

It has been assumed by some that because we adhere strictly to the doctrinal teaching of predestination and election, and say that no man can choose salvation, we thereby do not believe in justification by faith.

We can only deduce the reason for this is either their own incomplete knowledge of the full breadth of what we say, or of what scripture says, for we embrace justification by faith wholeheartedly – as we do any Biblical teaching.

In this paper we wish simply to describe what is meant by 'justification by faith'. Those who think we cannot accept this teaching usually think that way because they do not fully accept predestination, even if they say they do. Our own position is that we accept everything given in scripture. What if a particular text appears to go against predestination? Well, in this context we state the following:

1. Predestination, election and justification by faith are solidly scriptural. They appear many times throughout scripture. Therefore, they exist and must be believed.

2. If a text is found that appears to contradict these solid texts, we accept them also – but do not then get rid of the others! No, we just keep hold of the extant texts, of predestination, election, etc., and go on to search scripture to see if the 'problem' texts have meanings that agree with those of election (which they must), etc.

3. That is, we accept anything that is in scripture. So, we will not cast out predestination and election, or their allied teachings on man's inability to have freedom of choice when unsaved. No, we will accept that there exist other texts that *superficially* seem to oppose election and predestination.

However, we will study to discover how the two can be joined. We know that whatever is in scripture must be true. Therefore we accept, for example, 'justification by faith', as being consistent with predestination and election.

4. We know that no part of scripture can actually oppose any other part, for *all* is God's word, and God cannot and will not oppose His own word with contradictions.

5. This means that all other texts *must* support and enhance the teachings of predestination, election, and man's inability to make rational and free choices when he is unsaved. That a ready answer may not be forthcoming is not the fault of scripture, but of our own understanding.

6. Where we cannot happily and easily mix all seemingly opposing texts, we must let the

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Written by K B Napier

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matter go. We then either refuse to argue over matters we have no meanings for, or we insist that as all texts are homogeneous, none of them can actually oppose predestination, election, and unsaved man's inability to freely choose. So, whatever conclusions we come to, we cannot erase these fixed facts of scripture.

Now let us look at 'justification by faith', where you will see that this teaching coincides perfectly with predestination, election and unsaved man's inability to make free choices!

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In Romans 3:28 “... ***we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.***” We find that the law is established by faith (verse 31). But, to 'conclude' something requires a preceding argument or set of facts on which to base a conclusion...

To be 'justified' is to be made righteous. That is, to be returned to a state one ought to be in before God. The state Man was in before the Fall. It is to be called righteous or acceptable,
to
God and
by
God. To be justified before God is to be without guilt, innocent, and thereby accepted by God.

Here we are told emphatically that a man is made acceptable 'by faith'. What is this 'faith'? Faith is assurance and belief. It is to be completely convinced that God is true and that what He says and does is perfect and holy. Because of this a man will trust God fully and base his whole life on God's requirements.

Now the crux of the matter is this: where does this faith come from? Does it spring up from within the man by human means, or is it itself a gift of God? If it is the former, then Man can choose salvation for himself and it is 'of works'. But, if faith is a gift of God, separate from Man's own choices, then salvation is a gift of God. Which will you accept?

A man is made acceptable to God by God's own gift of faith, implanted within the man's regenerated heart and mind. The same gift that leads to salvation also leads the man throughout his life. We know all this to be true, for, in verse 24, we are told that men are “... ***justified freely by his grace...***”

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Are we saying that this is disconnected from verse 28? I hope not. Rather, we can deduce that both verses are linked and the same. Thus, the 'faith' that the man has to salvation is given 'freely by His grace'! Is it not simple?

The same act is also referred to as 'faith in his blood (verse 25)... through the forbearance of God.' Not of Man but of God. Is this of works? Nay! (Verse 27). Works and law (from which spring the decisions of men) cannot justify (verse 20). We also know that, when unsaved, men are *incapable* of going after God and choosing Him (verse 10-16).

The 'promise of faith' is given to all who believe (Galatians 3:22). How do we believe? **"... by him do (we) believe in God..."**

(1 Peter 1:21). Note this – 'by Him', not by our own convictions or humanly decided conclusions. We must

"... believe that he is..."

(Hebrews 11:6). We can believe because the word of God is effectual in our hearts (1 Thess. 2:13); and it is effectual only because God has called us; elected us by predestination:

"unto you it is given... not only to believe on him..."

(Php. 1:29). 'it is given'; we do not muster it ourselves.

"... faith (cometh) by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). The unsaved who hear God's word are separated from those who are saved by the faith given by God. How else can some be saved and the rest not? If you think people are unsaved because they choose not to believe, well, you have mistaken God's word.

We can only 'hear' God's word if God Himself causes us to hear: **"... if we are imputed..."** (Romans 4:24).

"God made choice among us, that the Gentiles... hear the word of the gospel, and believe."

(Acts 15:7). The eyes of the unsaved are deliberately blinded by God (John 12:39, 40). People who remain unsaved are chosen not to believe,

"but ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep... my sheep hear my voice... and I give unto them eternal life... neither shall any (man) pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave (them) me..."

(John 10:26-29). So, we can see that the Father gave the saved to Jesus. When? Before the world began!

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If you wish to confirm that God chose who would be saved, please read the other articles on the subject. Then, link them with this one, and you will see that faith, like salvation, is given only as a free gift by a God Who chooses who will be saved in eternity. Thus we can only be justified by faith if the faith is firstly given to us by God.

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