apttoteach.org

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Bereans "received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so."

1



2

II Thessalonians



3

Challenging Truths from 2 Thess. 2

1. **(LAST WEEK)** God's Kingdom has two domains of calling & conduct (1) bearing a cross in this life, and (2) a crown in the next.

- We fix our hope not on this world, but on a New heaven and earth of Christ's 2nd coming.

- While we wait we are not just "enduring" but we are active alien ambassadors, bearing witness to a hope by which we respond to a broken world with patience, peace, and power.

4

Challenging Truths from 2 Thess. 2

2. **(LAST WEEK)** Justifying (saving) faith is broader than the New Cov. Gospel of Paul.

- Jesus is the only way to justification before a holy God (even for those who have not heard the name "Jesus").

- Justifying faith may be found in some contexts that do not know about the man - Jesus or the Gospel (as Paul explained it).

5

2 Thessalonians 2

"13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because **God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.** 14 And it was for this He **called** you through our gospel, that you may gain **the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**."

apttoteach.org

- Theology
  - Salvation
    - 704 Predestination

6

Challenging Truths from 2 Thess. 2

3. God's election is not "to faith" but "of Christ" and all who invest faith in the Redeemer God".

- God's grace starts with His image in every human with an appetite, antennae, and ability to believe.

- God's sovereign choices do not excuse our responsibilities to be disciples of Christ.

7

By God's grace we all have faith in something. The question is, how do we direct it and for what?

Romans 1

"19 … that which is known about God is **evident within them; for God made it evident to them.** 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, **have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse**. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they **became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened**. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and **exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures**. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. 25 For they **exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator**, who is blessed forever. Amen."

8

Romans 2

"14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they **show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness**, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."

All humans have an awareness of God and the ability to respond in faith to Him.

We are saved by God's grace in that He has

1. exposed Himself as a holy, Redeemer, Lord, through His Son and
2. equipped us with faith to respond to Him.

9

God's gift to the "elect" is not faith, but rather the Gospel of Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-9

"we are saved by grace through **faith** and **that** not of yourselves, *it is* the **gift of God** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

- **The Greek** "that" **(neuter) can not refer to** "faith" **(feminine).**
- **The** "gift of God" **refers to salvation not faith.** *Rom.6:23* "but **the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus** our Lord."



Interpretive paraphrase

"You are saved by the **grace of God**, through faith not works."

10

Ephesians 1

"4 just as He **chose** us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. 5 He **predestined** us to adoption as sons **through Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us **in the Beloved**."

1 Peter 2:4 (Isa.42:1, Lk.9:35)

"a living stone,…rejected by men, but **choice (elect)**…in the sight of God."

Christ is the "chosen one" and we are chosen "in him" by faith.

11

Jesus is the chosen one.

Isaiah 49:5

"And now says the Lord, who formed me from the womb to be **His Servant**, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that **Israel might be gathered to him**."

Isaiah 42:1

"Behold, **My Servant**, whom I uphold; My **chosen** one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations."

Luke 9:35

"This is My Son, My **chosen** one;"

1 Peter 2:4

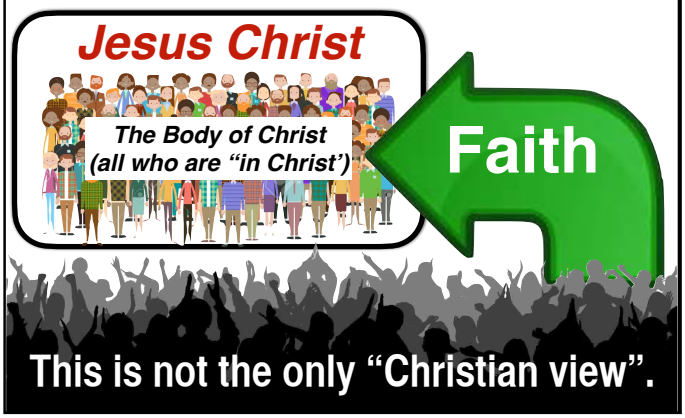
"And coming to him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is **chosen** and precious in the sight of God,"

1 Peter 1:21

"who **through him** are believers in God, who raised him from the dead."

12

We are chosen (elect) when we are united with Jesus by our faith.



This is not the only "Christian view".

13

The same image can be seen in different ways.

The same text can be read in different ways.

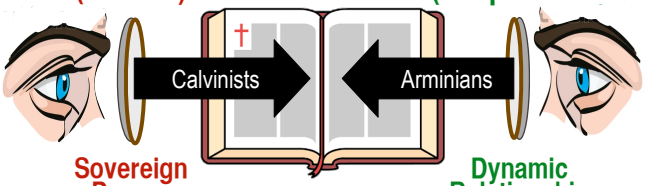
The big picture will dictate the details.



14

A grand narrative (lens) can guide our reading and application of the details.

(control) (cooperation)



Sovereign Decree — Dynamic Relationship

Mystery — MANDATE

Both read the details of Scripture in light of a bigger & different picture.

15

Why is it important to respect libertarian free choice?

- We are not called to "Let go and let God" but to "Put off the old and put on the New self" in response to God's grace.

Rom.12:1-2 "I urge you therefore, brethren, **by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice,** acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And **do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,** that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Eph..4:22-24 "in reference to your former manner of life, you l**ay aside the old self**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and **put on the new self,** which in {the likeness of} God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

16

Why is it important to respect libertarian free choice?

- We are not called to "Let go and let God" but to "Put off the old and put on the New self".
- We are not called to "change" circumstances, so much as to "capitalize" on circumstances by being content and commissioned to bear witness to faith, hope, and love by the way we respond to tribulations.

2 Cor.12:10 "Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, … for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

Rom.8:28 "… God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.."

Phil.4:11 "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am."

17

Deuteronomy 29:29

"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons"

- God's sovereignty and predestination are up to God and are mysteries beyond our comprehension.
- Faith is a gift of grace to all humans and is invested in what we hold to be our hope to satisfy the deepest longings for life.
- Christian faith in the Gospel is a choice that is not a meritorious act but rather a free response to God's Gospel in Christ.

18

"Calvinism emphasizes divine sovereignty and free grace; Arminianism emphasizes human responsibility. The one restricts the saving grace to the elect; the other extends it to all men on the condition of faith. Both are right in what they assert; both are wrong in what they deny. If one important truth is pressed to the exclusion of another truth of equal importance, it becomes an error, and loses its hold upon the conscience. The Bible gives us a theology which is more human than Calvinism, and more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian than either of them."

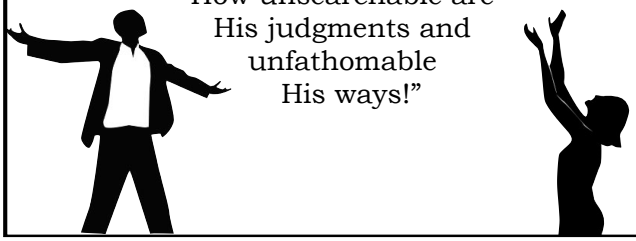
Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church , vo.VIII:815-6

19

What impressed Paul was not God's control but the wisdom and knowledge that guided His actions.

Romans 11:33

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the **wisdom and knowledge** of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"



20

II Thessalonians



21