

BRIEFLY CORRECTING ERRANT VIEWS ON DIVINE ELECTION

VI. Biblically Explaining Key Passages On Faith

I. Introduction

- A. Many believers struggle to understand and/or to accept the teachings they hear or read about divine election.
- B. Actually, much error exists on the doctrine, so it needs to be explained in a brief but thorough, Biblical way.
- C. We thus offer a seven-lesson series on election, and in this sixth lesson, we explain key passages on faith:

II. Biblically Explaining Key Passages On Faith.

- A. Though both Calvinists and Arminians make God's election result in justification, Arminians claim that man contributes a meritorious faith to help save himself while Calvinists claim that God gives man the faith to believe unto justification, and each theological party offers Biblical "proof" texts to support its view of faith.
- B. We first study key Bible passages used as "proof" texts by these parties to discern their true interpretations:
 1. We study Ephesians 2:8 that some Calvinists use a "proof" text that God authors salvation faith:
 - a. In the KJV, this verse reads, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Some Calvinists claim the demonstrative pronoun "that" here refers to "faith" or "grace" in support of the belief that God chose some to receive His gift of faith to believe.
 - b. However, the pronoun "that" (*touto* in the Greek text) is in the neuter gender "whereas 'grace' and 'faith' are feminine," so *touto* refers to something **besides** grace and faith. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 624)
 - c. Also, for Paul "to refer back to either" faith or grace by the pronoun *touto* "seems to be redundant," Ibid.
 - d. "Rather the neuter *touto*, as is common, refers to the preceding phrase or clause. (In Eph. 1:15 and 3:1 *touto*, 'this,' refers back to the preceding section.)" (Ibid.) "Thus it refers back to the *concept* of salvation (2:4-8a), whose basis is grace and means is faith," Ibid.
 - e. In conclusion, God's gift in Ephesians 2:8 is **NOT faith** or **grace**, but God's *salvation!*
 2. We study Philippians 1:29 that some Calvinist's use as a "proof" text that God authors salvation faith:
 - a. In the KJV, this verse reads, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake," and some Calvinists say this means God gives the faith to believe in Christ.
 - b. Yet, claiming this verse teaches God gives one the gift of faith to believe forces him to claim that God **also** gives one evil persecution (Philippians 1:28), making God author evil opposite what 1 Peter 1:16 teaches!
 - c. If we check the Greek text, we find that the pronoun *to* that is translated "it" in Philippians 1:29 is in the neuter gender and it is also "anarthrous," referring to something previously mentioned or to what is well-known. (Blass/Debrunner, A Grk. Gram. of the N. T., 1973, p. 205-206; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 683)
 - d. With *to* being in the neuter gender, we recall from "II, B, 1, d-e" that Paul may use it to refer to a *concept*.
 - e. In support of the idea of a *concept* for *to*, J. B. Lightfoot's commentary, Epistle to the Philippians, 1913, reprint by Zondervan, 1974, p. 85 claims God gave the readers "the high privilege of suffering for Christ."
 - f. We conclude that *to* here does **NOT** indicate that God was giving faith and persecution, but that it refers to the **well-known concept** of the **privilege** both to believe in Christ and also to suffer for Him.
 3. We study Luke 7:48-50 that Arminians typically use as a "proof" text that man authors a meritorious faith:
 - a. In forgiving a woman of her sins, Jesus told her, "**Thy faith** hath **saved** thee" (Luke 7:50 KJV; emphases ours), a statement Arminians say has Jesus teaching that one's faith meritoriously helps to justify oneself.
 - b. However, Ephesians 2:8-9 claims that salvation is by faith **lest** anyone should **boast**, so **faith** has **no merit!**
 - c. In checking the Luke 7:36-50 **context**, we note that it contrasts the self-righteous Pharisee Simon with the sinful woman. Simon did not love Jesus as he was not forgiven since he relied on his works to be justified and the woman loved Jesus much as she was forgiven much since she trusted in Him! To expose **Simon's need to BELIEVE versus relying** on his **works** to be **justified**, Jesus meant to **stress** in **Simon's hearing** that the **woman's FAITH** was what **motivated God** to **justify** her! To do this, Jesus used a "metonymy of the subject," putting the subject "**FAITH**" **IN PLACE OF God's salvation without human merit** in stating that the woman's **faith** saved her! (E. W. Bullinger, Figs. of Spch. Used in the Bib., 1968, p. 567)
Thus, Jesus actually **countered Arminian** theology, teaching one is saved by **grace without human merit!**
- C. Second, we note Scripture's true teaching on faith in the justification process (as follows):
 1. In Mark 6:1-6, Jesus marveled at man's unbelief, so He saw faith as authored by man opposite Calvinism.
 2. Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches that salvation is by a faith that is not meritorious, what counters Arminianism!
 3. In conclusion, faith is entirely authored by man, but since faith is without merit, God alone justifies man.

Lesson: God by grace justifies those who trust in Christ (versus Arminianism) of their own will (versus Calvinism)!