

Lesson 26: ELECTION

Ye Did Not Choose Me, But I Chose You, and Appointed You That Ye Should Go and Bear Fruit - John 15:16

I. Introduction

- a. In this verse our Lord tells us plainly that the branch does not **choose** the vine, or decide on which vine it will grow. The vine brings forth the branch, as and where it will. This could not be more plainly stated: "*Ye did not choose me, but I chose you.*"
- b. But some will say this is simply the **difference** between the branch in the natural world and that of the spiritual world.
- c. They insist that man has the will and the **power** of choosing, and that it is by virtue of his having decided to accept Christ, his having chosen Him as Lord, that he is now a branch.
- d. That man has a will and chooses is undoubtedly true. And yet it is only **half a truth**.
- e. The lesson of the Vine, and the teaching of our Lord, points to the other half, the deeper, the **divine side** of our being in Christ. If He had not chosen us, we had never chosen Him.
- f. Our choosing Him was the **result** of His choosing us, and taking hold of us. In the very nature of things, it is His prerogative as Vine to choose and create His own branch. He is the necessary first cause and we are the effect.
- g. So, if we want to know Christ as the true Vine, then we must know certain things without equivocation. First, we must know that He is the **initiator** of our branch life and we are the fruit of His election in grace.

II. Election and Predestination

- a. Let us, then, understand the calling whereby we are elected; those who are elected are so not because they have believed, but those who are elected are so **that they may believe**. "*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.*"
- b. For if we had been elected because we had believed, we would have first chosen Him by believing in Him, so that we should **deserve** to be elected.
- c. Our Lord **takes away** this supposition altogether when He says "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." And yet we ourselves, beyond a doubt, did choose Him when we believed on Him.
- d. He chose us that we might choose Him; because His mercy **preceded** our choosing according to grace, not according to debt. This is the changeless truth concerning predestination and grace. *Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, KJV*
- e. Some would attribute this to God's **foreknowledge**, by which they mean that He knew that we would choose Him. If such were the case then it would be upon our merit that we would deserve to be chosen by Him. *Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. kjv*
- f. What God foreknew was what He **Himself** would do; we were elected out of the world with that calling whereby God fulfilled that which He predestinated to accomplish for Himself. *Eph 1:11 being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: KJV*

III. The Difference Between Predestination and Grace

- a. There is one difference between grace and predestination: predestination is the preparation for grace, while grace is the gift itself. Grace is the **effect** of predestination.
- b. When God promised to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, He promised not from the power of Abraham's will but from His own **predestination**. *Gen 17:4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. KJV*
- c. In this case, God's predestination of the good He was to bestow upon Abraham prepared him to receive grace, and this grace **enabled** the faith of Abraham. *Rom 4:3 Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. KJV*

IV. By Grace Are You Saved

- a. Salvation of the soul of man can only occur in one of three possible ways.
 1. God does it monergistically without any participation on the part of man. (**Augustine**)
 2. Man does it monergistically without the participation of God. (**Not** accepted Church doctrine)
 3. There is a synergistic cooperation between God and man to bring about the salvation of the soul. (**Semi-Pelagian**)
- b. While this debate was fought exhaustively between Augustine and Pelagius and the Semi-Pelagians around **400 AD** it continues to this day to be an issue of confusion and contention among believers.

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- c. From the perspective of grace, the option that provides the most magnanimous view of God's grace and **accords** with Scripture is that the Holy Spirit monergistically without any contribution on the part of man saves the soul.
- d. Grace which is bestowed in human hearts by the Divine gift, is rejected by **no** hard heart, because it is given for the sake of first **taking away** the hardness of the heart. *Ezek 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:KJV*
- e. **No one** deserves this grace. From the sin of Adam, all have gone into a condemnation, so that even if none were delivered from condemnation, there would be no just cause for finding fault with God. *Rom 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; KJV*
- f. It is by His great grace alone that **some** are delivered, so that he that glories may glory in the Lord not in his own merits, which he sees to be equally flawed with those that are condemned. *Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; KJV*
- g. If, as some purport, all men received **equal grace** with which to believe, why does one man believe the gospel and not another? Is one smarter, or does that one have more natural sensitivity than others to spiritual things?
- h. Jesus answers this question: *John 10:26-27 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: KJV*
- i. The unregenerate man does not believe because he is not the predestinated sheep of the Lord and therefore **can not** hear His voice. This is not evidence for equal grace.
- j. The **nature** of the person determines the choice they will make. An unregenerate man will not exercise faith in a holy God. *Matt 7:17-18 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. KJV*

V. Chosen by Necessity

- a. Further, it is **necessary** that the initiation of our choosing be on God's part for three reasons.
- b. First, we are spiritually **dead** in our sins and trespasses. Being spiritually dead is analogous to physical death. Like Lazarus we are unable to raise ourselves from death. *Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) KJV*
- c. This is so because we do not possess the **power of being** within ourselves. Only God possesses the power of being within Himself. He alone has power over death.
- d. Secondly, in our pre-conversion state we are spiritually **blind**. A blind person is by definition incapable of seeing impending threats to his life and well being. *Matt 15:14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. KJV*
- e. Thirdly, before conversion we are said to be deaf to the spiritual **voice** of God who calls out to all men and desires that they would be saved. *Prov 1:20-23 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.KJV*
- f. These analogous descriptions of our actual pre-conversion condition can only be understood as completely **limiting** factors which make our cooperation with grace impossible.
- g. It is not until Christ comes and raises us from our spiritual deathbeds, or heals our blindness or deaf condition that we are **able** to respond to the gracious offer to be saved.
- h. God's monergistic action in bringing a soul to salvation is **necessary** before that conversion can take place.

VI. Application

- a. *I chose you.* Lord, teach me what this means-that You have set Your heart on me, and chosen me, and saved me to bear fruit that will abide.
- b. If it is God who predestined your salvation and who has chosen you out of the billions of people who have ever populated the earth, and it was He, acting alone, who enabled your belief, what ought to be your response to such amazing grace?