samuel, all indicating the state of the nation at that time in its relationship with God.

2.7 Jeremiah

Jeremiah was called as a young man:

Now the LORD's word came to me, saying,

"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

Before you were born, I sanctified you.

I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Ah, LORD God! Behold, I don't know how to speak; for I am a child."

But the LORD said to me, "Don't say, 'I am a child;' for you must go to whomever I send you, and you must say whatever I command you. Don't be afraid because of them, for I am with you to rescue you," says the LORD.

Then the LORD stretched out His hand, and touched my mouth. Then the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. Behold, I have today set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to uproot and to tear down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Moreover the LORD's word came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?"

I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree."

Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well; for I watch over My word to perform it."

The LORD's word came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?"

I said, "I see a boiling cauldron; and it is tipping away from the north."

Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north, evil will break out on all the inhabitants of the land. For, behold, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the LORD.

*"They will come, and they will each set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem,
and against all its walls all around, and against all the cities of Judah.
I will utter My judgements against them concerning all their wickedness,
in that they have forsaken Me,
and have burnt incense to other gods,
and worshipped the works of their own hands.*

You therefore put your belt on your waist, arise, and say to them all that I command you. Don't be dismayed at them, lest I dismay you before them. For, behold, I have made you today a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. They will fight against you, but they will not prevail against you; for I am with you", says the LORD, "to rescue you."

Jeremiah 1:4-19 (WEBPB)

3. New Testament examples

3.1 The twelve disciples

One of the disciples Jesus called was a tax collector:

As Jesus passed by from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax collection office. He said to him, "Follow Me." He got up and followed Him. As He sat in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

*When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do. But you go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' **for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**"*

Matthew 9:9-13 (WEBPB)

*Now it happened, while the crowd pressed on Him and heard the word of God, that He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. He entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. He sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered Him, "Master, we worked all night, and took nothing; but at Your word I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great multitude of fish, and their net was breaking. They beckoned to their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. They came, and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord." For he was amazed, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had caught; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "**Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men.**" When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything, and followed Him.*

Luke 5:1-11 (NHEB)

Jesus spent the night in prayer before He officially called and designated the Twelve:

In these days, He went out to the mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God. When it was day, He called His disciples, and from them He chose twelve, whom He

also named apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter; Andrew, his brother; James; John; Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas; James, the son of Alphaeus; Simon, who was called the Zealot; Judas the son of James; and Judas Iscariot, who also became a traitor.

Luke 6:12-16 (WEBPB)

The disciples of John wanted to follow Jesus and fellowship with Him. Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus and Jesus renamed him Cephas (Peter). Jesus called Nathaniel through a word of knowledge about his character and his physical location:

Again, the next day, John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What are you looking for?"

They said to him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

He said to them, "Come, and see."

They came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day. It was about [4pm]. One of the two who heard John and followed Him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah!" (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is by interpretation, Peter). On the next day, He was determined to go out into Galilee, and He found Philip. Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote: Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said about him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

Nathanael said to Him, "How do you know me?"

Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are King of Israel!"

Jesus answered him, "Because I told you, 'I saw you underneath the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these!" He said to him, "Most certainly, I tell you all, hereafter you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

John 1:35-51 (WEBPB)

3.2 Zacchaeus

Jesus called the tax collector Zacchaeus in a way similar to Matthew:

He entered and was passing through Jericho. There was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, and couldn't because of the crowd, because he was short. He ran on ahead, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." He hurried, came down, and received Him joyfully. When they saw it, they all murmured, saying, "He has gone in to lodge with a man who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. If I have wrongfully exacted anything of anyone, I restore four times as much."

*Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. **For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.**"*

Luke 19:1-10 (WEBPB)

3.3 Saul

Saul was called in a dramatic way. The Lord used a local elder, Ananias, to confirm his calling:

But Saul, still breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked for letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he travelled, he got close to Damascus, and suddenly a light from the sky shone around him. He fell on the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?"

He said, "Who are You, Lord?"

The Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise up and enter into the city, then you will be told what you must do."

The men who travelled with him stood speechless, hearing the sound, but seeing no one. Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no one. They led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. He was without sight for three days, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

He said, "Behold, it's me, Lord."

The Lord said to him, "Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judah for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus. For behold, he is praying, and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight."

But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he did to Your saints at Jerusalem. Here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your Name."

*But the Lord said to him, "**Go your way, for he is My chosen vessel to bear My Name before the nations and kings, and the children of Israel.** For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My Name's sake."*

Ananias departed and entered into the house. Laying his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he received his sight. He arose and was baptised. He took food and was strengthened. Saul stayed several days with the disciples who were at Damascus.

Acts 9:1-19 (WEPPB)

3.4 Cornelius and the elect in Caesarea

Cornelius was the first Gentile to be saved. He was also called at the same time:

Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man, and one who feared God with all his house, who gave gifts for the needy generously to the people, and always prayed to God. At about [3pm], he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God coming to him, and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

He, fastening his eyes on him, and being frightened, said, "What is it, Lord?"

He said to him, "Your prayers and your gifts to the needy have gone up for a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and get Simon, who is also called Peter. He is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the seaside.

When the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier of those who waited on him continually. Having explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Acts 10:1-8 (WEBPB)

On the next day Peter arose and went out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. On the next day they entered into Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his relatives and his near friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up! I myself am also a man." As he talked with him, he went in and found many gathered together. He said to them, "You yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man who is a Jew to join himself or come to one of another nation, but God has shown me that I shouldn't call any man unholy or unclean. Therefore I also came without complaint when I was sent for. I ask therefore, why did you send for me?"

Cornelius said, "Four days ago, I was fasting until this hour, and at [3pm], I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer is heard, and your gifts to the needy are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and summon Simon, who is also called Peter. He is staying in the house of a tanner named Simon, by the seaside. When he comes, he will speak to you.' Therefore I sent to you at once, and it was good of you to come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God to hear all things that have been commanded you by God."

Peter opened his mouth and said, "Truly I perceive that God doesn't show favouritism; but in every nation he who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. The word which He sent to the children of Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ – He is Lord of all – you yourselves know what happened, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of everything He did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they also killed, hanging Him on a tree. God raised Him up the third day, and gave Him to be revealed, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen before by God, to us, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that this is He who is appointed by God as the Judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about Him, that through His Name everyone who believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word. They of the circumcision who believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in other languages and magnifying God.

Then Peter answered, "Can anyone forbid these people from being baptised with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just like us." He commanded them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay some days.

Acts 10:23b-48 (WEBPB)

3.5 The elect in Pisidian Antioch

Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in Pisidian Antioch. Once they had shown proper respect for the Jews, they concentrated their efforts on those who were appointed for salvation:

Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by Him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

*“Look, you scoffers,
be astounded and perish;
for I am doing a work in your days,
a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.”*

As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

*“I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”*

*And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and **as many as were appointed to eternal life believed**. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 13:38-52 (ESVUK)

4. Conclusion

God loves the world and wants all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), but in His foreknowledge He knows and calls out those who are appointed for salvation. Our prayers and actions can make a difference but we should be led by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the most unlikely people make the most influential converts. We should never judge people in their pre-regenerate state.

*I will go before you,
and make the rough places smooth.
I will break the doors of bronze in pieces,
and cut apart the bars of iron.
I will give you the treasures of darkness,
and hidden riches of secret places,
that you may know that it is I, the LORD, who call you by your name,
even the God of Israel.
For Jacob My servant's sake,
and Israel My chosen,
I have called you by your name.
I have given you a title,
though you have not known Me.
I am the LORD, and there is no one else.
Besides Me, there is no God.
I will strengthen you,*

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*though you have not known Me;
that they may know from the rising of the sun,
and from the west,
that there is no one besides Me.
I am the LORD, and there is no one else.*
Isaiah 45:2-6 (WEBPB)