

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.

The Tree of Life for week ending 12/01/02.

The Angelic Conflict

Part 7

John 3:15-18 The Existence of Free Will in the Human Race

Our study of the doctrine of the *Angelic Conflict* has now brought us to the subject of our **motivation** and **momentum**, and the role of our **free will** in the historical trial of Satan.

Our Lord addressed evil motivation in **Mar 7:14-15**, “*And after He called the multitude to Him again, He began saying to them, ‘Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.’ And when leaving the multitude, He had entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. And He said to them, ‘Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him; because it does not go into his heart [where his motivation is and where he can be defiled], but into his stomach, and is eliminated?’ And He was saying, ‘That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.’”* False **motivation** is what hinders spiritual growth, **Phi 2:14, Job 17:11**.

Phi 2:13-14 *For it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [giving you motivation] and to work [giving you the ability to execute] above and beyond His good pleasure. Keep on doing all things without sullen discontent [pouting] or argumentations [undermining authority].*

The **right thing** can be done in the **wrong way**, with false motivation. Many believers give, serve, pray, learn, and even apply what they learn, but they do it all with false motivation. If we are going to advance in the Christian way of life, we must do it under the authority of our right pastor-teacher without pouting, arguing, and disrespecting authority. Even in giving, the great issue is motivation, **2Co 9:7**, “*Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart [motivated in the right lobe], not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful [joyful] giver.*”

For the mature believer, God turns the evil motivation of his enemies into grace blessing, **Deu 23:5**, “*The Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the Lord your God loves you*”; **Gen 50:20**, “*And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.*” The motivation of the mature believer is often maligned. No Old Testament saint was ever more maligned than Moses, who was a mature believer

with great humility and great motivation, **Exo 17:3**, “*But the people thirsted there for water; and they complained against Moses and said, ‘Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?’*” There was nothing wrong with the motivation of Moses but everything wrong with those who criticized it. They did so because Moses was a constant challenge to their pride, and finally their pride exploded and triggered the mechanism of jealousy, vindictiveness, implacability, etc.

After seeing the role we play in the angelic conflict with our spiritual motivation and momentum it is also important to understand the existence of free will in the human race—a principle that many Christians reject. One of the false teachings that have been perpetuated by the kingdom of darkness is the idea that man does *not* have a free will or a choice. This is promoted by hyper-Calvinists who teach that man cannot choose God or the plan of God, and therefore God must choose Him. They teach the “limited atonement,” denying that our Lord died for the entire human race. This results from misinterpreting passages concerning the sovereignty of God and not comparing scripture with scripture. This is a serious deception in the angelic conflict because it compromises the justice and righteousness of God. Many hyper-Calvinists hold to the doctrine of *double predestination*, which says that God has predestined some to be saved and actually predestined others to the eternal lake of fire. Let us look at what the Scripture says about **predestination**.

Act 2:23 *This Man, delivered up by the **predetermined** plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

Act 4:27-28 *For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose **predestined** to occur.*

Rom 8:29-30 *For whom He foreknew, He also **predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He **predestined**, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

The term “predestination” is *always* applied to our Lord and to believers. Nothing is ever mentioned about a predestination of unbelievers or being predestined to hell.

1Co 2:7 *But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory.*

Eph 1:5 *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.*

Eph 1:11 *Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.*

The doctrine of double predestination is heresy, and it is an attack on the justice of God and an on the character and nature of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We were all born guilty in sin as David said in **Psa 51:5**, “*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*” We did not have anything to do with becoming a sinner; we were born in sin, and not by our own choice. Therefore, David also wrote in **Psa 58:3**, “*The wicked are estranged from the womb; these who speak lies go astray from birth.*” We did not become sinners through the our own volition, but through the imputation of Adam’s original sin.

Rom 5:12 *Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned [when Adam sinned].*

Every member of the human race has been born into sin ever since Adam and the woman sinned willfully in the Garden of Eden. Every member of the human race since then has been born into sin *without* their consent. Therefore, if God sent them to hell because they were born sinners, He would be unjust in doing so. We are not responsible for imputed sin.

Man is not free to choose whatever he wants and always get away with it, because there are consequences to his decisions. However, he does have the choice to spend eternity in heaven or the lake of fire. This is why the Lord Jesus Christ came to take away the sins of the world, **Joh 1:29**, “*The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’*” The Lord Jesus Christ as the lamb of God took away the sin of the **world** (not just the elect or the chosen); **everyone** has the opportunity to make the decision to believe in Jesus Christ and be saved, and those who do not have the mental capacity to make that choice will all go to heaven. All children who die before the mental age of accountability are given eternal life, **2Sa 12:23**, and the same is true for all those who mentally retarded and mentally incapable of making a decision to believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, **Jon 4:11**.

Joh 3:15 *That **whoever** believes may in Him have eternal life.*

Not “whoever is *chosen*,” but “whoever *believes*”!

Joh 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes** in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He **who believes** in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

This passage makes it very clear why people go to the eternal lake of fire and are judged—it is not because they are sinful and immoral, but because they refused to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Joh 12:46-47 *“I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save **the world**.”*

Rom 5:6 *For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for **the ungodly**.*

2Co 5:19 *God was in Christ reconciling **the world** to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them*

1Jo 4:14 *And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of **the world**.*

1Ti 2:4 *He desires **all men** to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

1Jo 2:2 *and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and **not for ours only**, but also for those of **the whole world**.*

1Ti 4:10 *For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of **all men**, especially of believers.*

In **Heb 2:9** we are told that the Lord Jesus Christ *“tasted death for **everyone**.”*

Man has a free-will choice to either choose or reject the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Therefore, double predestination is a false doctrine. “Predestination” is a term that applies to *believers only*. No one has *ever* been predestined to hell! No one has ever been predestined to eternal damnation! People only go to the lake of fire because of their own negative volition.

Joh 3:18 *“He who **believes** in Him is not judged; he who does not **believe** has been judged already, because he has not **believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*

The verb translated “believes” is *“pisteuon,”* and here in the *active voice* it means that mankind literally makes his own willful decision to believe. The verb for “has not believed” is *“pepisteuken,”* and in the *active voice* it means that he has willfully *refused* to believe in Jesus Christ! The perfect tense in both of these verbs reveals that they had every opportunity to do so.

2Pe 3:9 *The Lord is not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

It would be an obvious contradiction for the Lord to predestine anyone to hell when He is not willing for anyone to perish.

The kingdom of darkness enthusiastically promotes this type of lie because it attacks the character and nature of God, which is the central issue of the angelic conflict. Hyper-Calvinism says the only reason you ever believed in Christ was because you were elected and denies the very existence of the angelic conflict. Not only does this ignore the part played by human volition in human history and the reason we have been created, but

it seriously compromises the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, when He said *"It is finished!"* Our Lord's substitutionary sacrifice dealt with the sins of the entire human race, once and for all, and that is why our Lord is victorious in the angelic conflict. If He had only dealt with "some sins" on the Cross, then He could not say that He conquered sin and defeated the kingdom of darkness. No wonder Satan promotes the "limited atonement" as much as he can!

For a more detailed study, order last week's tapes, IA11-245 to IA11-246.