

**YESTERDAY'S TOMORROW**  
**Session Twelve**  
**Class Leadership Instructions**

Introduction Notes

A. In 1947, what is now the Bible Fellowship Church withdrew from the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church because of a proposed merger with another church.

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God initiates the process by which human beings receive the gift of salvation.

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B. In 1951, formal ties were broken.

C. Following this withdrawal, the church known as The Mennonite Brethren In Christ, Pennsylvania Conference, underwent sweeping changes.

1. Perhaps most radical was the determination to restudy the doctrinal positions of the church with the result that new doctrinal positions were established.
2. A new form of government was adopted.
3. A new name, Bible Fellowship Church was adopted.
4. Changes were made in procedures for calling pastors.
5. Even the financial procedures were reconsidered to make us of budgets instead of separate specific offerings.

D. The doctrine of salvation demonstrates how our determination to study the Scriptures brings change.

1. Election was not an issue in Mennonite theology.
2. The study of the Scriptures brought us to make a statement.

Question Notes

Issues relating to the doctrines of salvation have always been controversial. Words like election and predestination make some people very uncomfortable. These are difficult issues to face. Be patient as members of the class struggle with the opposing points of view. Human responsibility does not negate God's electing work. And, God's electing work does not negate the need for human response.

Be sure to do some study on these issues and come prepared.

1, 2. Our earlier statements tended to stress the need for response on the part of man. Nothing was said there about the electing work of God. A statement about God's electing work came with the new doctrinal statements.

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3. There are more verses than you can cover here. Some emphasize the need for response from man while others emphasize God's work which enables man's response.
5. Occasionally, Christians believe that election to salvation by God means that evangelism is unnecessary. The line of reasoning goes like this: Those who will be saved will be saved anyway whether evangelism takes place or not. God has said that the gospel must be taken to unbelievers.
6. The Bible teaches that humans receive eternal punishment as a consequence of their sin, not as a result of a choice made by God.
7. The answer to this question is no. But be sure to make it clear that God has said this will never occur. No one will ever be turned aside.

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SESSION TWELVE**

**DOCTRINE OF SALVATION**

6. Of Repentance and Reformation.

...But we must go to God with sincere hearts and true and perfect faith, and believe on Jesus Christ, according to the testimony of the Scriptures; by this living faith we obtain remission or forgiveness of sins, are justified, sanctified, nay, made children of God, partakers of His image, nature and mind; being born again of God from above, through the incorruptible seed. (From Articles of Faith, Dortrecht, 1632)

Article 8 - Free Will

Man, having become so completely ruined, has neither the will nor power to turn to God, and if left to himself, would remain in his wretched and miserable condition forever. But, blessed thought, the "grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men;" hence, God graciously employs the means of enlightening and awakening the mind of the sinner to a sense of his poverty and wretchedness, and then extends the invitation that "whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." But just so long as man refuses to comply with the requirements of God and rejects the invitation of His Word, salvation cannot be secured by him. (From The Doctrines and Disciplines, The Mennonite Brethren in Christ, 1936.)

**Article 10 - Human Ability and Responsibility**

In his original creation man was endowed with ability to will and to do good or evil and was accountable for his willing and doing.

But by the fall of Adam man lost his ability apart from God's grace to will and to do those things necessary to a right relationship to God; however, he is still accountable to God for obedience to all His commands. Man has not lost his ability to make decisions, but left to himself acts only in accordance with his fallen sinful nature.

Only by God's infinite grace can man will or do anything necessary to his salvation. God by that grace saves men whom He causes to will and to do good; however, He does this without nullifying man's ability to act responsibly.

Article 7 - Repentance and Amelioration of Life.

We believe, since the meditation of the human heart from childhood is evil and therefore inclines to all unrighteousness, sin, and wickedness, that for this reason the first lesson of the precious New Testament of the Son of God, is repentance and amelioration of life. Therefore men must bring forth fruits meet for repentance, must ameliorate their lives, must believe the Gospel; for neither Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Church Membership, nor any other outward ceremonies, without faith, regeneration, change or newness of life, can help us to please God, or to obtain consolation or promise of salvation from Him (From Doctrines of Faith, Evangelical Mennonites, 1866, from What Mean These Stones? p. 28).

### **Article 11 - Election**

Election is a free act of the sovereign God in which from eternity, and for reasons known only to Himself and apart from any goodness in man He graciously chose from among the fallen mankind a people unto salvation, that they might be conformed to Christ's image. Those so chosen he redeemed by His Son and seals by His Spirit.

### **Article 12 - Salvation**

In the gospel salvation is offered to all men and is received by grace through faith and the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, apart from works or human merit. Salvation centers in a person, Jesus Christ, and receiving Him includes the remission of sins on the grounds of His shed blood, the imputation of His perfect righteousness, the reception of the Holy Spirit and the impartation of eternal life. (From The Faith and Order, The Bible Fellowship Church)

## QUESTIONS

1. What do these doctrinal statements teach about what a person must do to be saved? How are they alike? How are they different?
2. What do these doctrinal statements teach about God's electing work in salvation? How are they alike? How are they different?

3. What do the following verses teach about who will be saved?

-John 3:16

-John 6:37

-John 17:2, 24

-Romans 1:16

-Romans 9:6-24

-Romans 10:8-11

-Ephesians 1:4

-2 Thessalonians 2:13

-2 Timothy 1:9

-1 Peter 1:2

4. What, in your own words, does the doctrine of election teach?
5. Does the fact that God has chosen those who are saved mean that evangelism is unnecessary?
6. What is wrong with this statement? "People who receive everlasting punishment from God do so because they were predestined to receive it?"
7. Is it possible that God would refuse salvation to anyone because they were not predestined to receive salvation?