

Last week we looked at God's election of those whose names He wrote into the book of life and a particular Arminian deviation from Scripture in which they assert that God's sovereignty is subject to man's will.

We also looked at God's will and the different types of will that we find in Scripture. God's irresistible will (*thelema*) is clearly distinguished from his desire (*boulomai*) in which His providence works over time and the order of nature. The Lord's desire (*boulomai*) does not refer to God's will as it does in the Lord's prayer (Mat 6:9) "Thy will be done" where it is translated from the Greek *thelema*.

In 1 Timothy 5:14, for instance, the use of *boulomai* is clearly illustrated, "...I want (*boulomai*) younger widows to get married..."

There is, therefore, a clear distinction between the will of God (*thelema*) and the fact that God wills (*boulomai*) something.

Scripture teaches us that God chose particular individuals unto salvation, before the foundation of the world.

Mar 13:20 "Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

1Th 1:2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;

1Th 1:3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

1Th 1:4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;

1Th 1:5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

2Th 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

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Eph 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

Eph 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Eph 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Rev 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Rev 17:8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

Rom 9:10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

Rom 9:11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

Rom 9:12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

Rom 9:13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

Rom 9:14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

Rom 9:15 For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

Rom 9:16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

Rom 9:17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

Rom 9:18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

Rom 10:20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME."

2Ti 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

2Ti 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

Once we have been regenerated by the Spirit and justified by faith in Christ, good works confirms our calling and election.

2Pet 1:5-11 For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

Therefore, brethren, be more zealous to confirm your call and election (to make certain about His calling and choosing), for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The obedience and suffering of Christ were of infinite value, and that if God had so willed, the satisfaction rendered by Christ would have saved every member of the human race. It would have required no more obedience, nor any greater suffering for Christ to have secured salvation for every man, woman, and child who ever lived that it did for Him to secure salvation for the elect only. They could not save

themselves, nor was the purpose of Christ's salvation to enable them to save themselves, but He came *to save* the people given to Him by the Father. Christ made his sacrifice so great that everyone, without exception, could apply Christ's sacrifice onto himself with the instrument of faith, without fear that Christ's sacrifice would run out.

Mat 1:21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Luk 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

2Co 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Gal 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

Gal 1:4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

1Ti 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

Tit 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

Tit 2:12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

Tit 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

Tit 2:14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

1Pe 3:18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

But He came into the world to represent and save only those given to Him by the Father. Christ's saving work was limited in that it was

designed to save some and not others. It was not limited in value but in application.

Election and redemption do not complete the work of salvation, because included in God's plan for recovering lost sinners is the renewing work of the Holy Spirit by which the benefits of Christ's obedience and death are applied to the elect. This is the phase of salvation which deals with the application of the benefits of Christ.

The Holy Spirit never fails to bring to salvation those sinners whom He personally calls to Christ. He inevitably applies salvation to every sinner whom He intends to save, and it is His intention to save all the elect.

The gospel invitation extends a call to salvation to every one who hears its message. It invites all men without exception to drink freely of the water of life and live. It promises salvation to all who repent and believe. But this outward general call will not bring sinners to Christ. Why not? Because men are by nature dead in sin and are under its power. They are of themselves unable (that ability was lost because of the fall of our First Parents) and unwilling to forsake their evil ways and to turn to Christ for mercy. No amount of external threatenings or promises will cause blind, deaf, dead, rebellious sinners to bow before Christ as Lord and to look to Him alone for salvation.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit, in order to bring God's elect to salvation, extends to them a special inward call in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message.

Through this special call, the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ. The inward change wrought in the elect-sinner enables him to understand and believe spiritual truth; in the spiritual realm he is given the seeing eye and the hearing ear. The Spirit creates within him a new heart or a new nature.

This is accomplished through regeneration or the new birth by which the sinner is made a child of God and is given spiritual life.

His will is renewed through this process so that the sinner spontaneously comes to Christ of his own free choice. Because he is given a new nature so that he loves righteousness, and because his

mind is enlightened so that he understands and believes the Biblical gospel, the renewed sinner freely and willingly turns to Christ as Lord and Savior.

Thus, the once dead sinner is drawn to Christ by the inward supernatural call of the Spirit who through regeneration makes him alive and creates within him faith and repentance.

Although the general outward call of the gospel can be, and often is, rejected, the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of the those to whom it is made. This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only. The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ.

The atonement of Christ is sufficient for expiating all the sins of all men, or of the whole world, but the atonement of Christ is applied to the elect only.

What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross?

Answer

That by the virtue of the sacrifice and death of Christ, our old man is crucified, dead, and buried with Him; so that the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us, but that we may offer ourselves unto Him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

This question deals with the benefits of Christ's death. As with the passion of Christ, the end and fruits are to be regarded as the same, only in different respects: for the things which Christ proposed Himself as ends, are unto us the fruits, when we receive or apply them to ourselves.

The following three benefits of Christ's death are the entire and complete work of our redemption:

1. Justification or the remission of sins,
2. Regeneration, or the renewing of our nature by the Holy Spirit, and
3. Eternal life.

1. *Justification or the remission of sins.* The justice of God demands that the sinner should not be punished twice. Since Christ has already suffered the punishment that we were due, He will not punish the same in us. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleansed us from all sin: Original as well as actual sin, sins of commission as well as sins of omission.

We are justified, that is, freed from the evil of both punishment and of guilt on account of the death of Christ, which is the cause of our justification.

2. *Regeneration, or the renewing of our nature by the Holy Spirit.* Christ, by His death, has merited for us not only the pardon of sin, but also its removal and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Or we may say that He has, by His own death, obtained for us not only the remission of sin, but the indwelling of God in us.

John 16:7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Col 2:10 And you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

1Cor 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

The death of Christ is, in two respects, the efficient cause, of our justification and our regeneration.

a) *In respect to God*, because He, on account of the merit and death of His Son, remits unto us our sins, grants us the Holy Spirit, and renews in us His own image.

Rom 5:9 - 11 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Gal 4:6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, <"Abba">, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

b) *In respect to us* the death of Christ is also an efficient cause; because we who believe that Christ obtained for us righteousness and the Holy Spirit, cannot be otherwise than grateful to him and earnestly desire to live in a manner that we may honor Him, which is done by commencing to walk in newness of life.

The application of the death of Christ, and a proper consideration of it, will not suffer us to remain ungrateful; but will constrain us to live Christ in return, and to render thanks for such a great and inestimable benefit. Hence we are not to imagine that we can have remission of sins without regeneration. No one that is not regenerated can obtain remission of sins. He who boasts of having applied to himself by faith the death of Christ, and yet has no desire to live a holy and godly life, that he may so honor the Savior, lies, and gives conclusive evidence that the truth is not in him.

All those who are justified are willing and ready to do those things which are pleasing to God. The desire to obey God can never be separated from an application of the death of Christ, nor can the benefit of regeneration be experienced without that of justification. All those that are justified are also regenerated, and all those that are regenerated are justified.

The apostle Peter wrote: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," (1Pet 1:3) in which he attributes our regeneration to the resurrection of Christ. How is it here attributed to His death? It is attributed to both.

To His death. By His death Christ has merited for us our regeneration.

To His resurrection. By rising from the dead He applies regeneration unto us, giving us the Holy Spirit.

3. *Eternal Life.* From this fruit of the death of Christ we receive what we lost in our first parents, eternal life. However, in glory, we will not be able to sin, as Adam and Eve could, thus being in a much better position than they were. We will be like Christ. We will be unable to repeat the catastrophe that caused so much evil and caused the Son of the living God to be humiliated and to be killed for our sake.

The effect of Christ's death and resurrection is truly a complete and sufficient regeneration of His people.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 John 5:11, 12 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

What is it to believe in the death of Christ? It is to believe that He has not only suffered the most excruciating pains and torments, but also death itself. By His death he has obtained for me remission of sins, reconciliation with God, and by consequence the Holy Spirit also, who commences in me a new life, that I may again be made the temple of God, and at length attain unto eternal life, in which God shall for ever be praised and magnified by me.

Next week we will look at why we have to die when Christ has died for us so that we may live. That will conclude our study on the fourth degree of Christ's humiliation. We will, then, continue with his fifth degree of humiliation, He descended into hell.