

EVERYONE IN THE WORLD - PART 3

In Part 1 of this series, we considered the word “world” in *John 3:16* and, in light of how it is used elsewhere in John’s writings (*John 17:9, 15:18-19, 1 John 5:19*), suggested that it may not refer to every human being. To support this assertion, we considered the context of *Romans 9:13*, “As it is written, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*” Before continuing, I encourage you to read Parts 1 & 2 of this series posted on December 14th & 17th, respectively.

If the world of *John 3:16* doesn’t include everyone, there must be other passages in the Bible which support this assertion:

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as **he hath chosen us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” (Eph. 1:3-6)*

To choose is to select a portion of the whole. The people Jesus came to save were chosen of God “before the foundation of the world” and “predestinated” (predetermined, appointed beforehand) to be conformed to His image (*Rom. 8:29*). Predestination has nothing to do with the events that transpire in our life here on earth. It only refers to God predetermining, before the world began, that his chosen people would be saved by Jesus and ultimately live with Him in heaven.

*“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **elect** according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” (1 Peter 1:1-2)*

The people Jesus came to save were the “*elect according to the foreknowledge* (forethought, prearrangement) *of God the father*”. By definition, both the words “*chosen*” and “*elect*” refer to a select portion of the whole.

*“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save **his** people from their sins.”(Mat. 1:21).*

Simple English grammar teaches that the people Jesus saved were “*his*” before he saved them. Jesus came to save a people that already belonged to him, a people He loved, “*his*” people. She (Mary) **shall** bring forth a son, his name **shall** be called Jesus, and he **shall** save his people from their sins. Mary delivered a child, they called him Jesus, and he **saved** (not saves, will save, or offers to save) **his** people from their sins. When did Jesus save his people? About two thousand years ago when he made himself a sacrificial offering unto God for the sins of his people (*Heb. 9:26b & 10:14*). Jesus made the offering to God and God accepted the offering (*Eph. 1:6b*). God chose and loved his people before the world began and sent Jesus to save them (*Luke 19:10*). Jesus accomplished what his Father sent him to do (*John 19:28-30*). He didn’t try to save them, he did save them. He didn’t offer salvation; he brought salvation (*Isa. 59:16*).

How do we determine if we are one of his people? To answer this question we need some understanding about the effect of Adam’s sin. In the beginning, God instructed Adam, “...of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” The Apostle Paul explains this death, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (*Rom. 5:12*). Adam’s contamination with sin was fatal and it infects all of his descendants causing the body to age and/or contract diseases, resulting in death (*1 Cor. 15:53-54, 2 Cor. 4:16, 5:1-4*). Furthermore, Adam’s transgression caused spiritual death: “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners...” (*Rom.*

5:19). Sin affected his heart (*Psa. 14:1, Jer. 17:9*) and mind (*Gen. 6:5, Rom. 3:11, 2 The. 1:7-8, 2 Tim. 3:8*) and we inherited this ruined condition.

Satan appealed to human curiosity by offering omniscience to Eve. In partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam was exposed to a realm of knowledge for which his intellect was not designed. It is the nature of God to abhor evil. He cannot be tempted with evil (*Jas. 1:13*). Adam's exposure to the knowledge of good and evil resulted in attraction to evil, not abhorrence. Like yeast added to dough, this new knowledge permeated his heart and mind, causing spiritual death (*Eph. 2:1b*). By his disobedience Adam and all of his descendants, were "*made sinners*".

Unless they are born again (i.e., given spiritual life), all of Adam's descendants will remain in a state of spiritual death. A dead body has no sense of its environment. It cannot feel, see, hear, smell, or taste. It does not have the ability to respond to any physical stimulus. In like manner, a person who is *dead in trespasses and sins* (*Eph. 2:1b*), has no ability to sense spiritual things. Without spiritual life, there is no ability to **feel** conviction of sin (contrast *Acts 2:36-37* and *Acts 5:30-33*), **hear** the gospel (*John 8:43*) [other than the audible voice of the speaker, i.e., it means nothing to them (*1 Cor. 1:18*)], or **see** the kingdom of God (*John 3:3*). Paul expressed the concept this way, "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" (*1 Cor. 2:14*)

Before God's children (those whom God loved and Jesus saved) are born of the Spirit, they are "... *dead in trespasses and sins.*" (*Eph. 2:1b*). They are no more bothered by sin than a human corpse is bothered by the grave. Natural senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling) only exist where there is already natural life. Spiritual senses (conviction of sin, fear of hell, a desire to live a better life) only exists where there is already spiritual life. Life precedes action. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "... *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" (*John 3:3*). He was not telling Nicodemus to "get born again". He was telling him that spiritual life produces spiritual sight and, consequently, the ability to see the kingdom of God.

More to come, Lord willing,

Buddy Abernathy
January 15, 2019