

Chosen to Salvation

Radio Broadcast

By Ken Wimer

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Bible Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:13

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Shreveport Grace Church

2970 Baird Road

Shreveport, LA 71118

Website: <http://www.shrevegrace.org/>

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech

Welcome to the Grace Abounding Broadcast brought to you by the congregation of the Shreveport Grace Church that meets at 2970 Baird Road in Shreveport, Louisiana. My name is Ken Wimer and it is my privilege to bring to you today a message that seeks to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorious person and finished work of salvation accomplished for sinners at the cross. Please stay tuned.

My message today is taken from 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 13. Listen as I read this.

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Now, my subject in this message is the electing grace of God. There are those today because of pride in our hearts and wanting to exalt the creature above the Creator, in other words, pitting man's will against God's, they resist the teaching of God's electing grace even though it is clearly set forth in the Scriptures and I pray that you are not one of those. They, in resisting this doctrine, resist the Spirit that authored it. These are not man's words that I have read for you here, this is the very word of God and inspired of God and yet here is a truth which is often trampled underfoot by most today that even profess to call themselves Christians. You say, "Well, how can that be?" Well, again, it's a doctrine that gives God all the glory. Now, there are different ways of resisting the truth: some try to change it and even as Peter wrote, they rest or twist or pervert the Scriptures to their own ruin and destruction. You say, "Well, how do they twist the Scriptures?" Well, you'll talk to some and they say, "Yes, the Bible does teach election but it's God electing nations," and so they talk about how God chose one nation over another. But dear friends, nations are made up of individuals and especially as you read in Romans 9 where the Apostle Paul clearly declares the sovereignty of God not only in the salvation of sinners but also in their condemnation when he says in Romans 9:13, "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." So there even if you say that those are nations, they were made up of individuals.

As we continue to read in this portion of Scripture, we see that God himself being sovereign, has determined on whom he will have mercy and compassion and those he will harden. Such is the God of the Bible and if any say, "Well, then God is unrighteous," even there the Apostle Paul addressed that objection in Romans 9:14, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" The simple answer is, "God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassio," to listen to the conclusion here in Romans 9:16, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Such is God's prerogative to show mercy to whom he will but some will cavil and say that it just has to do with nations. No, it has to do with individuals that God has either purposed to save or condemn. Some will say, "Well, it's election to service. He chooses different ones to service." Well, here in my text in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, it says, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," so election is the very foundation of salvation and, therefore, we need to give it our utmost attention because it is taught in the Scriptures. For some it may be a bone of contention but the first thing that I note here by the Apostle Paul is that election is a subject of thankfulness, not of contention, of thankfulness. Where you see contention, where you see railing accusations that are brought against this doctrine, in reality it's brought against God himself because the God of the Bible is a sovereign God and rather than be silent before the Lord and accept our guiltiness and God's right to condemn us and send us to hell you say, "Why do people rebel against it?" Well, it's because they've never seen their own guilt before God. If they did, their mouth would be stopped and they would be utterly cast upon his mercy that he be pleased to save them if he will.

So we can see that those that contest, even in the context here in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, in the first part of the chapter, the Apostle Paul has just described those that are under delusion and deceived. He says there in verse 10, "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." Why do men contest with Scripture? Why do they twist the Scriptures? Well, it's because they are deceived and they perish. Also in 2 Thessalonians 2:10 it says, "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." It's not a matter even of just saying, "Well, I guess if Scripture teaches election, I'll just have to believe it." No, here Paul speaks of a heart of gratitude, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you. " That little word "but" is in contrast to those that are damned and those that do not love the truth. It says, "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Then we read in verse 11, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." How many people are there out there that have raised their fist in the face of God and still call themselves Christian? You run into some that say, "Well, I love God. I don't hate God." People love the God of their imagination but when confronted with the God of Scripture, that's where you begin to see this rebellion coming out and it might be the case even now as I speak. I'm just taking this word and declaring it unto you but if you find in your heart not only a reticence but the more that God is glorified through his word in this message, you find an anger toward this God, that's that rebellion and that's what gets stirred up in natural minded people even if they profess to be the Lord's and yet do not bow to him as he reveals himself in his word. And the

warning in verse 12 of 2 Thessalonians 2 is, "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." You see, God calls unrighteousness anything that stands opposed to his honor and glory alone.

There was an old preacher one time and someone asked him and said, "What is the right interpretation of Scripture?" And the preacher paused and thought and said, "Well, no matter what Scripture it is, the right interpretation is that which always gives God the glory and always abases man. That is the right interpretation." So just from that principle, I can tell you the right interpretation of Scripture is that all the glory belongs unto God in for sinner's election unto salvation and man, being abased, is utterly cast upon God's mercy whether he'll save him or whether he'll condemn him. Now, here's the first point again that this matter of election: for those that are the Lord's, chosen of him unto salvation, this is not a matter of contesting with God. Maybe before it pleased God to reveal Christ in our heart we had a problem and we rebelled, we thought, "No, that is not the God that I will worship," as some have told me but the glorious truth is that if the Lord has chosen such a one to salvation, then in time he will bring that one to bow and as one preacher said, "Lay down your arms of rebellion and surrender to this God," because to continue to oppose him is most certainly condemnation.

So for Paul here and for those that are taught of the Lord, election to salvation is a matter of thanksgiving. Paul said, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord." That word "beloved" means "loved above all others." And so as you consider in the world out of one fallen mass, there are those that God has loved above all others and that he has chosen and this from eternity and has purposed to save and has sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the world to save and has saved by his accomplished work there at Calvary and in time now, the Spirit himself is drawing unto Christ but it's a matter of thankfulness. Even our Lord in Matthew 11 as he was on this earth, he pronounced condemnation on different cities there in Israel where they heard him preach. They saw his miracles and yet they did not believe on him. In Matthew 11:21 he says, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." So these were cities where there were religious centers and places of worship and there were just like today, preachers and the leaders of congregations that led people in a profession of religion and yet they denounced the Lord Jesus Christ. So here the Lord is pronouncing this condemnation on them and saying that even cities outside of Israel, had God purposed to send them the truth, even as these were having it declared unto them, that these outside of Israel, the Lord would have caused to bow and to believe. The truth is that there were some in Tyre and Sidon. It should read, "The Gospels, that it pleased God to send the Gospel to pass by others," but this is God's prerogative and he speaks also of Capernaum where our Lord spent a lot of his time and his ministry and refers to them in verse 23 as being "exalted unto heaven." In other words, that was the pride that they had of being better than anybody else because of their religion. But it says, "shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." You stop and think about that city of Sodom and Gomorrah but the Lord said, "I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

So imagine the worst city as you hear different cities being described as sin city, the Lord saying that those cities would rise up in judgment against cities that profess to be Bible cities or church cities. You see, there are many that meet and congregate and do so for the purpose of worship and yet they do not worship the God of the Bible. Oh, they have the name of Christ on their lips, they even hold the same Scriptures that I'm holding here and declaring unto you and yet they are blind to the glory and honor of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. You can take all of the denominations of the world and sum them up in one of two categories: it's either of works or grace. This goes all the way back to Cain and Abel. They are either of Cain or they're of Abel. Those of Abel, their one hope is in the blood sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ alone but what did Cain bring? The works of his hands, the fruits of his hands, of his labors. And so you've got those that are of Cain that truly believe that somehow their works or their will or their walk, you hear people say that, "Walk the walk and talk the talk." They really believe that somehow that gives them that righteous standing before a holy God and dear friend, such are deluded.

This distinction, this passing by some and causing others to believe, what can we say of that? Well, for the Lord it was a subject of thankfulness because he said in Matthew 11:25, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent," that is, wise and prudent in their own eyes, "and hast revealed them unto babes." Now listen, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." There is the answer. That's where our mouths are stopped. If any is to question, "Well, how can God do this?" well, he's God and our Lord bowed to him. You know, when he prayed in the garden in John 17:9, he didn't pray for the world. He wasn't praying that everybody would be saved. In fact, he said "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me out of the world." Even our Lord Jesus Christ bowed to the will of the Father that he would save not one more or less than those that the Father had given him and he said, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." Then you can read in Matthew 11:27, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

So just like with the Apostle Paul writing here to the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, this matter of the election of God by his grace of sinners that God has purposed to save was a subject of thankfulness but secondly we see here in my text, what is the source of this election. One preacher one time, someone asked him, "Well, explain election to me," and the preacher rather proudly said, "Well, that's easy: God has cast his vote, Satan cast his vote and now the final vote is up to you." You see, that's how, again, some will take this doctrine of election and pervert it in their rebellion because ultimately they make it man's choice and not God's choice. Here dear friend, listen carefully to the word, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you." That's the first thing. If man had anything to do with his choosing and his electing, then the apostle would have had to say, "We're bound to give thanks to you unto God." In other words, "We're thankful that you made this decision." How many times have you heard preachers say that? And it's wrong. It's not I that have made the decision, it is God that has chosen and Paul says that, "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved

of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." You see dear friend, all the glory belongs unto God.

If you've never read this portion of Scripture, I would recommend that you take the time preferably to open the word and to read Paul's epistle to the Ephesians in chapter 1. I'm going to read a portion of it here for you because it underscores this matter of who is the source of our election. It's not man. It's not God looking down through time and seeing who would choose him and so then he chose them. No, all that God saw from eternity was a fallen, depraved and hardened, condemned world as a result of Adam's fall. So election then is God's way of determining who it is he would save. You see, his justice would condemn all of humanity because of our sin but his mercy and his grace determined that there would be those he would save and not utterly cast away. Paul writing to the Ephesians in chapter 1, verse 3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us," but notice, "in him," in Christ. Now, when was this choosing done? Some say, "Well, it's when the sinner believes." No, here it says, "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

So when you consider election, it wasn't just God arbitrarily choosing out sinners like when we were children and we would take that daisy and we'd say, "She loves me, she loves me not. She loves me, she loves me not," and just pull them off. That's not it. God in wisdom, God in grace and mercy and for Christ's sake. You see, even before the fall, the Lord Jesus Christ was there before the foundation of the world and God the Father purposed to honor him as the Redeemer and the Savior. What would be a Redeemer and Savior without a fallen race? You can understand then why God ordained a fallen world. But also now it is his prerogative in his mercy to give to his Son, to the honor of his Son as the Redeemer of people and that's what we read here, chosen and predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. You see, it all has to do with Christ and his glory. Any that are saved are the beneficiaries but the glory belongs unto Christ and that's why it says in verse 6 of Ephesians 1, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted," not just acceptable but accepted, "in the beloved." You say, "How so?" Well, verse 7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." No, election is not in itself salvation. Here the Apostle Paul writes again in my text in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, that it is unto salvation, "because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." So God purposed the salvation and did the choosing of those that he would save and now we see the reason why God has done the electing there in Ephesians 1, it was by his grace and it was because of the Lord Jesus Christ being there from eternity is that Redeemer that the Father purposed to honor.

Now, one other aspect here in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 is the effect of this election. As I said, it is unto salvation. Salvation is a broad term. We see salvation in God's purpose, in other words, those he purposed to save but we also see salvation in Christ's redemption

that when he came to this earth and lived his perfect life to work out that righteousness that God required in order to be just, to declare sinners righteous that he would save, we see salvation in that redemption. It's by his blood and righteousness so if you were to ask me, "Ken, when were you saved?" Well, I was saved when Christ paid my debt. I was not yet born but that's my salvation. You say, "Well, how did you come to find out about that?" That's the part we're reading right now. If God has chosen you, then Christ has already paid your debt, we know that, but in time then, he will indeed draw you unto Christ by his Spirit through his word and the effect or fruit will be belief of the truth. That's what we see here in this Scripture "because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation," listen, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." This sanctification of the Spirit is describing that time when the Spirit of God comes and regenerates the heart of that elect sinner and the one that Christ has already redeemed. Christ said that of all the Father had given him, he should lose nothing but should raise them up at the last day. There is a physical resurrection of those that Christ has redeemed yet to come at the end of time, but there's a spiritual resurrection and notice here it says "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." So if you're asking, "How is it that I can know whether or not I'm one of these that God has chosen?" Well, it's the Spirit of God that testifies to our spirit that we're the children of God but it's through belief of the truth so even now as I'm declaring unto you the truth concerning God, concerning Christ, concerning salvation and his grace, is there a bowing in your heart? Is there an acknowledging that, "Yes, God is to be glorified in this and I am nothing."

You see, all of salvation is of God and we have nothing whereof to glory. A person that in some way still tries to find a reason to glory in himself, attributing any part of his or her salvation to initiating it or maintaining it, they've not bowed to the truth. They have not believed the truth. You see, where God has revealed Christ, there is a deep humility, a bowing of that sinner and an acknowledging of our sin before a holy God and even acknowledging that should God condemn me, he would be just in doing so and yet if the Lord has paid my debt, that same Spirit that points out the sin will also direct the heart to the Savior and cause that sinner to look outside himself to the Savior, to the one who has paid the debt and to whom all the glory belongs. Such is the affection of the heart that the Spirit produces in those that the Lord has chosen. Here again, you get some that cavil against this doctrine and say, "Well, if you preach God doing the saving and God doing the electing, you're just going to encourage people to sin and to live in licentiousness." Well dear friend, we don't need God to give us a license to sin, we're sinners by nature. We're fallen, depraved creatures wherein we need God as that he by his grace having chosen such as we are and Christ having paid the debt by his Spirit to direct our hearts and thoughts and minds in adoration to who he is and all that he has accomplished for sinners such as we are, and that's where you'll find those that he has chosen and drawn by his Spirit. They will be bowed before his throne giving all the glory to him as the Father and to his Son as the Redeemer and to the Spirit as the one who has given life to belief.

Is such your hope, dear friend? I pray so.

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