

# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

*A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God*

## ***Do Not Reject God's Purpose for You***

**Luke 7: 18-35**

Before we leave this passage regarding John the Baptist there is one more verse we need to consider: *But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves...* (v.30). This is a profound statement with far reaching implications for each one of us. Today we must examine the tragedy of their choice, lest we follow in their steps.

### **I. The Implications of the Text**

- A. God had a purpose (plan) for the Pharisees and lawyers, each one of them
- B. They made a decision which ultimately was a rejection of God's plan
- C. It left them in a vastly different situation with relation to God

### **II. The Truth About God's Sovereignty & Man's Free Will**

- A. Many people feel that the only two choices logically available are:
  - 1. God is absolutely sovereign and human beings have no free will—this ultimately makes God the causative agent in man's sin
  - 2. Human beings have free will and God is limited by their choice—this ultimately strips God of power and ushers in chaos (Open Theism)
- B. Consider some Biblical examples of God's expressed desire vs prophecy
  - 1. Judas: John 13:18-27; Matt 26:21-25
  - 2. God's desire for all to be saved (I Tim 2:4) vs the reality that most will be lost (Matt 7:13-14)
- C. God's omniscient sovereignty and human being's limited freedom
  - 1. God knows all things and has planned the course of history; He knows the choices we will make and limits us within the bounds of His eternal plan.
  - 2. Human beings are totally depraved and apart from grace are incapable of true goodness or spiritual understanding—their choices are made under the constraints of bondage to the law of sin and death. They are incapable of understanding truth because they live in darkness and are blinded in their understanding. (Rom 3:9-20; 1 Co 2:14-16; 2 Co 4:3-4)
  - 3. God accompanies proclamation with His Spirit and extends grace with His invitation—we are raised to a level of freedom in choosing His purposes for us. (Joshua 24:15; Hebrews 4:1-11; Luke 13:24; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:8-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; etc.)

### **III. God's Purposes For Us, Our Choice to Make**

- A. Beginning with the invitation to come, to turn from sin and come to Christ, God offers us many opportunities filled with His grace and blessings.
- B. We have genuine choices to make: to receive and believe, following God; or to reject His purposes for us.
- C. The opportunity may only arise once and is often weighted with significant consequences. Be sure you choose well!

When the messengers of John had left, He began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are found in royal palaces! But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'

I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. **But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves,** not having been baptized by John.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss your understanding of God's sovereignty and human free will. What are the extents and limitations of each, if any?
2. Are you responsible for your choices before God?
3. Can other people do things to affect you over which God has no control?
4. Does God, in fact, have a plan for your life? Can you miss it?
5. What opportunities exist if you were to come back later? Can you repent and recover everything you forfeited originally?
6. Can you surprise God by the choices you make?
7. Is there redemption after disaster due to rejecting God's plan for you?

### NOTES

"To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another, and they say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.' For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon! 'The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

**Luke 7: 24-35**

I cry out to God Most High,  
to God who fulfills his  
purpose for me.

**Psalm 57:2**

Many times He would  
deliver them; they,  
however, were rebellious in  
their purposes, and so sank  
down in their iniquity.

**Psalm 106: 43**

The LORD will fulfill his  
purpose for me; your love,  
O LORD, endures forever—  
do not abandon the works  
of your hands.

**Psalm 138: 8**