

Let me begin this morning by saying that though God from the beginning has chosen whom he is going to save in Christ and ultimately no one will be saved whom has not been chosen it is still important to seek God to be saved. That brings me to the first point this morning.

I. It Is Right To Seek Salvation (Joshua 10:1)

"...the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them."

The Gibeonites knew they were marked for destruction by God. They knew if they fought against God and His people they would be destroyed. They knew if they did nothing they would be destroyed. They did not give up, they did what they could do to seek their salvation. They sought to find a way to make peace with Israel.

Likewise, our Lord in the gospel of Luke, in response to the question, "...are there few that be saved?" exhorted those to whom he was speaking, "STRIVE to enter in at the strait gate..."(Luke 13:23-24). Again, in Luke 16:16, our Lord declares, "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man PRESSETH into it."

It is true that all mankind, like these Gibeonites, is marked for destruction by God because of sin, and is deserving of destruction. It is also true that God from the beginning has chosen to save a portion of mankind on the basis of His "good pleasure" in Christ. Scripture makes it clear that God's choice is not based on man's works or merit. Understanding this does not mean that people are to sit back and do nothing. Like the Gibeonites if you fight against God you will perish, if you do nothing you will perish. Like the Gibeonites a person is to do what he can do and what our Lord exhorts us to do, "strive to enter in..." It is Biblical and right to seek salvation.

We need to remember that whom God wills to save in Christ He also wills to come to Christ to be saved (John 6:37,44,65). This leads us to our second point this morning.

II. A Possibility Of Being Saved Is Better Than A Certainty Of Being Destroyed (Joshua 9:24-25)

The Gibeonites had heard that God had given the land they lived in to Israel and that God had commanded Moses to destroy all the inhabitants who lived in it. The Gibeonites had also heard what God had done for Israel in Egypt, the miracles and the parting of the Red Sea. As well they had heard how God had parted the waters of the Jordan river for Israel, how he had helped them defeat Jericho and Ai. They also, know doubt, had heard that in Jericho a prostitute, Rahab and her family, had been spared. The men of Israel had given their word to Rahab because of her help and were faithful to keep it. As said before, these Gibeonites knew if they fought against Israel and God they would be destroyed, they knew if they set back and did nothing they would be destroyed. They did what they could. Perhaps, they reasoned that if they could get the men of Israel to give them their word as they had to Rahab they would not be destroyed. These Gibeonites did the only thing they could do, they deceived the princes of Israel into making peace with them. They did so, I am persuaded, with the thought that a possibility of being saved was better than a certainty of being destroyed. The great American theologian and preacher Jonathan Edwards once preached a sermon with that theme from II Kings 7:3-4. The four lepers mentioned in that passage

reasoned in that manner. If they entered the city they would die of famine. If they continued to sit at the gate of the city they would die, either from famine or from the hands of the Syrians who were surrounding the city at that time. They did the only thing they could that would give them a possibility of being saved. They decided to go to the host of the Syrians and seek mercy. The worst that could happen was what was already going to happen they would die. However, there was a possibility that they might be spared. They rightly reasoned that a possibility of being saved was better than a certainty of being destroyed.

Often people in response to the doctrine of predestination or election will argue that if they believed it they would do nothing. They would just wait and see if they were one of the elect. Such an attitude is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. The Scriptures teach us to seek salvation. As mentioned before our Lord commands, "strive to enter in," and speaks of people pressing into the kingdom and the violent taking it by force (Luke 13:24; 16:16; Matthew 11:12). Peter in Acts 2 exhorts the people, "save yourselves from this untoward generation." (Acts 2:40) Yes, the Bible teaches the doctrine of predestination/election and our Lord taught it but that does not mean a person just sits back and does nothing, to the contrary, a person is to do what he or she can, strive to enter in, seek salvation. The matter of predestination/election is in the Lord's hands and man has no control concerning it. But man does control whether or not he will seek salvation. Again, we need to understand that Scripture clearly teaches that those whom God wills to save in Christ, God wills to come to Christ to be saved (John 6:37). We seek salvation because Scripture commands us to, we seek salvation because God saves those who come to Christ for salvation and we seek salvation understanding that if we do nothing we will certainly perish and that a possibility of being saved is better than a certainty of being destroyed. This brings us to our third point this morning,

III. If You Seek Salvation There Is Not Only The Possibility Of Being Saved But A Probability (Joshua 9:26-27).

Why do we say this? We say this because Rahab, who was marked for death sought to be saved and she was. We say this because these Gibeonites who were marked for destruction sought to be saved and they were. We say this because the four lepers for whom death was certain in II Kings 7 sought to be saved and they were. Finally, we say this because of the words of our Lord in John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and HIM THAT COMETH TO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT."

This brings us to our fourth and final point this morning,

IV. Ultimately, We Are To Understand Our Seeking Of Salvation As Having Been Of God (Joshua 11:19-20).

Is this not what is implied in the case of the Gibeonites in distinction from all the other inhabitants of the land in Joshua 11:19-20. Is this not what we learn from the teaching of our Lord in John 6:37,44,65. Ultimately, all those whom the Father has given to Christ to be saved, the elect, (John 6:37; 17:2) will come to Christ for salvation (John 6:37) and their coming is the result of the Father's special work in them (John 6:44,65).

This morning I exhort all present who have yet to seek the Lord for salvation and as well those among us who think too well of themselves in this matter and presume upon God,

SEEK SALVATION IN CHRIST, APPLY TO GOD FOR MERCY IN CHRIST, CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD for it is right to seek salvation of the Lord and it is the promise of our Lord, "...HIM THAT COMETH TO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT."