

The Chosen of the Lord

By Ernest S. Underwood

Not too long ago I read an article by a religious person wherein the writer was discussing God's chosen and elected. It was sad to note that the writer evidently did not have a grasp of what the Scriptures teach on the subject, and therefore resorted to a timeworn and oft answered denominational concept. There are generally two views on the subjects of predestination and election. There is the Calvinist view that in one way or the other is found in two or three of the denominational "confessions of faith." This view states that God, before the foundation of the world, chose or elected certain individuals to be saved, and certain individuals to be lost. It is further stated that the number of each group is so fixed that it can neither be added to, nor diminished from. In short, if God chose you to be saved, you can do nothing about it, nor do you have to do anything to be saved. On the other hand, if God chose you to be lost, there is nothing you can do to be saved even though you passionately desire to be saved. That this view is patently false is evident to any who believe the Scriptures when they tell us that, "He tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9), and that "...the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

The second view is the one learned from the Scriptures. This view states that God elected and predestined the *place* where salvation could be obtained. That place is in Christ (cf. Acts 4:12). As one reads the Book of Ephesians, it is constantly brought to the attention of the reader that salvation is to be found in Christ. I would encourage the reader of this article to stop at this point and just take his Bible and read the first chapter of Ephesians. In doing so, please note and underline or highlight the times that the phrases "in Him," "in Jesus Christ," "in Christ," "in the Beloved," "in the Lord Jesus" or "through His blood" are found. (These were taken from the *New King James Version*.) Yes, the Bible tells us that God elected, but that he elected *the place* (or *Person*) of salvation, not certain individuals. Since salvation is in Christ, then it should be the desire of every honest soul to be in him.

Now some questions: (1) Is getting into Christ conditional? (2) Does each person have the right of freewill to make the choice? (3) If God has given the stipulations of how one gets into Christ, are those stipulations open to all? (4) If view number one as noted above is true, has not God violated man's free moral agency?

Since it is quite evident that "God is not willing that any should perish..." (2 Peter 3:9), and that he "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...", it should be just as evident that he has not taken away man's right to choose whether to be lost or saved. This being true, and it is, it shows that the denominational, Calvinistic

concept of election is nothing more than another doctrine of the devil, a doctrine that leads to another devilish doctrine, namely, once saved, always saved.

Real Righteousness

By Joe Slater

In His matchless “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus made a shocking statement that really serves as the theme of the whole sermon: “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20). What was He talking about? What was it about the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees that was deficient? How are we to exceed their righteousness?

I’ve heard people say that since the Pharisees gave a tithe (10%), we must give at least 11% to exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees. Let me say it kindly but firmly: They Have Missed The Point! In fact, that sort of thinking demonstrates that they have fallen into the same trap that ensnared the Pharisees: thinking that a right relationship with God depends merely on rote obedience to commands.

The sixth commandment forbade murder. The Pharisees thought that as long as you don’t murder anyone, you’re covered. But Jesus taught that the unjustified anger and hatred leading up to murder offends God, not just the physical act of murder (Matthew 5:21-26).

The seventh command forbade adultery. Don’t have sexual relations with another’s spouse and you’re good, so the Pharisees would say. But Jesus taught that the lust leading up to the physical act was sin. The heart is important, not just the physical act (Matthew 5:27-30).

The rest of the sermon on the mount continues to emphasize the heart, not just rote commandment-keeping. God’s commandments are important! But God has ever and always wanted obedience from the heart, not mere mechanical compliance.

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