

SOVEREIGNTY ALLOWS CHOICE

(Ex. 20:4-6)

Introduction:

1. One tool in helping us to reach the lost around us is to understand the false teaching that has kept people from coming to God for salvation. At the root of most denominations is some form of Calvinism. Calvinism, at its most basic, is comprised of five tenets detailed by the acronym T (Total depravity) U (Unconditional election) L (Limited atonement) I (Irresistible grace) P (preservation of the saints).
2. This morning let's address the "U" of unconditional election. This false concept stems from two basic misunderstandings of scripture: that of election; and that of the sovereignty of God.

Discussion:

I. Biblical Election.

- A. The word translated "elect" is the Greek word *elektos* = picked out, chosen-Thayer. To be God's elect (Titus 1:1) one is chosen by God. The question is, what are the criteria for being selected?
- B. Some teach that election is by God and completely arbitrary, but the Bible teaches otherwise (Rom. 8:29; Mark 16:16; Luke 9:23; 2 Thess. 1:8; John 6:44, 45; et al).
- C. Consider "election" in Matt. 20:16 and Matt. 22:14.
 1. Matt. 20:16 = many are called but few are chosen = many called to work but some come with the wrong heart and arguing with God regarding the means of salvation. The chosen are those who come when called and accept/submit when told.
 2. Matt. 22:14 = many are called but few are chosen = many called to the feast but only those "dressed" for the feast will be chosen.
 3. Compare with other statements of Jesus (Matt. 7:7-27; 11:28-30).
- D. Consider Paul's words to Titus in Titus 1:1-3 emphasizing "faith", "truth", "word", and "preaching".

II. God's Sovereignty.

- A. Unconditional election states that God has chosen some people to be saved (arbitrarily) and others to be born in order to burn in hell eternally with nothing they can do about it. This makes even the adherents to this false doctrine uncomfortable, and they throw up their hands and lay it at the feet of God's sovereignty. Can't God do whatever He wants?
- B. The word "sovereign" does not appear in the KJV or NKJV, but the NIV translates *despotes* in Jude 4 as "sovereign" others translate it as "Master" (ASV, NASB, ESV, RV) or "Lord" (KJV, NKJV).
- C. Sovereign, Master, Lord all have the same basic definition = *supreme ruler, a monarch*-Concise Oxford Dictionary.
- D. So, again, can God, who is without question the supreme ruler of all, do whatever He wants? Yes and no☺ God cannot do anything contrary to His nature. He cannot sin because sin = not God. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18) and has told us over and over that He is loving (1 John 4:8) and just (Deut. 32:4). So, how can God act in such an unloving and unjust way as unconditional election implies? The answer is He cannot!
- E. God does have sovereignty over all aspect of our physical lives but has via His sovereignty determined the conditions by which one may be saved and calls all to come and be saved (Gen. 2:17; Ex. 20:5, 6; Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17 but in context of vv 12-16).

Conclusion:

1. God is sovereign over all! He can determine whether we are rich or poor, healthy or sickly, at ease or troubled. But God will NEVER take away our choice with regards to salvation. His sovereignty is what allows us to be able to choose where we spend our eternity.
2. 2 Thess. 2:13-15 Choose wisely, choose life, and choose obedience to God's sovereignty.
3. Invitation.

MORE ON “SOVEREIGNTY ALLOWS CHOICE”

1. Some see unconditional election in passages such as Rom. 9:8-33, but they misunderstand the whole point being made in this passage.
 - A. Paul was explaining to the Jews that they had not been deserted by God, but that they had misunderstood God’s election (choosing) of them as His people. They were “elected” in order that (for the purpose of) God might fulfill His promise to the world through them, and that ALL (Jew and Gentile) might be reconciled to God (Gen. 3:15; 12:3; Gal. 4:4).
 - B. In vv 1-6 Paul makes the point that not all Israel (descendants of a man) are of Israel (the people of God chosen to serve God).
 - C. In vv 7-14 Paul expounds this idea by explaining God’s right to choose who will serve Him and how He will save people. Paul explains that God has the right to determine who will be His chosen vessel to carry on the Seed promise (it would be Jacob not Esau-vv 12, 13). Is God unrighteous because He exercises His sovereignty? Of course not (v14).
 - D. In vv 15, 16, Paul explains that God also has the sovereignty to determine who will be saved and who will not (note v15 is a quote from Ex. 33:19 which is clarified in Ex. 20:5, 6!!).
 - E. In vv 17-19, Paul gives us an example of how these two aspects of God’s sovereignty work together. Pharaoh was Pharaoh because God in His providence “raised him up” for His purposes. But didn’t Paul imply God had hardened Pharaoh’s heart (v18). Yes but how did God harden Pharaoh’s heart? By repeatedly demanding with sings and wonders that Pharaoh release His people (see attached appendix).
 - F. In vv 19-24, Paul makes plain that God’s sovereignty allows Him to use people as He pleases but the Bible teaches that we also get to determine how we will be used by God (2 Tim. 2:20, 21).
 - G. In vv 24-33, Paul explains that what appears to be God discarding His people is actually them discarding Him (v32; cp. Rom. 10:3) after having misunderstood God’s plan and purpose for their special relationship with Him.
2. Consider the teaching found in 1 Pet. 1.
 - A. In vv 1, 2 Peter wrote to the elect pilgrims who were elect according to the foreknowledge (prognosis) of God (Rom. 8:29) in (en) the sanctification of the Spirit (2 Pet. 1:3) into (eis) obedience and sprinkling of blood (obvious reference to baptism).
 - B. In vv 3-21, Peter explains and details the faith (God’s conditions) that made them elect (chosen).
 - C. Note vv 22-25 and how they highlight the very conditional nature of election and God’s Sovereignty in determining the conditions/terms of salvation.
3. God is sovereign over all and has determined before the foundations of the earth were laid how salvation would be obtained. He has utilized His sovereignty to highlight those conditions and the choice He has lovingly given to all mankind.
4. God’s elect are those people who have learned of His sovereign decree regarding the plan of salvation and have lovingly, thankfully, obeyed that plan with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.