

God commands us to turn from sin, but alas! we have not power to turn; therefore he has promised to turn us, to put his Spirit within us, and to turn the heart of stone to flesh.. Therefore, Christian, be not discouraged, though thou hast no strength of thy own, God will give thee strength" - Thomas Watson

### GADSBY'S CATECHISM

by William Gadsby (about 1800)

*(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

Question LXXX. Can you give a proof of the gospel as a rule in the church?

Answer. Yes; as it is written, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." "As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches." "Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." "Keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." "Let all things be done decently and in order." "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

Matt. 23.8-10; 1 Cor. 7.17 & 11.2 & 14.40; Eph. 6.9; Heb. 10.24-25; 1 Pet. 3.8-11 & 5.1-5.

#### THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM– In Richwood

#### Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

# THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

## THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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### THE GOSPEL OF YOUR SALVATION

*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1:13*

After a lengthy doxology in which the praises of the glory of Christ Jesus our Lord were preciousely declared, this blessed addition is recounted to the Ephesians. I have been led, at times, to begin here and preach back to the third verse of this chapter. That which is here declared to have been the experience of the Ephesian saints is the end result of the eternal purpose of God set forth in the preceding verses. What a wondrous revelation it is to discover that we who have believed were chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world; that our acceptance with God is accomplished in Christ; that redemption has become, in Him, both a fact and a possession; and that it is all according His good pleasure. The hearing and trusting which occurred in time were in fact seen in eternity as that which was pleasing to God as it was brought to fruition in Christ.

There seems to be no doubt that Paul was conveying to the Ephesians that while the beginning of the ministry was to the Jews, that they had come to the knowledge of Christ by the same route as they and that they were fully capable of enjoying all the benefits of this great salvation. They had heard the “Word of truth” and they had believed what they heard. Indeed, they had come to trust the One who was so revealed to them.

Many come to a form of belief while never realizing that the revelation of Jesus Christ to His own was the result of an eternal decree of God.

They seem to believe that the divine action entails an attempt to rescue men as an afterthought to a plan gone wrong. They picture the process as something occurring as a response to something akin to a “sales pitch” and they think themselves to be doing God a favor. It is, to them, an explainable human process and that it is repeatable and so they persist to teach for doctrine the commandments of men.

In fact, the true believer sees himself as a miracle and the revelation of a mystery. The very fact that they heard was a gracious act on the part of God. That they heard it as the “Word of truth” is a miracle. That it was the gospel of a personal and particular salvation is a mystery this world cannot understand. Many have heard the gospel and are able to repeat the elements of it. What distinguishes God’s elect is that it pertains in such particular fashion to them. I still recall that many congratulated me on learning of my profession of faith in Christ. Most who did were not believers themselves. They thought it a good thing for me, but it was not for them in their opinion. How many professing faith in Christ are in fact thinking that they have merely done a good thing for themselves with no reference to either the cost (the blood of Christ) or outcome of true salvation.

As we are made to contemplate the wonders of the might and majesty of God and to think of His eternal uncreated existence we face difficulty in seeing ourselves as so much as a

consideration in His mind. As we rehearse the biblical narrative and the unfolding of the redemptive purpose of God and realize the vast implications, we tend to disappear in the light of such glory. When we are made to see ourselves as sinners and deserving of the wrath of God and realize that we have no recourse in the matter of His holiness and justice we despair. But, then we hear through quickened ears that there is plenteous mercy with Him and that the means of salvation is discovered in Christ, His life, death and resurrection, and we dare to hope. When the Word of Truth appears and He declares the gospel of our salvation we trust. And along with that ability to believe comes the wonderful assurance (sealing work of the Holy Spirit) we are moved to “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Thus we realize that from the vast depths of eternity to the cross of Christ itself, we, each of us, were in Him and the end result was sure.

It was this that had brought the Apostle to Ephesus. He had come preaching this “Word of truth.” It is interesting to note that Paul knew those blessed truths expressed earlier in the chapter, but labored to deliver the Lord’s message. We are reminded of: *Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ*

*Jesus with eternal glory. 2 Timothy 2:10.* And furthermore, we are reminded of the words of James: *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. James 1:18.* And so, we preach the Word!

It is a delight to note that our salvation is not merely by Christ; it is in Him. The phrase “in whom” or “in Christ” occurs more than a hundred times in the New Testament. It is a safe conclusion that the intent of the Apostle is to declare that having heard, believed and been sealed that we are found in Him having His righteousness and fully given to trust in Him. Furthermore, it is certain that having experienced such a revelation that they continued in a way of amazement in the presence of Christ our Lord. This is stark contrast to the superficial forms of religion that are proliferating through or land.

It behooves us to revisit often that which Paul brought to the attention of the Ephesians in the matter of our own experience “in Christ” in Whom we were chosen, in Whom we have redemption, in Whom we have believed, in Whom we are sealed and in Whom the Father is well pleased! And so we would desire “That we should be to the praise of His glory...” *bhs*

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## Proud Works vs. Humble Faith

*“On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’” (Matthew 7:22)*

Consider the difference between a heart of “faith” and a heart of “works.”

The heart of works gets satisfaction from the ego-boost of accomplishing something in its own power. It will attempt to scale a vertical rock face, or take on extra responsibilities at work, or risk life in a combat zone, or agonize through a marathon, or perform religious fasting for weeks — all for the satisfaction of conquering a challenge by the force of its own will and the stamina of its own body.

The heart with a works-orientation may also express its love of independence and self-direction and self-achievement by rebelling against courtesy and decency and morality

(cf. Galatians 5:19–21). But it's the same self-determining, self-exalting works-orientation that also gets disgusted with boorish behavior and sets out to prove its superiority through self-denial, courage, and personal greatness.

In all of this, the basic satisfaction of the works-orientation is the savor of being an assertive, autonomous and, if possible, triumphant self.

The heart of faith is radically different. Its desires are no less strong as it looks to the future. But what it desires is the fullest satisfaction of experiencing all that God is for us in Jesus.

If “works” wants the satisfaction of feeling itself overcome an obstacle, “faith” savors the satisfaction of feeling God overcome an obstacle. Works longs for the joy of being glorified as capable, strong, and smart. Faith longs for the joy of seeing God glorified for his capability, strength, and wisdom.

In its religious form, works accepts the challenge of morality, conquers its obstacles through great exertion, and offers the victory to God as a payment for his approval and recompense. Faith, too, accepts the challenge of morality, but only as an occasion to become the instrument of God's power. And when the victory comes, faith rejoices that all the glory and thanks belong to God. --John Piper



“Whom He did Foreknow” -- Don Fortner  
Romans 8:29

Be sure you do not fail to observe that every verb in Romans 8:29 and 30 is in the past tense. The tense in the Greek is called “aorist.” That is very important. The aorist tense of the Greek language indicates “a past action without further limitation or implication.” In other words, the Holy Spirit is telling us here that everything described in these two verses was done, finished, accomplished in the eternal purpose of God.

The first thing mentioned in Romans 8:29 is God's foreknowledge of his elect from eternity. — “Whom he did foreknow.” The word “foreknow” is proegnw (proegno) from proginoskw (proginosko). The noun form of the verb translated “foreknow” is the word from which we get our word “prognosis.” You know what a prognosis is. In the language of medicine, a doctor first makes a diagnosis of a patient illness. Then he gives a prognosis, telling what course the disease is likely to take.

But with God, foreknowledge is much more than a prognosis! With God there are no unexplainable turns for the worse. And God's foreknowledge is much more than prescience, or knowledge beforehand of what we would be or do.

The counsel and decree and purpose of God did not depend upon what we would be, or do, or will. God's purpose and the fulfillment of it is not the result of him foreknowing that we would believe on Christ. In the Bible foreknowledge means much, much more than knowledge beforehand.

In the Word of God, God's foreknowledge is not a foreknowledge of things, but of people. The Scriptures never speak of what God foreknew, but whom he foreknew. God's foreknowledge is not to be confused with his omniscience. Omniscience is a divine attribute. Foreknowledge is a divine act.