

## Salvation—Election (4<sup>th</sup>)

(The study for today continues with the doctrine of election unto salvation. In this podcast we are simply seeking to answer the charge that believing the doctrine of election will cause one to live a life of sinfulness.)

In previous studies regarding the doctrine of the election of God unto salvation, we showed the origin of election, the purpose of election, and some of the benefits of this doctrine as it relates to the final destination of the elect. Some object to this doctrine by saying that if this is true it will cause those who believe it to live anyway they wish and continue to commit sin because if they are an elect they will go to heaven anyway. However, the Scriptures do not teach this. In fact, we will see that the Word of God declares that the elect desire and seek to live godly. Paul, while teaching about salvation in his letter to the Romans, addressed such an objection. Because salvation is by the sovereign work of God and not by the works of man, Paul's objectors falsely accused him of teaching, "Let us do evil, that good may come." Paul answered that anyone who teaches such a doctrine his "damnation is just." (See Romans 3:8.) However, let us now see what the Scriptures teach about the life-style of the elect.

In our last podcast we studied somewhat Titus 1:1, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." In that session, we looked at "the faith of God's elect" and "the truth" connected with it. Now we will consider these things as they are associated with "godliness." In reality, it should not be necessary to comment on this because the verse plainly states that the elect of God live in faith and in the truth of salvation in such a way that godliness is reflected in their lives. Even John Gill stated regarding this verse, "the Gospel is a doctrine according to godliness; the truths of it have an influence, both on internal and external godliness; they direct to, and promote the worship and fear of God, and a religious, righteous, sober, and godly life and conversation."

When Paul wrote his first epistle to the saints at Thessalonica, he commented that he knew that they were elected by God because of the way they responded to the gospel. They did not simply hear the gospel and make a profession as so many do today. They became followers of Paul and the others that preached to them and their obedience brought "much affliction" in their lives. Furthermore, their obedience to the gospel and life of godliness was a witness to every region that heard about their conversion. Paul commended them for how they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (See I Thessalonians chapter one.) Equally, we saw in a previous podcast that Peter designated the believers as "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" as being sanctified by the Spirit of God and he closed out his epistle stating that the saints at Babylon were "elected together" with them, I Peter 1:1-2; 5:13. Throughout the Scriptures obedient and faith of the saints are described as the elect of God.

Another passage that proves that the doctrine of election promotes holy living is Colossians 3:12-13, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye." From this inspired word of the Holy Scriptures, it is plain that the Lord intends and commands the elect to live a godly and holy life. Yes, "put on" in verse twelve is not a suggestion, it is a command from God; it is in the imperative mood. In fact, the previous verses in this chapter direct the saints to set their affections on the things of God and not the world; that the elect are to "mortify" sin in their bodies; "put off" the sins of the flesh; and other exhortations to live a life of holiness because they were "the elect of God." No, when

the doctrine of election is properly understood and believed, it does not produce lazy and slothful Christians; it produces believers that walk in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ seeking to honor Him in their lives in every way.

Another passage that authenticates the elect of God living a holy and godly life is II Peter 1:1-11. Obviously, time does not permit us to consider and study each verse in the passage, but it is imperative that we understand that it refers to the elect of God. In fact, verses ten and eleven say, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Recently, a dear friend and beloved brother in the ministry said while commenting on this overall passage of Scripture (i.e. verses 1-11), “Sanctification is the only sure mark of election.”

Peter begins with designating those to whom he was writing as those “that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” II Peter 1:1. The Greek word for obtain means to receive by divine allotment. The faith they had was given to them by God. Steven Charnock said, “Election is the cause of faith, and not faith the cause of election.” (*Sword Searcher Bible Program*, footnote to John Calvin’s comments on Titus 1:1.) However, Peter continued by divine inspiration instructing the believers to actively incorporate various godly virtues into their lives and by doing so it would verify their election of God. In fact, the only way a person can know that another individual, or the believer himself, is an elect of God is by his godly life. As Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Therefore, assurance of salvation is not in one’s feelings or emotions; assurance of salvation is found in a person living in obedience to the commandments of God. Even John in his first epistle verified this truth: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments,” I John 5:1-2.

Primarily, so far we have been reviewing verses that contain the word elect or election. Since II Peter 1:10 equated “calling” with election, we could expand our study on the doctrine of election unto salvation to include verses that have this Greek word, too, but that should not be necessary since our purpose is not to give an exhaustive study of the subject. However, I would like to draw our attention back to the epistle of Ephesians to show that the doctrine of election rightly understood and believed does not lead to a life of lasciviousness.

It was pointed out in a previous podcast that the people of God were chosen (elected) in Christ Jesus “before the foundation of the world.” The purpose was that the elect “should be holy and without blame” before God. While ultimately all of the redeemed will be found justified in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, this conformation begins in this life. Even Romans 8:29 tells us that those whom the Father foreknew (or loved) before the world was created were predestinated to be “conformed to the image of his dear Son.” Obviously, there are many things included in this conformation that begins with the new birth. Ephesians chapter two and other passages teach that we are born into this world “dead in trespasses and sins.” For this reason our Lord told Nicodemus that he must be born again by the Spirit of God before he could “see” or “enter” the kingdom of God, John 3:3-8. Also, we have seen from previous verses in our study today that the elect of God are changed and drawn to the Lord to live a life of holiness. (By holiness we do not mean sinless. The Lord willing we will address this more in future studies. In this podcast we are simply seeking to answer the charge that believing the doctrine of election will not cause a true believer to live a life of sinfulness.) Paul brings out many things in the book of Ephesians to show this truth. Obviously we cannot address everything the Lord teaches in Ephesians but there are a few things we must consider. Ephesians 1:6 says that the elect are “made ... accepted in the beloved.” Verse seven declares that we “have redemption” even “the forgiveness of sins”; not that we will have

it, but we have it now. Verses 13-14 tell us that we were “were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise” after believing the gospel. Verses 19-20 state that the same power that raised Christ from the grave works in the elect causing them to believe. Ephesians 2:10 declares, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” In other words, the elect of God will not walk in ungodliness and follow after the world in their overall walk after the Lord quickens them by the Holy Spirit. Yes, they struggle with sin, and, sadly, sometimes fall into sin and have sins of the mind and attitude, but they do not openly walk on a continual basis portraying a lifetime of sin. We are God’s workmanship created to walk in good works.

Many other passages could be set forth to prove this truth, but these should be sufficient for any who believes the Scriptures of God. Though I do not have time in this lesson to say more about it, I want to make it clear that a proper understanding and belief in the doctrine of election does not hinder the gospel. This is proved by the confession of the apostle Paul: “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory,” II Timothy 2:10. The Lord willing we will discuss this more in future studies but our time is up for today. Farewell.