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Predestination. in 2 Thessalonians 2 and John 15. (2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible Outdoors

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Predestination (2 Thessalonians 2) (John 15).

Topics.

- God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved.
 - You did not choose me, but I chose you.
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2 THESSALONIANS.

God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved

- **2 Thessalonians 2:13-15:** we (the apostles) ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. ¹⁴To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

The firstfruits to be saved does not mean that no-one has been saved prior to this since that would mean Abraham, Job and David etc., were not saved, rather it means that those after Christ's resurrection were the first to be saved under the new covenant of grace in contrast to being saved under the old covenant and Moses Law.

SAVED THROUGH SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT

Saved through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth (v13) means they were made holy and righteous by faith through believing in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as opposed to self-righteousness (i.e., attempting to attain to holiness and righteousness by self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions etc.).

1

HE CALLED YOU THROUGH OUR GOSPEL

He called you through our Gospel (v14) means that God calls people through the Good News of the Gospel, but it does not mean that he influences their response they remain free to choose to accept or reject the call. Paul was able to tell the Thessalonians that God had called them through the Gospel because they responded to it with a resounding "yes" even though their acceptance of the Lord resulted in extreme persecution and suffering.

THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN THE GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The glory of the Lord (v14) in this context refers to the following two things:

1. The life of love, compassion, kindness, mercy, forgiveness and grace Jesus showed toward others.
2. To Jesus resurrection to the right hand side of his heavenly Father and to eternal life and everlasting glory.

The word traditions: in the scriptural sense means things delivered over from one to another either written or oral it carries the idea of delivering or handing over a message received from someone else.

The apostle Paul said:

- So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter (2 Thess. 2:15).

This clearly shows that when the apostles use the word traditions it does not refer to traditions as most think of religious traditions today, but refers to doctrines and precepts the apostles had taught and not traditions that had come down from ancient times or any Jewish religious traditions of the church since there is no evidence that any of these types of religious traditions were given or taught by the apostles. Paul only speaks of what had been delivered by himself and the apostles, whether orally or by letter, which means that the word traditions refers to anything delivered in the way of teaching by the apostles whether in their preaching, private conversation, or by their letters. The traditions that Paul and the apostles taught refer to doctrines and rules that concern godly behaviour such as respecting the good order and government of the church, the Lord's supper; water baptism, proper respect for women, not being lazy, helping the poor, showing honour to those who faithfully labour for Christ and such like things these are the kind of traditions that Paul and the apostles had in mind when they used the word traditions and not religious pomp and ceremony or religious ceremonial rites and holy days.

NOTE: The apostles' use of the word traditions cannot be used to support traditions the Church of Rome holds or any other similar traditions since they are not taught in the New Testament or by Paul and the apostles. God called these believers by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that the apostles proclaimed. This is how God calls people into His Kingdom, they hear the Good News of the Gospel are convicted of sin and by faith receive Christ into their heart and mind and faithfully follow him and God accepts them into His Kingdom and adopts them as his children because of their faith in His Son.

JOHN 15 CHAPTER ONE

2

You did not choose me, but I chose you

- **John 15:15-16:** Jesus said: "No longer do I call you servants, for the servants does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."

Jesus is talking to the eleven apostles, but by extension what he is saying applies to all who faithfully follow him. Notice, Jesus calls everyone who believes his word and does them his friends. Jesus in this conversation is contrasting the word friend to the word servant, the word friend embraces the idea that there are no secrets, friends tell each other everything which is what Jesus is saying he has done for the eleven. The Lord has told them everything that his Father revealed to him and made known to them. Christ has made known to them all things pertaining to eternal salvation and the Kingdom of God contrasted to a servant who is kept in the dark and is not told what their master is doing. In contrast to servants who reluctantly work under the submission of a ruler or master friends love, honour and respect each other and willingly put the well-being of their friend's life before their own. Today every faithful brother and sister in Christ is Jesus friend and has access to everything Jesus told the apostles through the written word of God.

WHATEVER YOU ASK THE FATHER IN MY NAME, HE MAY GIVE IT TO YOU

Jesus chose the apostles so that they would bear fruit that would remain. The fruit the apostles were to bear refers to proclaiming the word of God,

delivering people from the bondage and condemnation of the law to the Good News of the Gospel and delivering them from the domain of darkness and transferring them into the kingdom of his beloved Son (Col. 1:13) which means that Jesus words, "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you (v16) does not apply to the riches, luxuries and material things of this world, but to whatever is needed:

- To proclaim and share the word of God.
- To deliver people from the bondage and condemnation of the law into the Kingdom of Christ and God's grace.
- To translate sinners from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light.
- To help new converts growing in the fruits of the Spirit and love one another.

These are the things Jesus had in mind when he told the disciples whatever they ask the Father in his name, the Father will give it to them. He was referring to all things needed to save a person to eternal life and not to worldly riches and wealth. Jesus is basically saying, "I have given you every spiritual teaching you need to deliver people from death to life eternal and to help them grow in their faith and in the fruits of the Spirit and if you ask the Father for any of these things in my name He by His Spirit of inspiration will also give them to you (remember they did not have the cannon of the Bible as we do today).

GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THEY LAY DOWN THEIR LIFE FOR THEIR FRIENDS

John in this verse is not saying that God choses certain individuals. Certainly it is true that Jesus in these verses is talking to the twelve apostles (v27) who he chose, but it should be remembered that they had to from their own free will chose to respond to his call and chose to follow him, thus it is with all who Christ by his word calls through the Gospel into his eternal Kingdom. Christ has chosen us all in that he laid down his life for all the world, so in this sense everyone who hears the Gospel is being called by the Lord, but that does not mean that everyone who is called is going to respond with a "yes" to the call.

NOTE: if anyone ever doubts Jesus loves them all they have to do is look at the bloodstained cross of Calvary, there is no greater act that Christ can do than what he has already done to show how much he loves those who belong to him.

FOOTNOTE

We must always keep in mind when we are speaking of God's sovereignty, God's timeless mind, predestination and God's foreknowledge that it is with a fallen and finite mind that is limited to time (as we understand it) that we are attempting to understand God's eternal wisdom and God's eternal knowledge which is far higher than our limited fallen mortal mind can comprehend therefore we should never be dogmatic and absolute in our understandings and explanations concerning God's eternal sovereignty, but always allow for certain amount of mystery.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
