

DIVINE ELECTION AND PRAYER

Intro: Whenever we speak about the sovereign work of God it always tends to throw questions around what we as the Lord's people do.

This is true with regard to salvation. What is the need to witness? What is the need even to believe?

The answer is that God in choosing men to salvation also determines all of the means necessary to bring them to Christ. This includes prayer, witnessing, explaining, believing -- with all of the people who are involved. Divine election does not eliminate man; it works through man so that the will of God is being done.

Listen to another couple of verses which deal with this wonderful theme -- 2 Thess. 2:13, 14,

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, Unto which he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You can see evidence in this verse of the human as well as of the divine:

- 1) The divine:
 - a) "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."
 - b) "Through sanctification of the Spirit."
 - c) "He called you."
- 2) a) "Belief of the truth."
b) "By our gospel."

So we must recognize what the Word of God teaches even though we may not be able to reconcile the two aspects in our minds. You cannot deny either one without contradicting the Word of God.

This all should help us as we turn to the subject of prayer in this connection.

What light do we find on this as we turn to the Word of God?

- I. ALL TRUE PRAYER MUST BE ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD. Cf. 1 John 5:14, 15.

There are many passages of Scripture that are related to this. Cf. John 14:13, 14; 15:7; 16:24. All of these verses are the words of our Lord Himself.

Prayer is not getting the Lord to conform to my will. It is my asking in accordance with His will. To guide us in this

God has given us:

- 1) The Word of God.
- 2) The Holy Spirit. Cf. Eph. 6:18; Jude 20.

II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF ELECTION DID NOT KEEP THE APOSTLE FROM PRAYING. Cf. Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1-3 -- related these to the statement he makes in Rom. 11:5.

III. OUR LORD BROUGHT DIVINE ELECTION AND PRAYER TOGETHER IN HIS HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER.

A. The evidence of election in our Lord's prayer. Cf. John 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24.

B. The evidence of His prayers for the elect. Cf. John 17:9.

C. His petition for the elect. Cf. John 17:11.

Obviously He is praying for those who at that time were saved, but it all applies when we remember that salvation includes the past, the present, and the future.

D. His petition for the elect who were yet to be saved. Cf. John 17:20.

In passing, note the combination in this verse of the human and the divine -- the Lord praying about people in the future who would believe through the witness of those who knew the Lord.

No stronger proof could be produced than to see the evidence of election and prayer in the praying which our Lord did.

IV. THE PRESENT INTERCESSORY MINISTRIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND OF OUR LORD CONFIRM THE HARMONY BETWEEN ELECTION AND PRAYER. Cf. Rom. 8:26, 27 and 34 in the light of vv. 28-30.

Do we feel that the prayer ministries of the Holy Spirit and of our Lord are something that we would want to give up? NO! Then see the application as Paul goes on to speak of his own intercessory ministries as already mentioned in Rom. 9 and 10.

V. THE PRAYERS OF PAUL IN EPHESIANS RELATE ELECTION AND PRAYER.

A. The first prayer (Eph. 1:15-23).

Note the "Wherefore" in Eph. 1:15 -- tying it in with the first part of the chapter which is introduced with Eph. 1:3, 4. Note also vv. 5, 9, 11.

B. The second prayer (Eph. 3:13-21).

Again we have a "wherefore" and "for this cause."

What is it connected to? See vv. 8-12. We have identically the same emphasis that is found in chapter 1.

Prayer and divine election do belong together.

Concl: What conclusions can we draw from this?

- 1) These two doctrines are not in conflict with each other.
- 2) There is the closest possible relationship between the two. Spirit-led praying is a part of God's elective purposes.
- 3) The doctrine of election is a great encouragement to pray.
- 4) We must learn to pray, AND THEN PRAY!