

*In
Search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Philippians 4:8 (NASB-U)

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"Having Predestinated Us"

*By: Donnie V. Rader
Guardian of Truth XLI:4-Feb. 20, 1997*

Ephesians 1:5 teaches predestination. That is undeniable. The text says, *"having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."*

Just what does that mean? This passage has been greatly perverted by those who have bought John Calvin's thoughts on salvation.

Misunderstanding and Abuse of the Text

Calvinism teaches an unconditional and individual predestination. This is necessary in view of their doctrine of total depravity. This says that man is born in sin and is completely depraved. He is unable to do any good. He cannot believe unless God causes him to believe. Thus, any election (chosen to be saved) would have to be unconditional.

Consider how the Calvinists use Ephesians 1:5. In *The Doctrines Of Grace*, Lasserre Bradley, Jr. (speaker for Baptist Bible Hour) has a chapter on each of the major points of Calvinism. In his chapter on unconditional election he says, "election is a sovereign act of God whereby He chooses certain individuals from the fallen race to eternal life for the glory of His name.... One of the clearest definitions of the doctrine of election is found in the first chapter of Ephesians" (p. 14). He then quotes verses 3-5 and applies them to his chapter heading: "Unconditional Election." He adds, "By unconditional election, we mean that the choice of God was not conditional on anything within man" (p. 16).

Notice two things in the above quotes. Mr. Bradley says that Ephesians 1:5 teaches an election or predestination that is (1) unconditional and (2) individual. Thus, Calvinists wrest this text to say that before creation God arbitrarily and unconditionally selected certain individuals to be saved and certain individuals to be lost.

The Context of Ephesians 1:5

The book of Ephesians is about God's eternal purpose in Christ

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TIMES OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

**Bible Classes* 10:00 AM
AM Worship 10:45 AM
PM Worship 6:30 PM**

WEDNESDAY

**Bible Classes* 7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)**

Jesus (cf. Ephesians 1:9-10 and 3:10-11). Chapter one describes the blessings we have in Christ through God's eternal purpose. Chapter two describes the object of God's eternal purpose: salvation. Chapter three tells of the revelation of God's eternal purpose.

Back to chapter one. Verses 3-14 tell of the blessings that we have in Christ: (1) All spiritual blessings -- v. 3, (2) We were chosen before the foundation of the world -- v. 4, (3) We were predestinated -- v. 5, (4) We receive God's grace -- v. 6, (5) We have redemption through the blood of Christ -- v. 7, (6) God has made known to us the mystery of his will -- v. 9, (7) We have an inheritance -- v. 11, (8) We receive the Holy Spirit -- v. 13. The point I want us to see is that the context is dealing with God's eternal plan.

The Meaning of the Text

1. Predestinated defined. The word "predestinated" means to "mark out beforehand, to determine before, foreordain" (W.E. Vine, I:305). Darby's translation says "*having marked us out beforehand*" in Ephesians 1:5. Both the ASV and Young's Literal Translation render this phrase, "*having foreordained us.*"

2. Two questions. No one can or should deny that our text teaches that God marked out our salvation beforehand. However, we must ask: (a) Is the predestination conditional or unconditional? (b) Did God select particular individuals or did he select salvation in Christ and all in him are chosen?

3. Conditional. Receiving salvation (being chosen or elected) is conditional upon our obedience to the gospel. Consider these simple texts.

"And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

"Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace..." (Romans 4:16).

If predestination is conditional, then the Calvinist concept of the text is wrong.

4. The selection is not particular individuals but choosing that those who are obedient will be saved. "God foreordained that all those who voluntarily choose to walk by faith in Christ shall be added to his family by adoption. God willed in his love that those in Christ should be his sons with the full benefit of inheritance" (C. G. "Colly" Caldwell, Truth Commentaries: Ephesians, 21).

"God foreordained the provisions of salvation, the characters that should be saved, and the conditions and tests by which they would be saved. He left every man free to choose or reject the terms and provisions of salvation and in so doing to refuse to form the character God has foreordained to be his children and so predestined to everlasting life" (David Lipscomb, Gospel Advocate Commentaries: Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, 19-20). B.W. Johnson said, "The whole line of argument is general instead of particular" (Peoples' NT Commentary; On-line edition).

This is much like a man predestinating (marking out beforehand) a secretary. His choosing is not unconditional nor is it a "marking out" of a particular individual. Before he hires anyone he marks out the qualifications. She must take shorthand, do word processing on the computer, have some knowledge of his type of business, have at least two years of college, and be in good health. She must meet these conditions. He did predestinate her. No, he did not arbitrarily choose Sally Jane. But he chose the qualities of the person who would be hired. Sally Jane meets those and is hired. We can easily see how that works with God's eternal plan.

Today's Preachers:

AM—Nathan Marshall

PM—Dan Marton

I want to express my appreciation to these two young men for filling in for me while I am away in a Gospel Meeting

Jacob's Family

Using Genesis 30 and 35 find the four wives,
12 sons and one daughter of Jacob (Israel)

B I N G D N U N H S I M O N A
I L S A A R A N U A B H M E L
N A A D O H Z P I L H E O B E
J H L H J U D J H M U L A U E
E P S E H A N I D T A B I R I
M A I S A C H A R H A J I B E
O N R H N H A D U J H L N Z N
N L E I Z E B U L U N S I E C
N E U N I D R J U D A H A L B
O H B O O E M I S D E N H I L
E C E A H I V D A N J J P H H
M A N S I E L I V I J O E C N
I R A E L H A P L I Z S S A E
S C R A H C A S S I N E O R E
M E H N A E S A I H A D J J E

News N Notes

Remember these in your prayers:

- Dave & Wilma Harless—traveling to Barberton, OH
- The Henderson family as they travel to & from Washington, PA each evening this week
- Terry Smith
- Earl Miller
- Trudell Tennant
- Lucille Harless, Dave Harless' mother
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband.
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Blake Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's grandson
- Bud and Merl Frey
- Tammy Garrison, Zeda Goddard's daughter
- Audrio Gaudio, Nancy Morris' great-granddaughter
- Marie Roberts, & Ed's father, Jim Roberts.
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother
- Cary & Grace Lancaster

Nursing Home:

- Pauline Sellers
- Ethel Mahan

Shut-ins:

- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Pauline Midcap

Last Weeks:

W E P T M J A M E S Z E B E D E E A T P
N S H Z A R H R W S A M O H T E H L A T
J U T B T A T E O R A C S I A D U J A
A E J M P N R T E I H P S I U D P H B D
D A E I R D M O D R B T A W E E E W A N
E H J U N E H I T D E T A W E A B L H R Z
A P A J W P L W S P E W M D E I T T O
E L H A P N H O J I E R J O D Z H T H M
D A S I M M O N L T M H W L A S P A O W
E S A A L A A I J W E E W O H E A M L O
B E A D B I H R A T H E L H T M O L O M
E M O D L P B L D T H D A T H A O A M M
Z A S A M O H T T T N H E R A J O H A A
J O H A S T A A A A B T A J M M I S T
E B R T E W M M T O P T T B T S I M O N
M N J D T J U D A S I S C A R I O T U D
A H O E R S E H N O R S T D T P E T E M
J B E A M M S S T H O O M A S I T I O O
B A R H O L O M E W A O E E C E D R A T
M E T U R W L S M S S J H B T W S S A D