

Chosen in Christ Before The World Was

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[0 : 00] I'm going to sing to God's praise from Psalm 33, Psalm 33 and from verse 8 to verse 14.

Let earth and all that live therein with reverence fear the Lord. Let all the world's inhabitants threaten with one accord.

For he did speak the word and done it was without delay, established it firmly stood whatever he did say. God doth the counsel bring to naught which eathen folk do take, and what the people do devise, of none effect doth make.

O but the counsel of the Lord doth stand forever sure, and of his heart the purposes from age to age endure. That nation blessed is whose God Jehovah is, and those a blessed people are, whom for his heritage he chose.

The Lord from heaven sees, and beholds all sons of men full well. He views all from his dwelling place, that in the earth do dwell.

[1 : 14] We'll sing these verses, Psalm 33 from verse 8. Let earth and all that live therein with reverence fear the Lord.

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God's will not be re-established it firmly stood whatever he did say.

God doth the counsel bring to naught which eathen folk do take, and what the people devise, God of the Lord have done it, and what the people devise, of none effect doth make.

[3 : 18] O but the counsel of the Lord has done forever sure, and what the people devise, of none effect doth make.

God of His heart the power of His heart, of none effect doth make. His heart the power of His heartizer! God of His heart the both of His who— God of His heart the sociable of God is a crowding person camdy and to rays Erfahr.

God of His heart the only! God of His heart the world that He has considered a watg LY He absolutely deserves that He always does.

How blessed be the Lord for His heritage, Jesus.

The Lord from heaven, Savior, Lord, thousands of men for wealth.

[4 : 53] He is all from His wedding, it is that in the air you are.

We turn for a short while to the passage that we were reading together. 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 9.

Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

And the most obvious feature that many of them comment on, as far as they observe, is that an organization such as the Church, which is to all intents and purposes meant to exist in dependence upon one Lord and one Master, that it is still, in their eyes, clearly divided.

There are more evidences of division than there are evidences of unity. And if they needed a reason, and many of them don't, if they wanted an excuse, this is an excuse that they very often use, that such an entity is really something that argues against itself.

[7 : 37] And if you would possibly be on the back foot when somebody presents you with that kind of argument.

But of course, because most of you are part of the visible church, most of you, I would argue, are part of the invisible church, as far as is humanly possible to discern.

You know that the church, as an entity, is made up of all kinds of people. While it is made up of individuals, it is a collective.

It is made up of sinners. The church is nothing else if it is not made up of sinners. Because sinners are what Jesus Christ has come to save.

And we see that evidenced by the behaviour of those who belong to the church.

[8 : 54] And we can never use that as an excuse for misbehaving. The fact that the church is made up of sinners. That is a truth.

But misbehaviour is not excusable. Because of the reality of our human condition.

But it is a fact, nevertheless. And why the church is made up of all kinds of people with varying degrees of experience of sinful behaviour we can understand that the reason why there is division is obviously more often than not at least attributable to that sinful condition.

we know that without there are divisions that you recognise that are based upon on principles that are supposedly derived from the scripture.

we are a presbyterian denomination. All denominations argue their denominationalism from the scripture.

[10 : 35] You have congregationalists as well as presbyterians. You have pedo-baptists and you have baptists. You have all kinds of divisions that are divisions that are supposedly based upon a biblical understanding.

And these divisions are it is argued based upon scripture. A Baptist would very strongly argue his position on baptism on an understanding of the Bible.

a pedo-baptist on the other hand would just as surely and just as strongly argue his position or her position on an understanding of the scripture.

It's not the scripture that's wrong but clearly we can't all be right. We can't all be with the force of scripture allowing us to believe what we believe.

But that's the way it is as far as some of the divisions that exist. There are however certain elements that are scriptural and most most who believe in the scripture believe these to be scriptural foundational principles that every church regardless of how much they disagree about other things they insist that they must be of one mind on some of these foundational biblical principles.

[12 : 43] One such is the one we're looking at this evening and that is the doctrine of election. If you look at the history of the church and you look at those who espoused Protestantism at least many of the names however much you find them deviate from an understanding of scripture contradicting others on what they believe you will find them universally agree on this fact that God's word holds out to us that there is an election of God to everlasting life.

we know that Augustine Luther Calvin they might differ on a lot of things and yet on this point they were together.

There are many others we could mention and yet while this doctrine is just one among many we find that coming into a modern age coming into a modern generation that the emphasis that we find in scripture that scripture clearly insists upon is an emphasis that people are embarrassed by.

They find it difficult to accept and difficult to give the place that the scripture gives to it. And there are so-called evangelical and even so-called reformed evangelical who would rather not give place to the doctrine of election because of what it insists upon because of what it requires to be true because they themselves are uncomfortable with it.

And what we have to understand is that the doctrine of election is a biblical doctrine.

[15 : 23] Just move on a few chapters and you read in this epistle itself all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine for reproof for correction for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect throughly furnished unto all good works.

Why Paul has got this completely wrong and he is exaggerating the place that scripture has in the life of the believer and that he shouldn't have said all scripture that he should have said some scripture or part of scripture and then we could tolerate a departure from it but the bible doesn't allow us to choose which scripture to believe and Paul certainly didn't mean us to select scripture and to ignore others and the doctrine of election is one that we find in the bible however uncomfortable it makes us feel however difficult it is for us to explain it to those who have issues with it it is part of scripture and it is set before us and that's why we can look at it this evening and see how we can be fixed in our own minds and that's what

Paul means us to be with regard to what he is saying to us in this verse who have saved us and called us with an holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world was before the world began it's not just one passage there are many others and will refer to some of them but Paul sought to bring this to the attention of the reader as someone who was coming to the end of his Christian ministry later on in chapter 4 he clearly expects them to understand that his time for this world is brief

I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is attained I have fought a good fight I have finished my course I have kept the faith henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which shall give me at that day and not to me only but unto all them also that love is appearing and many are of the opinion this is the last epistle that Paul wrote it is a letter that's full of encouragement but a letter that insists on bringing to the attention of the reader that their salvation is God's doing and it is the power of God unto salvation that determines the end of it that determines that they are saved by

God for his glory so I want us to notice that the salvation of which Paul speaks as reference first of all to something that took place in eternity secondly that the reason for the salvation is to be found not within the recipient but found in the one who has brought that to pass and thirdly it is a very definite end in view salvation is something that God means to happen not just because he is the one that's doing the saving but because of the implications that there are for those that are saved by him so these three thoughts first of all salvation has reference to something that took place in eternity if you read these words again who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in

[20 : 39] Christ Jesus before the world began when when did the world begin well we may not know day and date we don't need to to understand what he is saying there that what he is talking about took place before whatever date that was that we don't know before times of ages or before times eternal that's exactly the meaning of these words it is something that has taken place before the world was and took place in Christ in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 4 we read according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love before the foundation of the world and that is something that is clearly stated and clearly meant to be understood took our nature in order to be able to save all who possess that nature so part of the universalist approach is that salvation is for all mankind

Christ died to save sinners and all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and because Christ died for all then all will have had that salvation but that is not the only thing that the Bible says the Bible tells us that Christ died for sinners but he specifies which sinners that he died for we know from our catechism which you have learned in your youth that God elected some to everlasting life and that's based upon an understanding of what the scripture is Christ as the eternal son of God as God he is the God who elects and as

God's chosen one all who are chosen in him are chosen to life everlasting and that's the limit of it it can be as expansive as you want it to be or as narrow as you want it to be but only on this basis that if you are elected in the person of the son of God as he is Christ Jesus Christ was the God had a respect to the mediation of Christ not as the cause of their election but as the means by which the purpose of election was to be accomplished Christ was the means that God was to use by which that election that took place in him before the world was that when he was born into the world when he took our nature to himself that this would be the outcome of it all for whom he died would possess life without end again in

Ephesians 1 verse 4 remind yourself of that according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love and verse 5 having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will to Thessalonians and chapter 2 again verse 13 we are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren beloved of the Lord because God has from the beginning chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth whereunto he has called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ

God has from the beginning chosen you and God's beginning can you find it is there a point at which you can go to find the beginning of God a God who has no beginning and no end and yet he has from the beginning chosen to life those who will believe and it is not on the basis of the belief that they have life but the life is the consequence of the belief that they have by reason of the choice that he has made of the second thing is that it takes us into I think uncomfortable ground it certainly was uncomfortable for me when I tried to work out my salvation believing that my salvation was to be outworked by my endeavours my endeavours to believe my endeavours to follow my endeavours to change my life and to conform in ways that would mark me out as someone who had faith and who believed and yet these things were found to be ineffectual and when they are found to be ineffectual what does that mean what does it leave you with it leaves you with a measure of discomfort that you find difficult to live with if we read verse 9 again he says not not not according to our works but according to his own purposes and grace not according to our works in other words forget your works the works as far as your salvation is concerned are not what saves you will not be saved without works

[29 : 02] I think I often refer to a gentleman I know if you knew well and he so often quoted these verses and it was a belief that he had that he could do nothing to save himself and that passages such as this were quoted by him frequently and he clearly believed them to be true and yet if anybody deserved to be saved by works he did once having experienced salvation he worked out his salvation with fear and trembling as he put it himself there was not a means of grace that he did not go to there was not a time devoted to devotion whether he was reading the scripture or words that divines had composed that he did not pour over and drink in to the best of his ability but at the same time he was dismissing that there was any merit in what he was doing which was quite right he could not at the same time believe that his works were meritorious and yet he could not live having been born again by

God's spirit without being as industrious as he could possibly be kind in kind in kind in God to them who are called the called according to his purpose for whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son that he might be the first born among many brethren they are called according to his purpose for whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate chapter 9 he says for the children being not yet born neither having done any good or evil that the purpose of

God according to election might stand not of works but of him that calleth again the same insistence that God elects to salvation and it is not it is not the work of the believer that is the cause of salvation but the result of salvation or the result of election B.B.

Warfield writes the divine plan is broad enough to embrace the whole universe of things and minute enough to concern itself with the smallest of details and you have to believe that if the doctrine of election is anything it means that God's purposes in electing from all eternity will never at any point be frustrated by anything that goes on in this world anything that you do or anything that your bitterest enemy does anything that those who despise the gospel are those who promote a gospel that is airing or departing from the truth we are not chosen because he could not but choose us now you might think well

I never believed that but it is taught that a person can accommodate election because God elects after the fact yet God says in his word you have not chosen me but I have chosen you if God has a reason to elect we have to find it in himself and it can only be understood if he has chosen to reveal that reason to us and what he has done is he has declared his purposes in electing some to everlasting life where then do we find that what is the evidence for that doctrine how can you say confidently to whoever questions you and whoever is uncomfortable with it well you find the evidence in the salvation of sinners who those who well as we quoted already

[34 : 47] Paul writes our gospel came not to you in word only but also in power and in the holy ghost and in much assurance as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake the gospel that is preached this is the outcome of it this is the fruit that it yields this is how a sinner comes to faith how a sinner becomes a saint election to holiness and election to obedience they come together you can't have one without the other it is the purpose of God to bring many sons to glory that's his purpose remember the apostle Peter he wrote in his first epistle elect according to the foreknowledge of God the father through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of

Jesus Christ grace unto you and peace Christ finished the work that the father gave him to do and the privilege that scripture brings to our attention the privilege that we have by having the word of God and believing the word of God is that God's purposes are what are at the heart of the salvation of the sinner we do just believe that the doctrine is true and because we believe it we occupy the position of a fatalist if I'm elect I'm elect maybe you didn't have that thought maybe you've got liberty from such a thought penetrating your position as a believer but

I'm afraid that when you speak to some who are under the teaching of the word of God which incorporates the election of the saints many would say I don't think they bother saying it today they're not even that educated as far as the scripture is concerned some would say well if I'm elect I'm saved if I'm not I'm lost I might not believe just now but if I'm elect I will and if I don't believe then it's because I'm not elect so God is responsible for my lostness and it may be that you find it difficult to bring man's responsibility and God's power or sovereignty together but that's not your business God commands and the command is to be obeyed believe in the Lord

Jesus Christ and be saved it's not for you to argue a person's election you argue your calling you argue your election from your calling and anybody else's as well go back again to Romans 8 and Ephesians 1 and what you find is that just as Calvin based on what the world was teaching is that because God's world is emphasizing his sovereign grace in saving the elect electing them in eternity that should bolster our faith it should encourage us in all humility to submit to his revealed will as it is in the scripture one more quote from

B.B. Warfield he says in whatever downhill God's jewels are hid election will find them and election will fetch them out from there because they are God's jewels and when he says that he expects us to understand that God is doing this work so that we can't attribute the glory to any other but him and this is what Paul means us to understand where did God take us from and he took us from where we were in our lostness and in our darkness and it was because he took us from there that we are saved and he took us from there because he had determined before the world was to do so and his own jewels will radiate in glory and will be the process by which that glory is exaggerated well may

[40 : 38] God give us grace to accept his word and to believe it and to be comforted through it let us pray ever blessed God we give thanks that you are a God of all grace and your grace is much in evidence in the life of every single one of us you did not save us because we were worth saving you saved us because in your grace you wanted to bring to yourself those who otherwise would have been lost we bless you and thank you for all that you are in yourself we pray for your blessing on your word that those who are of the elect would still be found by you and brought in and that their salvation would draw down to your glory grant mercy for sinning Jesus Christ Amen I'm going to conclude by singing in Galax and Verses from Psalm 135

Psalm 135 and at verse 4 toward Y■ forward yeah Jacob for to Israeze or you success on his gull thy hoth a m youlez and are■ twice olha quatre which is not your husband.

It is a memory. It is time to catch. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[44 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

The elders remain behind just for a minute at the end of the service. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all now and always. Amen.