

[c. 1940s. From a collection of tracts likely written by Gordon Clark]

PRAISE permeates the Bible. In the first chapter of Ephesians Paul emphasizes the pervasive Old Testament theme that God inhabiteth the praises of Israel. (Psalm 22:3) The praise of God's glory rings through Paul's epistle. Here the believer may learn to sing praises with the understanding. (Psalm 47:7)

Why should a believer praise God? The verses preceding Eph. 1:6 answer this question. God hath abundantly blessed us in Christ. He has blessed us inasmuch as HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

In other places also Paul gives us confidence in our salvation and ultimate glorification by teaching us that our election was settled before the foundation of the world. In Tim. 1:9 Paul by God's inspiration says, GOD ... HATH SAVED US ... ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE, WHICH WAS GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.

Why did he chose us? Why did he not pass us by while calling on others? Was it because we were wiser than other people? Or because we were particularly important? No. NOT MANY WISE MEN ... NOT MANY NOBLE ARE CALLED. (I Cor. 1:26) Was I because we were better than other people? Perhaps God looked into the future and saw that we should have spiritual discernment; perhaps God foresaw that, while many would see no beauty in Christ, we should have the proper appreciation of Christ's work for sinner. And then because God saw that we had greater spiritual insight than other people, because He saw that we had sense enough to choose Christ, therefore God chose us rather than someone in Tibet or Africa.

But in that case God's election would be to the praise of our merit and not to the praise of His grace. We were chosen by grace, and gracie is unmerited favor. God's choosing us is a sign of God's goodness, not a sign of our superior insight. In fact, were as dead in sin as anyone else.

THE NATURAL MAN RECEIVETH NOT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD ... NEITHER CAN HE KNOW THEM. (I Cor. 2:14)

So we were not chosen because we had recognized or should recognize the value of Christ.

THE CARNAL MIND ... IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE LAW OF GOD, NEITHER INDEED CAN BE. (Rom. 8:7)

It is therefore an impossibility for the unregenerate mind to exercise faith in God or to obey Him.

THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO NOT ONE. THERE IS NONE THAT UNDERSTANDETH. THERE IS NONE THAT SEEKETH AFTER GOD. ... THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE, FOR ALL HAVE SINNED. (Rom. 3:10, 11, 23)

THE HEART OF MAN IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS AND DESPERATELY WICKED. (Jer. 17:9) YOU ... WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SIN. (Eph. 2:1)

But if God foresaw no merit in us, and the Scriptures plainly teach that there was no merit, then why did God elect us and not some others to salvation?

Paul gives the answer in Eph. 1:5-6. God PREDESTINATED US ... ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL. Sovereign pleasure is the only answer. And the purpose of this election and predestination is THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE.

But can God do this thing? And if abstractly He can, is it true as a matter of act that He does? Again in the same chapter, verse 11, Paul gives the answer. God can thus elect us because He not only controls the salvation of those persons He gave to Christ in the covenant of redemption, but also He WORKETH ALL THINGS AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL.

Let us, therefore, us who have no merit or ground of confidence in ourselves, praise the glory of His grace.

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