

THE LEXIA EDIFIER

ROMANS 14:19 ...Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

MAY 19, 2013

WHAT WILL YOUR DESTINY BE?

Jim Stauffer

There is a wisdom offered in God's word that seems to be ignored by the chosen lifestyle of people today. I suppose it is the American dream that has captured the minds of people to the extent they pursue it at all costs.

Far too many make very shortsighted decisions based purely on the here and now and disregard any future considerations in the process.

The questions we ask today are, "Will you control your own destiny?" And if so, "What will that destiny be?"

As Jesus explains His deity and divine purpose on earth to Nicodemus in John Chapter 3, he tells him each man will determine his destiny by what he believes.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* That, of course, is the good news. There are those who will reject Christ. **John 3:18** *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the*

name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. Rejecting the message of the Divine Son of God is choosing darkness rather than light.

Throughout Scripture Jesus and His Apostles identify those who reject the truth of the gospel as living in darkness or bondage. The word bondage is used to illustrate the condition of those entrapped in sin. **Rom. 6:16** *Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?* Jesus promises deliverance from that bondage in a discussion with the Jews. He told them, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (**John 8:31,32**)

Paul claims that was accomplished when redemption occurred in the lives of disciples in Colosse. **Col. 1:12** *giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share*

in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He then warns the Ephesians they must choose between good and evil. Between God and the world. They had once “*walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air*”, but since their redemption were expected to be “*imitators of God as beloved children.*” (**Eph. 2:2; 5:1**) Thus the Holy Spirit led Paul to say, **Eph. 5:15** *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise.*

Today we see so many older people who are compromising their faith with ideas promulgated by the “prince of the powers of the air.” Oh, they still say the right things but their actions speak loudly of their comfort with this world’s goods. They have time for all the earthly pursuits, family get togethers, entertainment and recreation. Yet they struggle to attend regularly the worship of the God who saved them. They are rarely there when the work of the church is being done. Their concern is not their spiritual growth but rather the fulfillment of earthly enjoyment.

Unfortunately, many young people are following in *their* footsteps rather than those of the faithful. They plan their lives around an education designed to produce an income that will afford their families the same comforts they see their parents enjoying.

Planning for prosperity is not a bad thing in and of itself. One should try to do his best to provide for his own. But loving it and allowing it to be the major focus of our lives is. Many young people today devote their energy to “becoming established”, thinking they will later pursue the work of faith. I know of young people in the church today who do not give as prospered even though both the husband and wife are employed. How does that match with the example Jesus gives of the poor widow in **Mark 12** who “*did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*” I hope we can see the disparity in devotion to spiritual matters here.

Jesus tells a story of a rich man who learned the lesson we speak of the hard way. He devoted his life to producing wealth for the

purpose of his own comfort. When he was satisfied he had finally accomplished this, he prepared to sit back and enjoy the fruits of his labors. There was one thing he overlooked. Jesus said he would die that night. And when he did, all he had amassed would belong to someone else. You see, he had made a shortsighted decision in life. He had obtained wealth but it would no longer be of any value to him. He must now face his Creator in judgment and hear his eternal destination announced based on his earthly life. (**Luke 12:13-21**)

Now, back to the question. “Will you control your own destiny?” Of course you will. Everyone does by the choices he or she makes. The only unanswered question is, “What will that destiny be?” It will be what you make it by taking definite and deliberate action. You can fall into the pattern of behavior of the masses by seeking happiness in the material comforts of life on earth. Or you can be like Mary and choose the teaching of Jesus over the things of this life about which Martha was troubled. (**Luke 10:38-42**)

Conflicts in Calvinism

Jim Stauffer

This week’s discussion is about the tenet of Calvinism called Limited Atonement. The argument proffered by the Calvinist is Christ died only for the elect, who were already chosen before God created the world. Chosen so specifically the number cannot be increased or reduced at all.

We clearly pointed out in the article last week, the fallacy of Unconditional Election. Paul taught in **Romans 1:16**, that the, “*gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.*” He further taught in **2 Thess. 2:14** that God chose by calling us through the gospel. The very same gospel that has the power to save everyone who believes it.

The argument for Limited Atonement is if Jesus died to save anyone at all, He had to die to save someone specifically. Otherwise His death could possibly not save anyone and thus be powerless. Then based upon the false assumption of Unconditional Election, which says some are elected to salvation and some predestined to destruction, they conclude Jesus died only for those unconditionally elected to salvation. They would cite, **Matt. 1:21** *She will*

bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. They use this as evidence Jesus died only for the elect. They also refer to, **Luke 19:10** *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.* to support the same argument. They take the same position on, **1 Tim. 1:15** *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.*

Remember, they believe God has predestined every act of man from the beginning of time until the end. They believe God is not sovereign if He allows man to have a free will. Since God is sovereign He has determined the actions of all men from time immemorial. Based upon this belief, they conclude the word save in each of the passages we cited above means Jesus died for those God has predestined to election and salvation and therefore they have no choice but to be saved. Not only do they have no choice about their salvation, those who were predestined to destruction have no choice in their eternal plight.

Now, let us see if we can use some common sense in deducing this matter based on the consistent teaching of Scripture.

The Bible clearly teaches us Jesus “came to seek and **save** that which was lost.” He was born upon the earth to “**save** the people from their sins.” He “came into the world to **save** sinners.” We conclude these verses to teach us salvation comes through Christ.

We then are compelled by common sense to understand the implication of Paul’s statement. He says, “the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to **everyone** that believes.” This by any sound reasoning means **everyone** has the ability and the opportunity to believe and thus be **saved**. Now, let us make clear the necessary conclusion from these passages. **Everyone** has access to the salvation Jesus brought to mankind if he will believe. Of necessity we then conclude that Jesus died for **everyone**. The Scriptures are replete with this message in other passages as well. **Heb. 5:8** *Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,*

Jesus taught **all** men could be **saved** by believing and being baptized. **Mark 16:16** **Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

Peter taught **everyone** on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. **Acts 2:38** *And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized **every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* How did Peter know all those people on the day of Pentecost were unconditionally elected to salvation? The answer is, he didn’t. He told them all to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Would that not have been a lie if there were some who were predestined to destruction? It appears all gospel preachers are put in a difficult situation if they teach someone the gospel has the power to save them if indeed those people have been predestined to destruction. How do they avoid preaching and teaching a lie?

It would be necessary in the pursuit of honesty to advise the audience at some point that the gospel only has the power to save those God has elected to salvation and therefore God has already made the decision for you and you have no choice in the matter.

This is just another obvious conflict between Calvinism and the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Are Denominations Branches of Jesus?

If you are inclined to think that denominations are the branches Jesus spoke of, a little reflection will show you how impossible that is. He meant individuals, not denominations. And the diversity among the denominations also shows that they are not branches of the vine. No one ever saw a vine with branches so different as are the denominations. They are not alike, and they bear different kinds of fruit. It is impossible for them to be natural branches of the same vine.

R.L. Whiteside

You can judge a man pretty well by whether - if given a choice - he would ask for a lighter burden or a stronger back.

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, **20** being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; **21** in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1 Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psalms 1: 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers; **2** But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. **4** The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. **5** Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. **6** For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.

News and Notes: Let us remember the instruction of our Lord by visiting in whatever way we can, **Mary Czirr, Terry Czirr, Candiss Cason, Byron and Wendy Taylor.**

Matt. 25:40 *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.*

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We recommend to you the following websites:

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thelenexaedifier.com
lenexachurchofchrist.org***

Our Meeting times are:

Sunday Bible Classes: 9:30 AM
Worship Services 10:20 AM&5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes 7:00 PM

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." **(Romans 3:24)**

As a result of this justification we have been "delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins." **(Colossians 1:13,14)**

We therefore respect the inspired word of God that will completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God. **(2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Peter 4:11)**

What must one do to be saved?

Hear the gospel -

Romans 10:17

Believe in Christ -

Heb. 11:6

Repent of sin - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord -

Romans 10:9,10

Be baptized for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38