Floral Heights Church of Christ
1814 Buchanan, Wichita Falls, Texas 76309

Clips from Psalms

Psalms 90:1-2
A Prayer of Moses the man of God

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

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Unconditional Election

November 13, 1618 the Synod of Dort was held by the Dutch Reformed Church to settle a serious controversy initiated by the rise of Arminianism. During the year 1610, the followers of Jacob Arminius presented five objections to the teachings of John Calvin in a document called “The Remonstrance of 1610.” First, they believed that the divine decree of predestination is conditional, not absolute. Secondly, that atonement is in intention universal. Thirdly, man cannot of himself exercise a saving faith. Fourthly, the grace of God does not act irresistibly in man. Lastly, believers are not beyond the possibility of falling from grace.

The Synod of Dort rejected the Remonstrance of 1610 and formulated the “Five Points of Calvinism” remembered by many using the mnemonic “TULIP.” Today, many denominational bodies hold to some form of “Neo-Calvinism.” Summarily, John Calvin believed that God predetermined individuals by name to be saved. Those who were predetermined to receive salvation could not loose that state of election and those who were not predetermined could do nothing to attain God's favor. Consider the following Bible verses that confuse those who do not rightly divide the entire word of God.

Samson was chose by God to save Israel before he was even born (see Judges 13:3-7). Jeremiah was chose by God to deliver God's divine decree to the wicked of Judah before he was even born (Jeremiah 1:5). Then there is the famous statement made by David in his contrite prayer of forgiveness. David committed adultery with Bathsheba and had Uriah, her husband, murdered in battle. David later writes, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5). The apostle Paul writes of God's election of Jacob over Esau saying, "for the children being not yet born, neither having done any thing good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Romans 9:11-13).
Do these passages teach us that certain people are predetermined to be saved and others are not? The answer to this question is both yes and no. Let me explain. The apostle Paul teaches us that the reason Jehovah chose Jacob over Esau before they were born was that he made a authoritative sovereign decision to bring forth his promise of salvation through Jacob (Romans 9:9-24). Who else, aside from the Lord, had the authority to choose the method and mode of man's eternal salvation? God is not only the creator of this universe but the one who reigns with supreme authority. Man does not question God regarding the "why" of this life (Romans 9:19-20). Neither does man question God's authority by establishing their own. Zechariah writes, "Be silent, all flesh, before Jehovah; for he is waked up out of his holy habitation" (Zechariah 2:13).

So, yes, God has predetermined people to be saved and some not to be saved.

We must, however, be more precise in our answer of "yes" to the question above else confusion reigns. While it is true that Jehovah has predetermined people to be saved it is not true that those individuals are named by name. So the second answer to the question above is "no." Reason with me for a moment. If specific individuals were predetermined or elected before born then what do we make of statements such as, "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12; Revelation 20:12)? Again, the apostle Peter wrote, "The Lord does not wish that ANY man would perish but that ALL should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:3; see also John 3:16).

Each and every human being that has ever lived on the earth is measured by God's divine standard and will one day "give account" to how we approached that standard (see John 12:48). Individuals are only predestined by the basis of God's word (Romans 8:29-30). God's word "calls" those who have been foreordained unto eternal life (see 2 Thessalonians 2:13). Those who obey the sovereign will of God will be saved (see Ephesians 1:3-7). God predetermined this plan to save man. The means of justification were set before man was created. God always knew that there would be some who would receive his divine will in obedience and those who would not. Man has the right to choose. God predetermined that a class of people would be his elected rather than specific individuals by name (see 1 Peter 1:18-22). To say that God chooses some before they are born for salvation and rejects others is to reject God's divine words.

Please note that even though Jehovah's sovereign will was exercised in Jeremiah before he was born this did not excuse Jeremiah from making the choice to be obedient (see Jeremiah 1:17). The message of the Bible is simple. The gospel calls all men to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). All those who submit themselves to Jehovah's standard will be saved. All who reject God's authoritative word will be eternally condemned.

If you have never obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ we pray that you will consider your soul this day.

You must hear the gospel preached (Romans 10:17).

You must believe the gospel message (Hebrews 11:6).

You must confess that Jesus is the Christ (Romans 10:9).

You must acknowledge and repent of sins committed (Luke 13:3).

You must be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38).

You must remain faithful all the days of your life (Revelation 2:10).

Shut ins

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Introduction:

We come to the fourth of eight Beatitudes in our study. Happy is the man that is poor, mourning, meek, and hungry and thirst for righteousness. The quest for true happiness does not find satisfaction at the end of a rainbow filled with the things of this world but rather in a proper approach and outlook of life. Truly happy people understand that there is more to this current life than getting married, having children, getting a job, paying bills, and buying things. Truly happy people see the need for a life of godliness now so that an eternity of grace may be experienced. To experience eternal happiness in heaven man must "hunger and thirst for righteousness." The one word "righteousness" depicts all that God expects of his created beings.

To obtain righteousness is to appraise the Almighty, to take advantage of his divine grace, and to hope in the eternal glories of heaven.

I. What is "Righteousness?"

A. Righteousness is equivalent to God's commands and laws (Psalms 119:142, 172)

B. To be righteous is to be obedient to God's word (1 Samuel 15:22-23 / Proverbs 21:3).

C. Righteousness is the "way" of Jehovah (Jeremiah 10:23; 2 Peter 2:21).

D. Righteousness is the standard set by God for man to meet (see Isaiah 28:17):

1. A pattern (Exodus 25:9, 40) or scale (Daniel 5:27).

2. Landmark that set man's boundaries ( Hosea 5:10) and a plumb-line (Amos 7:7-9).

E. Consider these examples: Abel (Genesis 4:4; 1 John 3:12-13), Noah (Genesis 6:8-9; Hebrews 11:7), Abraham (Genesis 15:6; James 2:21-24), David (1 Kings 3:6), and Jesus (1 John 2:1).

II. What is so appealing about Righteousness that makes a man hunger and thirst for it?

A. No treasures the earth over can compare to the value of righteousness because its benefits are eternal (see Romans 5:21; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Proverbs 8:11; 16:16; 23:23).

B. Those who recognize its value will do all to obtain it (Proverbs 2:1-9; Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 11:9-10)

III. What Do I Hunger and Thirst for (Proverbs 22:2; 29:13)?

A. Righteousness through faith?

1. Obtained by observation of creation (see Psalms 19:1; 33:6-9; Romans 1:20; Isaiah 42:4; 10:12-13; Jeremiah 5:22).

2. Obtained by revelation (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6).

B. The things of this world (1 John 2:15-17)?

1. Riches (Proverbs 11:4-6, 27-28; 13:7-8, 11; 18:11, 23; 23:4-5)

2. War (Isaiah 13:17; 21:2)

3. Sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6)

4. Glory of men (1 John 12:43)

5. A passion to do evil as opposed to good (Jeremiah 4:22)

6. A passion for laziness (Proverbs 21:25)

Conclusion:

Blessed is the one who hunger and thirst for righteousness because such a one will be filled. An insatiable appetite will be satisfied. The man or woman whose desire is heaven will recognize in value of righteousness and do all within their power to obtain and hold on to it. You and I will take the paths in this life that our hearts truly desire. Those who recognize the value of righteousness are blessed now and forevermore.