



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 6:34-40

“The Election of the Covenant People”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Tonight we are continuing our studies in the theology of the Apostle John. And we're looking at the first in a series of studies on Johannine soteriology, which form part of the Johannine theology. And the subject tonight is the beginning, “The Election of a Covenant People,” and the passage that we're going to look at primarily is John 6, verse 34 through verse 40, although we shall be looking at a few other of the passages in the Gospel of John which pertain to this subject, “The Election of a Covenant People.”

This passage in John chapter 6, among many things, is notable for these two. First of all, in it is contained the first of the seven great “I am” statements that are found in the Gospel of John with which most of us who have read the Gospel of John are quite familiar. In the thirty-fifth verse the Lord Jesus says, “I am the bread of life.” And this statement, of course, is one of the great claims for deity on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, the very way in which the apostle has constructed the statement, or I guess we should say the very way in which our Lord has constructed the statement, is suggestive of the deity of the Son. For we remember that this expression “I am” takes us all the way back to Exodus chapter 3, verse 14 and verse 15, where Moses asks who the person is with whom he's dealing, and receives the answer, “I am who I am.” And

students of the Gospel of John have rightly seen in these expressions of our Lord, “I am the bread of life,” a reference back to that famous statement in Exodus 3. That statement in Exodus chapter 3, is also picked up by other parts of the Old Testament, particularly, by the prophet Isaiah and used in statements expressive of the deity and the infinite nature of Yahweh. And so when the Lord begins to use the expression in the unfolding of the nature of his being in person in the New Testament times, those who were students of the Bible made the connection. When they heard him say over and over, “I am this, I am that.” And they recognized that many of the things that he was speaking about came from the Old Testament, they made the connection, and so it’s not surprising that the early church thought of the Lord Jesus as the Lord or the Yahweh of the Old Testament. He says, “I am the bread of life.” He says, “I am the light of the world. I am the door. I am the good shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the true vine.” So over and over again he rings the changes on this expression, “I am,” and it expresses the self-existence of the Son of God.

Now, you can see as you consider these great claims, such as this one here, “I am the bread of life,” that he’s a far different person from the persons that liberal theologians have suggested he is. He’s far different from Renon’s amiable carpenter, from Tolstoy’s spiritual anarchist, from Schweitzer’s imminent cataclysmist, from Joseph Klausner’s unorthodox rabbi, or Otto’s charismatic evangelist. When you look at the things that liberal theologians have said about him, then you remember the statement that William Temple once made with some asperity, “Why any man should have troubled to crucify the Christ of liberal Protestantism has always been a mystery.” If that’s all that Jesus was there was no reason for anyone to crucify him at all, but of course, he made claims far different from these, and that’s the reason that men wanted to crucify him.

Now, the second thing that this passage is notable for is that it’s one of the important passages in which he deals with the doctrine of election. Bernard, J. H. Bernard, who wrote one of the outstanding commentaries on the Greek text of the Gospel

of John, a two-volume set in the *International Critical Commentary* series, has commented upon the “pre-destinarian doctrine of John.” Those are his words. And he affirms that this is the doctrine that the Apostle John, evidently, accepted. “Some sayings in John tend to reflect or seem to reflect, a high view of pre-destination that only those chosen by God are able to come to faith,” George Ladd weakly admits. Professor Ladd would like to tone down this but he, nevertheless, is forced to admit that the sayings in John seem to reflect a high view of pre-destination. The Lutheran Kummel affirms that “John teaches that God gives men faith as a first step in salvation, and that only those whom God draws come to faith, and that the only ones who have kept God’s word are those whom the Father has given the Son out of the world.” But even the Lutheran Kummel must add, however, “But this does not imply that God had made a definitive decision as to who belongs to Jesus, and who belongs to Jesus’ sheep and, therefore, hears Jesus’ voice.” Like a good Lutheran, Professor Kummel allows man the freedom to let God’s work occur through us or to reject it.

I think, you can see from this that this passage is, therefore, an important passage, and for some people it is a quite difficult passage. But for those who love the pre-destinarian doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, as reflected in the Apostle John’s Gospel of John, this is a highly comforting part of the word of God.

Now, with that as an introduction, I want to read verse 34 through 40, and I want you to pay attention, specifically, to what the Lord Jesus is saying. This is in the context of the walking upon the water and then the feeding or the feeding of the five thousand, and then the walking upon the water. And since he has just fed the five thousand, it’s natural that he should speak about the “bread of life.” So verse 34.

“Then said they unto him; Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them; I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you that ye also have seen me, and

believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will who hath sent me that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

R.H. Strachan, a British student of the Gospel of John, who has written also a commentary on the Gospel of John, commenting upon some words in chapter 17 in verse 2, where we have some similar expressions to these found in chapter 6. Let me remind you of verse 2 of chapter 17, where he says, “As thou hast given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” Well Strachan commenting upon the fact that here in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of John, it is said that the Father has given certain people to the Son says, “The Church is not a voluntary organization. It is given and created by God. The individual becomes a member of the body of Christ.” Well that's certainly the teaching of John in John 6:34 through 40 and specifically in verse 37 through 40. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” The Church is not a voluntary organization. It is a group of people who have been given by the Father to the Son. Now, I do not mean to suggest, thereby, that those individuals do not exercise their will in response to the work of God the Holy Spirit, which leads to their salvation, but even that is the product of the working of God. So that the Church is not a voluntary organization in the sense that we are the products of our own free decision unmoved and unmotivated by God.

The apostle has just given words of our Lord, in which he spoken of the way of life, and Jewish rejection of it, and verse 37, begins without any connective. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” This, the fact that there is no connection there in verse 37, suggests that there is a

silent contemplation here of the reasons why men refuse to come to him. It's related to the Father's giving and drawing. That's why some do not come. Some are not given. Some are not drawn by the Father. The idea of the Father's giving men to Christ is a Johannine emphasis, and I'd like for you to notice how many times this is said. It's something very difficult for us to realize, but it's said over and over and over again. Look at verse 37, “All that the Father giveth me.” Now verse 39, “And this is the Father's will who hath sent me that of all that he hath given me.” Now, turn to chapter 10 in verse 29. In chapter 10, verse 29, we read, “My Father, who gave them to me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” Now John chapter 17, this great prayer of the Lord Jesus. Wouldn't we be impoverished as the people of God if we did not have this great prayer that our Lord prayed in John 17? Verse 2, “As thou hast given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” Verse 6, “I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word.” Verse 9, “I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me, for they are thine.” Verse 12, “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” Verse 24. “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.” Chapter 18 in verse 9 we read, “That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spoke; of them whom thou gavest me have I lost none.” So over and over and over again, we are said to be the gift of the Father to the Son. What a gift. What a magnificent gift; the gift of the children of God to the Son of God, given by God the Father to them.

Now it is striking that in this verse 37, “All that the Father giveth me,” that “all” is neuter, and we are to understand by that a very general “everything,” but it refers most specifically to the persons. Now, the resultant clause is a very strong statement of the

divine sovereignty and salvation. “All that,” well verse 37, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” Do you know what that says? Think about it for a moment.

“Everyone whom the Father has given to the Son shall come to the Son.” In other words, everyone whom the Father has granted in sovereign grace as a gift to Jesus Christ shall come to Jesus Christ. There is no resistance on the part of the individuals. The sovereignty of God determines that all given shall come. People do not come to Christ because it seems to them a good idea. You may think you do. You may think in your own human reasoning, “Well, I think, I am a lost individual. I think it might be good to have the assurance of eternal life, so I will of myself believe and receive the gift of eternal life.” Well that’s what you may think, but if you keep studying the Bible, you’ll discover that it wasn’t your idea first. It was God’s idea. So people don’t come to the Lord because it seems to them a good idea. As a matter of fact, it never seems to men a good idea to come to Christ, until the Holy Spirit has first implanted that good idea in our hearts. So we don’t come to him because we have reasoned through the matter, and think that, “You know, it might be good to be saved.” That’s the product of the working of God if we have that idea.

Now, he says in verse 37, “All that the Father giveth me.” That’s present tense. “All that the Father is giving to me.” Present tense. Well that’s written from the standpoint of the waiting Son of God in time. “All that the Father gives to me.” The Lord Jesus thinking and speaking from the standpoint of this situation, when he has just fed the five thousand, he sees individuals coming to him as the hours and days and weeks and months transpire. So he speaks of them coming to him as, “All that the Father is giving to me.” But you must not think that that giving occurred at the moment that they came because in the very next verse or so, notice how he speaks of it. He says, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will who hath sent me that of all that he hath given me.” There he

uses the perfect tense. So the fact that individuals come to him in time is the product of our Lord's giving of them in the eternal ages past. So we come in time to the Lord, but we are given in eternity in the first place and the certainty of the reception and the finality of it are pictured in the expressions, “shall come” and “I will by no means cast them out.” Now, isn't this a great text? My goodness, a person could preach for hours on a passage like this. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” “Shall come to me.” And then, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

In the original text, there is a way of giving what grammarians call, “an emphatic negative statement.” It's an emphatic. In fact, the expression that is the construction that is used is frequently called by grammarians the “subjunctive of emphatic negation.” So if it is desired to negate an idea or a statement and you want to do it emphatically, you use the subjunctive mood, and you also use a double negative particle “who may.” And that's the expression that is found here. And to get over that idea, the translators of the Authorized Version used the expression “in no wise.” Occasionally, the expression that is used to emphasize the negation is in English simply “never,” but here, “in no wise.” Now it is true “in no wise” is not found in the Greek text, specifically; that is, there are no Greek words that correspond to “in no wise,” “in no way,” but the construction fully justifies that translation, as all students of the Greek text of John have affirmed.

This was a text that meant a great deal to John Bunyan and he says some rather interesting words about it. And since they're in small print, of course, you know I take out my glasses and see if I can make them out. But this is what he said. This text meant a great deal to him. In fact, he said that, “He and the devil had quite a struggle over this text.” And listen to what he says, and this is from his “Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners.” “This Scripture also did most sweetly visit my soul and him that cometh no me I will in no wise cast out. O, the comfort that I have had from this word ‘in no wise’ as who should say by no means, for nothing whatever he hath done but Satan” in other words, he says he could have translated this, “And him that cometh unto me I will not

cast out, no matter what he has done.” “But Satan would greatly labor to pull this promise from me, telling of me that Christ didn’t mean me, and such as I, but sinners of a lower rank; that is, not quite as great a sinner as I am, but those that are not quite as bad as I am. That’s what that was meant for, but not you Bunyan. You’re too bad for that; that had not done as I had done, but I should answer him again; Satan, here is in this word, no such exception. But him that comes. Him. Any him. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. If ever Satan and I did strive for any word of God in all my life, it was for this good word of Christ; he at one end, and I at the other. O, what work we did make. It was for this in John, I say, that we did so tug and strive. He pulled and I pulled. But God be praise, I got the better of him.”

Now, of course, he got the better of him because God the Holy Spirit illumined his mind to see that when he says, “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out,” and that means not only little sinners, medium-degree sinners, but that means the greatest of all sinners, and those who think they’re the greatest of all sinners. “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” That text meant a lot to me. That text is the text from which I gained assurance of salvation, because I was very much disturbed over this after I had been converted and wondered if I really had accepted Christ and wondered if I really had everlasting life. And when I was living in Birmingham, Alabama, just shortly after I was converted, and I was still in the insurance business at the time, I remember being so disturbed over this question of the assurance of salvation, and what I had really believed in Christ. And I was studying the Gospel of John and I came to this text here which said, “All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” I said, “Well, I just better be sure that I have this salvation,” and I remember going into the bedroom. No one was around. Got down on my knees and said, “Lord, I don’t know for certain that I have come to you before, but I’m coming now, if I haven’t come before. And you say in your word, ‘Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’ Now I’m coming. If I’ve never come, I’m coming, and so I’m counting



on you never to cast me out.” And I don’t think I’ve ever had any question about my salvation since then; not that it’s not possible for some people to have the questions about their salvation, but in my case, I did not. Now, if I keep doing this, it is because I have so much hair up here. It was something bothering me there and I wanted to be sure and get it out of the way.

Now, we must not miss the argument of verse 37 through verse 40. It’s this. What the Lord is saying through John is, “Everyone given to me by the Father shall come to me, and I will not cast him out.” That’s verse 37, but verse 38, begins, “Because.” “Because I came from heaven to do the will of my Father, for I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me, and his will is that none of those given by him should perish. This is the Father’s will who hath sent me that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” That’s why he is able to say, “All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me. Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. Because I came down from heaven to do the Father’s will, and the Father’s will is that of all that he has given me I should not lose any but raise them up at the last day. Therefore, him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. I’m doing the Father’s will, and it’s the Father’s will that this take place.” Then puts it on the human level in the last verse by saying, “And this is the will of him that sent me that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

So it’s a beautiful form of statement the Lord is make. He said, “I am here to do the Father’s will, and it’s his will that all who are given be finally raised up, and so I’m certain that the one who comes to me shall never me cast out because this is the Father’s will, and I’m doing the Father’s will.” And this twice repeated at the end of verse 39, and at the end of verse 40, “and should raise it up again at the last day,” is a majestic solemn refrain of assurance and security. What that means is that the perseverance of the saints is a great doctrine, but the perseverance of the Savior is an even greater doctrine. “I shall

raise it up at the last day. So all those whom the Father has given shall come to me, and when they come to me, they have everlasting life and, furthermore, no matter what happens in the meantime, I will raise them up at the last day.” That’s the perseverance of the Lord Jesus Christ in the accomplishment of the Father’s will. Talk about the perseverance of the saints as much as you like. I believe in the perseverance of the saints. I think the saints persevere simply because the triune God perseveres. He perseveres in what he intends to do and as a result of that, we persevere. Bengul [phonetic spelling], when he comes to verse 40, says, *Hic finis est untra quem periculum nulum*, which means, “Here is the end, beyond which there is no danger.” “I will raise him up in the last day.”

Well, this passage then sheds a great deal of light on the doctrine of election, of assurance, of security. I think, it also says, “sheds light on the purpose of the Lord in his atoning work,” but we’re not going to go into that tonight. In the seventeenth chapter, there are two further notes that stress the election of a covenant people and their resultant salvation, and so I’d like for you to turn over for a moment to the seventeenth chapter. We’ll take a look at verse 6, first of all; a text I’ve already read. “I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word.” In this sixth verse of this great high priestly prayer, our Lord stresses the revelation of the Father’s name, and he stresses that this revelation was not made indiscriminently. Look at it. “I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word.” He doesn’t say he’s manifested the Father’s name to the world. He says he has manifested the Father’s name. He’s revealed the nature of God to those who have been given to him. In this very chapter he says, “I don’t pray for the world.” “Isn’t that terrible?” one might say. Aren’t we supposed to pray for the world? The Lord said, “I don’t pray for the world. I pray for them.” “I pray not for the world,” he says in verse 9. So he has manifested his name to those whom the Father

has given to him. It was made to the men given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they are given to the Lord “out of the world.” That’s the place from which they were given.

That’s their origin or perhaps their separation. They were separated from the world and given to the Son. That too, is a reflection of the choice of God. They were given to the Son out of the world, so in that very fact there is reflected, the election of a sovereign people. They that are of God, hear God’s voice, and because we are of God, because we are given a nature to respond to God, we being of God, hear God’s voice. To them comes the manifestation of the Father. That ought to make you leap on your feet for joy; that you have come to understand something about God the Father through the revelation by the Lord Jesus of the name of God. The fact that you understand the doctrines of the word of God is an evidence of the great love and care and concern and electing grace that God has exercised toward you. Isn’t that something that is great? Tremendous to think about. “I have manifested thy name to those whom thou hast given me.” When you understand that means you’re the object; that one of the evidences of the fact that you’re the object of the Father’s electing grace. Magnificent. No wonder this is such a great comfort to the saints of God.

Well, someone might say, “Well, the primary reference here is to the apostles.” Well, yes that’s true. The primary reference of this passage is to the apostles, but we stand in the same body of men among whom are the apostles, and the same principles pertain with respect to us, as the New Testament so completely sets forth. The same note of discrimination is expressed in the limits of his prayer in verse 9, a passage that I’ve already read. All right. That’s the Father’s work of giving.

Now, let’s notice the Son’s work of receiving, and we’ll look back now at chapter 6 again. The Father’s work of giving. That’s a magnificent work. Now, the Son’s work of receiving. The perfect unity with the Father in his will assures the accomplishment of the great plan for the ones given to the Son. In verse 38, we read, “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” The work of the Son

is expressed in three statements. First of all in verse 37, “He will not cast them out. They are given to him by the Father, and he will not cast them out,” verse 37. “He will not lose any one of them,” verse 39. Isn’t that good? “This is the father’s will who hath sent me that of all that he hath given me, I should lose nothing.” By the way, do you really think that when God determines something that it will come to pass or do you think it’s possible for God to determine something, and then for us to want his purposes? Our Lord doesn’t speak that way. He speaks as if the will of God, the will of determination assures the accomplishment of the end and purpose of God. Well he says, “This is the Father’s will that of all that have been given to me I should lose nothing.” That’s the second thing. He will not cast them out. He will not lose any of them, and thirdly, he will resurrect them. Twice he says that. He will resurrect them, so the Son affirms that it’s all in accord with the father’s will. Three times he mentions the Father’s will. Verse 38, “Came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” Verse 39, “This is the Father’s will.” Verse 40, “This is the will of him that sent me.” So what he’s doing, is doing the Father’s will.

Now, finally, we look at the human responsibility of believing. This is not the place for us to try to resolve the antinomy that exists in connection with divine sovereignty and human responsibility, even if we don’t know any way to resolve divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Both of these doctrines are taught so many times in the Bible, and so plainly that we would believe them. We would simply say, “God is God. We are his creatures. Not only that, we are his sinful creatures, and, therefore, we don’t understand everything about God. When we get to heaven, a lot of things will be cleared up, and then we shall understand a great deal that we don’t understand now, but we’ll always be taking theology when we get to heaven.” Love, sex, and marriage courses will be out of style then, and then we shall have good solid theology, and you’ll be forced to take in heaven what you may not want to take down here. And, I know, what you’re saying, “I’ll be better equipped then.” Well, no, you are well enough equipped now to

study theology. And I just hope that these preliminary courses, these prerequisites down here, will enable you to not have to be installed in “Theology 101” when you get to heaven with all the rest of those who’ve never studied theology when they’re down here, but have been fed on love, sex, and marriage courses.

Well, Bill was saying Sunday night that, “The things that are eternal are obviously better than the things that are temporal.” Love, sex, and marriage are temporal. These things are eternal, so we better spend our time studying them so we can get out of “Theology 101.” Not that “Theology 101” won’t be good. It’ll be especially good, taught by the Apostle Paul, Apostle Peter and so on, but after all, the Bible has been given to us. Here is our food. These are the things that help us in the experiences of life. You have some experiences like Nathan Coward and his family and friends, and have some experiences like the friends and family of Sanford Ing, then you discover the importance of these great doctrines of the Christian faith, because they are the things that enable you to be sustained and helped and held up through those experiences. Love, sex, and marriage, I’ve been on that recently, I know. Somebody’s going to say, “Why don’t you stop saying that?” Okay, all right, those courses will be helpful.

Now here this is not the place to resolve then this antinomy between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. “We’ll have a go at that later on,” as the British say. There is an appearance of contradiction between what God does as king and what he does as judge, and we must be careful to avoid extremes in handling difficult subjects like this. All Christians really believe in the sovereignty of God in their inmost being. Even when they’re not thinking. When they’re not trying to think through things from previous training that was given falsely, they believe in the sovereignty of God. Do you know why they really believe what I believe? Do you know why? Because they get down on their knees and pray. If they didn’t get down on their knees and pray, I might doubt whether they believed in the sovereignty of God, but when they get down on their knees and pray, they ask God to do something. They do believe in the sovereignty of

God and prayer indicates that. Furthermore, when they come to realize that they have been saved, what do they do? How do they give thanks for it? Do they say, “O God, I thank Thee for Thy part in my salvation, and O, my free will, I thank Thee for the other part.” Do they pray that way? Have you ever heard a Christian pray like that? No, you won't. Do you know why? Because when you get down on your knees, he believes in the sovereignty of God. He's a Calvinist on his knees. He gets up, and starts to think with his mind influenced by sin, and then he talks about fairness, and what seems to his mind afflicted by sin, to be right. But when he's on his knees, he doesn't think that way.

There's no one could put that better than Mr. Spurgeon. This is what he said. “You've heard many, a great many Arminian sermons I dare say, but you never heard an Arminian prayer. For the saints in prayer appear as one in word, and deed, and mind. An Arminian on his knees would pray desperately like a Calvinist. He cannot pray about free will. There's no room for it. Fancy him praying, Lord, I thank Thee though that I'm not like those poor, presumptuous Calvinists. Lord, I was born with a glorious free will. I was born with power by which I can turn to Thee of myself. I have improved my grace. If everybody had done the same with their grace that I have, they might all have been saved. Lord, I know, Thou dost not make us willing, if we're not willing ourselves. Thou givest grace to everybody. Some do not improve it, but I do. There are many that will go to hell, as much bought with the blood of Christ as I was. They had as much of the Holy Ghost given to them. They had as good a chance, and they were as much blessed as I am. It was not Thy grace that made us to differ. I know it did a great deal, since I've turned the point. I made use of what was given me, and others did not, and that's the difference between me and them. You wouldn't pray like that, but that's what they say on their feet. They don't realize what they're really saying. They're taking away the glory of God by attributing their salvation, not only to the Lord God in sovereign grace, but also to themselves.” I like the apostolic doctrine, and I like our Lord's words. “Those whom thou hast given to me.”

Now, on the other hand, having said all of that trying to make it as strong as possible, the Scriptures do say that men are called upon to repent and believe, upon penalty of divine judgment. Human responsibility is in the word, and they are called upon to do this. And if they do not do it, they are justly condemned, but when they do respond positively, they are told, “God gives repentance.” That’s what the Bible says. “He gives repentance. He gives faith.” John attempts no logical harmonization of the doctrines, as in the way that a philosopher or theologian might put the statements together, and seek to find the truth that harmonizes all of them. He, generally speaking, asserts both of these doctrines. In this passage, in John 6:34 through 40, human responsibility is set forth in this way. Notice verse 35, “Jesus said unto them; I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” So there it’s set forth as a “coming to Christ.” It’s set forth as a “believing in Christ,” not only here but also in verse 40. “This is the will of him that sent me that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.” And then it’s set forth as a “seeing of him” in verse 38 or verse 36, I should say. “But I said unto you that ye also have seen me and believe not.” Now that’s a difficult expression, “Seen me.” I’m not sure exactly what that means, whether that meant simply physical or whether that also meant spiritual.

But, finally, in verse 40, he speaks of “beholding the Son.” “This is the will of him that sent me that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” So then, human responsibility is to come to Christ. Human responsibility is to believe in Christ. Human responsibility is to see him or behold the Son, which seems to mean, “grasp the significance of something.”

The final verse of the section is a kind of summary. These final verses, I should say, express the root of the entire work of God, Christ, and men. It lies in the will of God expressed here objectively and subjectively. Look at verse 39, where we have the will of God expressed objectively. “This is the Father’s will who hath sent me that of all that he

hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day.”

Objectively, the Father willed life and resurrection for the given ones. That was his will.

“I will that those whom I give to the Son may have life and resurrection.” That is what God determined in his will.

Hendrickson, who has also written an evangelical commentary on the Gospel of John says, “In these and many other passages, Scripture teaches a council that cannot be changed, a calling that cannot be revoked, an inheritance that cannot be defiled, a foundation that cannot be shaken, a seal that cannot be broken, a life that cannot perish. ‘We are not only kept by the power of God,’ as Peter says. ‘We are not only kept by the love of God,’ as Paul says, but we’re also kept by the will of God.” And that, I guess, is as safe as it is possible for a person to be; safe, because of the will of God. How wonderful is the will of God. He has determined that the given ones shall have life and resurrection. Isn’t it great to be a given one? And subjectively, he wills life and resurrection for the believing ones. Verse 40, I read this text simply, “This is the will of him that sent me that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.” This is the final and infallible sign of the ones who’ve been given. There’s no need for us to seek for signs of the given. We wouldn’t know the signs of the given. We can’t say, “The given ones are those who are handsome or pretty.” We can’t say, “The ones who are given are cultured and nice.” We can’t say, “The ones who are given are those who are well educated.” We cannot say, “Those who are given are the Baptists. Everybody knows the Baptists are the given ones or the Presbyterians who believe in pre-destination.” No, the final, infallible sign of the fact that we are given by God to Christ is that we believe. That’s the final inevitable sign of the person who has been given. There is the response of faith. They believe.

Now the Apostle Paul in one of the passages that he wrote to his church at Thessalonica, he lets us know how we can tell who are the given ones. Someone might think, “Well, Paul is different from the rest of us. After all, Paul was an apostle. He had



access to the throne room of God.” Well, once he did maybe. In 2 Corinthians, he does speak about being “caught up to the third heaven,” but he himself says, “When he was caught up to the third heaven, he heard things that he couldn’t utter; couldn’t say anything about them.” So how is it that Apostle Paul knows who the elect are? And he does know who the elect are, because he says to the Thessalonians in the fourth verse of the first chapter of his first letter to them, “Knowing brethren, beloved of God, your election.” So he knew the election of the Thessalonians. But how did he know that they were elect? Why, he explains, “For our word came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance. As ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.” That’s how Paul knew they were elect. They responded to his message, they believed his message, they were filled with joy at the reception of the word of God, even though they were in the midst of affliction and persecuted for it, and they became followers of the Lord and of the apostles.

That’s how you tell who the elect are. You tell who the elect are by the evidences which include responsiveness to the word of God. You can look out among the saints of God, and you can see the inevitable signs of divine election in the responsiveness, faith, joy in the Holy Spirit, following the Lord, following the apostolic teaching; in the midst of affliction, in the midst of persecution, in the midst of trials, in the midst of difficulties. These are the signs of the saints. They are the signs of the elect ones. Are you in that company? Do you belong to them? If you’re not sure, you can go home, and get down by your bedside. In fact, you don’t even have to do that. You can do it right here. This is a good place to be saved. I’ve never known any place that wasn’t a good place to be saved. Right here is a good place to be saved. Through the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, the acknowledgment of your own sin, and the reception in free grace of Jesus Christ, take

your place in the company of the given ones; given a long time ago, but now coming to Christ. Come to him. Time is up.

Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent words of the Lord Jesus Christ. And how great it is to know that there is a covenant people; members of the New Covenant, saved through the grace of a triune God who gave us to the Son who was so determined to obey the Father that he gave himself as our redemptive sacrifice and now awaits as the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity, applies the benefits of his work. What a magnificent thing it is to be among the company of the given. Lord, may there be the inevitable signs of our election in the reception of the word, and the exercise of faith in fruitfulness.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.