

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“ordained to eternal life”

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Calvinism issues from the premise that God has chosen from eternity certain individuals to be saved. Since God is “All-knowing”, His choices for eternal life, without fail, will surface from the depths of depraved humanity. Because God is “All-powerful”, these choices will submit, without fail, to the direct power of God and be saved.

Calvinists therefore look at such passages as *Acts 13:48* as proof that their theory is correct. The text reads, “*And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*”. Is Calvinism true? These individuals who believed, were they ordained by God to believe before they were born?

The Greek word, TASSO, translated “ordained” in our text, means “*to set in order*”. The centurion explains his position to Jesus by saying, “For I am also a man *set under authority...*” (Luke 7:8). He is observing the fact that in the Roman army, there is an orderly arrangement. He is under men whom he must obey, and he is over men who obey him. Things

have been set in order. The root word is used by Paul when he is correcting the Corinthian church. He writes, “If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I *set in order* whensoever I come” (I Corinthians 11:34). Paul was to eliminate confusion by setting things in order.

Regardless if “set in order”, “appoint” or “ordained” is used to translate the Greek word TASSO, it is important to understand the context in which this “setting in order” occurs. In our text, the Gentiles had their mind set in order unto eternal life through the preaching of the Gospel. When they heard the gospel, they were glad and glorified the word of God. Are we to believe that these people really had no free choice to believe, but had been “ordained” by God unto eternal life, and therefore could not do anything but believe?

When we examine the other side of the coin, we see that such a concept is false. When Paul preached, there were some Jews who heard the same gospel message as the Gentiles. Instead of being glad, they “*were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the*

things which were spoken by Paul and blasphemed” (*Acts 13:45*). Without believing the gospel message, these individuals will not be saved. Are these individual Jews lost because they were not ordained by God unto eternal life? We must accept this conclusion, if we believe that it is God’s ordaining individuals to eternal life from eternity that determines whether or not they are to believe.

When we note Paul and Barnabas’ response, we see the blame of these Jews not having eternal life resting upon them. “*...Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge ye yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo we turn to the Gentiles*” (*Acts 13:46*). They had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. They had not allowed the gospel message to set their mind in order towards eternal life. On the other hand, the Gentiles had been “set in order” unto eternal life through the gospel. God has not ordained some individuals to be saved, and others to be lost. One, from his own free will, can have his mind *set in order* unto eternal life through the gospel message, or prove himself unworthy of eternal life by rejecting the same message.