

Grace Bible Church
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 06/07/09
The soul is a gift from God to glorify God and it is more important than the body.

The real you, which is your soul and what you think, has privacy because every attribute of the soul, while real, is invisible. It is contained in the vessel that God will mould based on your volition. The soul is the gift that mankind has to choose positive or negative towards the living word for salvation and the written word after salvation. God manufactured a body for you through the agency of your parents, but God alone manufactured your soul in eternity past and imputed it to your body at the moment of birth. Therefore the soul is of much more importance.

And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Mat 10:28)

God is the only one able to do that, but only based upon the volition of the individual, and in our passage in Rom 9 those individuals are the unbelieving Jews that Paul has great sorrow over. In Rom 9:22 they are referred to as vessels of wrath: **What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?**

Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. (Heb 2:14-15)

“Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.” (Mat 10:32)

This distribution of the escrow blessing of a formal announcement to the Father is mentioned in connection with the uniform of glory in Rev 3:4-5. Depending on this successful function of our ambassadorship we will differ in brightness or glory in eternity. **There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead (1Co 15:41-41).** If the soul burns for Christ on the inside, there will be an outward shining of Christ as a witness to the world, both by the tongue and the life.

If you burn within the soul with the filling of the Holy Spirit and PVTD you will shine in time and therefore shine in eternity in a uniform of glory (Joh 5:35).

“But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.” (Mat 10:33)

This verse doesn't mean that the believer can lose his salvation. It means that the escrow blessing of being announced to the Father in Rev 3 will be lost.

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. [throw out all those Christmas cards that say peace on earth.] For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.” (Mat 10:34-36)

Some will value the flesh (the vessel) and some will value the soul in the only way it can be valued – positive volition to the living word. These will war with one another.

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me [they put flesh above God, the creature before the Creator. The flesh profits nothing]. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.” (Mat 10:37-38)

Picking up your cross is a free-will submission to the purpose of the soul that God gave you; to bring glory to Him through submitting to His will and commands.

“He who has found his life [meaning to independently discover a life for yourself; emphasize “his life”] shall lose it [lose the real life, the zoe life, the God designed for you], and he who has lost his life [forsakes his own will and plans] for My sake [motivated to do this so that he may glorify God] shall find it.” (Mat 10:39)

There's a big emphasis in the New Testament on a potential life that is the environment of the new creature. It is Christ's life and what your “real” life is (Col 3:3; Eph 4:18). You won't find life if you pursue your own independent will. The vessel is nothing; positive volition in the soul is everything. When that positive volition is there, God will mold the pot into an honorable vessel of mercy. Therefore you have perfect privacy to think what you want to think, to decide what you want to decide, and in the normal soul through self-consciousness to relate yourself to life as well as even to emotion.

All of these wonderful gifts have been imputed and encased in your body or vessel that can be a recipient of tremendous mercy or hardness of heart resulting in scar tissue of the soul. Furthermore, God created everything in His matchless grace and provided everything necessary for man's free will to be positive toward God, both at God-consciousness and gospel hearing. So that while man has the opportunity of being negative as he so desires he also has the opportunity to be positive. There never was a person in the human race who did not have that opportunity. The body takes on the genetics of the father and mother, and therefore is flawed. The OSN takes on the genetics of the father only, and naturally it is flawed as well. But they are a part of the body and not the soul. The soul, man's precious gift, came from God who created. and He sovereignly imputed that soul to your vessel in time.

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And *He did so* in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, *even us*, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. (Rom 9:22-24)

Yet, through negative volition the soul can accumulate scare tissue, but not over night. Scar tissue

develops over time. Pharaoh did not instantly develop scar tissue of the soul. God showed his forbearance, enduring with much patience his vessel of wrath that was destined for destruction. Scar tissue is not an instant development; it is like maturity which develops over a period of time. Pharaoh's hardness of heart originated from a long series of free will decisions, all negative, including God-consciousness, gospel hearing, and the challenge of Moses to release the Jews from slavery. God could have instantly destroyed Pharaoh and had the Jews out of Egypt instantly. But God had another plan. And again, in Paul's argument, who is anyone to question God on that plan.

God could have squashed Pharaoh after the first miracle, but there were others to consider. And by allowing Pharaoh to harden his own heart over 10 miracles demonstrated God's power and made His power known. There were some in Egypt who needed to witness all the miracles and believe. There were others in the surrounding lands who would hear and believe. This was God's sovereign desire so that many would believe and become vessels of mercy. Scar tissue is consistent and extremely tough. Only intensive discipline can soften it.

God kept Saul of Tarsus alive so that he could eventually say yes. We often don't ask why God waited for Saul of Tarsus to become the worst sinner alive (as an ultra-religious murderer) before He knocked him off his high horse. Why wait till after so many had died or suffered in prisons? The answer is because God wanted to demonstrate His mercy. Here again we see the Sovereignty of God in acting in patience.

And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost [sinner], Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (1Ti 1:16-17)

The Greater the opposition, the greater manifestation of divine power resulting in greater evangelism of the world. We see many examples of God's sovereign choice to be patient and the bountiful fruit that His patience produces. Adam and the woman were kept alive to receive salvation. God was patient with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God was patient with Moses. God was patient with the Jews who constructed the golden calf. Example after example where the patience of God produces fruit to His glory, whether the person is a believer or unbeliever.

Man cannot blame the mistakes and errors of his own decisions on perfect and incorruptible God. If God chooses and rejects; pardons and punishes whom He pleases, He does so on the basis of His perfect integrity which includes His righteousness and His justice. It is not arbitrary. Arbitrary and prejudiced mankind assumes that God is prejudiced and arbitrary. But mankind cannot superimpose his own weaknesses on God. Freedom; man's free-will produces inequality. We all begin equal at the moment of salvation, but that is where equality ends. Man's objection to the inequalities of time as well as eternity is really an objection to the possession of freedom and the right of self-determination which produces these inequalities. This is why man, in his evil, opts for communism or socialism in which freedom is taken away. Those who support such things are afraid of freedom, afraid of taking responsibility for their own decisions, and afraid of the successes and failures that come with truly free self-determination.

In eternity past there was a printout of election and predestination according to God's foreknowledge of each believer's free-will decisions. If you are a believer you have election and pre-destination from God. That's at salvation. What you do with that election and pre-destination is the sum total of your decisions in time. Those free-will decisions are all seen by the foreknowledge of God. When man

objects to the printout of all his free-will decisions in light of election and predestination he fails to realize that his own volition determines his exclusion from the blessings of God. Therefore, man's irresponsibility and depravity is never more dramatically portrayed than when he seeks to blame God for his own thoughts, his own decisions, and his own actions.

God is not obligated to save the unbeliever. God is not obligated to bless the reversionistic believer, that is a matter of momentum under the plan of grace. God is not obligated to impute blessing to the reversionistic believer in time, nor to impute rewards to him at the judgment seat of Christ. However, God's obligation is to Himself. God's obligation is to His policy, grace. God does not make an exception for the nicest person who ever live, the sweetest personality, the most sincere, the kindest, etc. God honors Christ the living word and after salvation He honors Bible doctrine the written word. This is the issue and God is obligated to that. Man is always trying to bend God to his own thinking and then saying, "This is God's will." The quotation from Isaiah 29:16, which Isaiah applied to the nation, Paul applies to then individual Jew.

Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote, Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed." Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from the Lord, And whose deeds are done in a dark place, And they say, "Who sees us?" or "Who knows us?" You turn things around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, That what is made would say to its maker, "He did not make me"; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, "He has no understanding"? (Isa 29:13-16)

In the context of Rom 9 Paul has combined the doctrine of God's perfect integrity with the reality of man's arrogance and his ignorance to establish the true issue of God's omniscience in knowing who would be positive and who would be negative. Paul isn't talking to the elect who believed and have momentum in His plan to attain spiritual maturity, but in context he is speaking to the condemned Jew who has rejected Christ as Savior, who has refused the Shekinah glory and is now grasping at straws in an attempt to justify his error. To blaspheme and malign the perfect wisdom and justice of God is the irrational act of a desperate person. Irrational because of after having made hundreds of free will decisions, culminating in judgment, God is blamed and maligned for thus shifting the responsibility from their erroneous decisions and blaming it on the sovereignty of God.

Paul uses a debater's technique to refute this blasphemy and to shift the responsibility right back to human free will where negative volition has manufactured its own hardness of heart. Paul says that if God wants to make a pot of honor and a pot of dishonor from the same lump of clay, does He have the right to do so? The answer is yes. God has the authority but that isn't the issue. The issue is, does the individual pot recognize divine authority? Does the individual pot make decisions compatible with divine authority? That is the issue.

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And *He did so* in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, *even us*, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. (Rom 9:22-24)

God has done everything He can to save mankind, but free-will is the issue, therefore the reality is; Vs

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22 - vessels of wrath are unbelievers and in vs. 23 - vessels of mercy are believers.