

Matthew 10:32-33

- I. **MAT 10:32-33** is oft interpreted by Bible readers according to their soteriologies.
 - A. Arminians may affirm that confession is the *necessary cause* of one's eternal life and if a confessor later denies Christ, he *loses* his eternal life. Eg. "Let it be remembered, that to be renounced by Christ is to have him neither for a Mediator nor Savior." (Adam Clarke)
 - B. Calvinists may affirm that confession is an *indispensable concomitant* of eternal life and if a confessor later denies Christ, that proves he was never one of God's elect in possession of eternal life since God's elect will persevere faithfully: his confession was only that of a hypocrite like Judas. Eg. "...he will deny them to be disciples, or that they belong to him... he will do more, he will banish them from his presence, and send them into everlasting burnings." (John Gill)
 - C. Confessing Christ saves one from shame. **MAR 8:38 c/w ROM 10:8-11; 1JO 2:28.**
- II. Neither eternal life or death nor eternal salvation or damnation are mentioned in these verses.
 - A. Confessing and denying Jesus must be defined, compared and reconciled with other verses.
 - B. These verses are therefore not proof texts for the Arminian or Calvinist interpretations.
- III. Definitions.
 - A. confess: To acknowledge or formally recognize (a person or thing) as having a certain character or certain claims; to own, avow, declare belief in or adhesion to.
[NOTE: Oxford English Dictionary cites MAT 10:32 as an example of this definition]
 - B. deny: To say 'no' to the claims of. To refuse to recognize or acknowledge (a person or thing) as having a certain character or certain claims; to disown, disavow, repudiate, renounce.
- IV. Refutation of the Arminian interpretation.
 - A. If confession is a condition of everlasting life then the retarded, insane, infants and the ignorant are all eternally damned.
 1. If they are not, then confession is not a condition of everlasting life.
 2. If confession is not a condition for those classes, it is best to be in such a class.
 - B. One must *believe* in Christ *before* he can confess Christ since *confess* means to "...declare belief in..." Therefore, *believing* and *confessing* are distinct actions. **JOH 12:42.**
 - C. One who believes in Christ already *has everlasting life, is born of God, and is justified* (freed from the penalty of sin). **JOH 6:47; 1JO 5:1; ACT 13:39.**
 - D. One is indwelt of God *before* he confesses Christ. **1JO 4:15.**
 1. None truly confess Jesus as Lord but by the Holy Ghost. **1CO 12:3; GAL 4:6.**
 2. Those led by the Holy Ghost are *sons of God*. **ROM 8:14.**
 - E. Everlasting life and justification cannot be lost. **JOH 10:27-29; ROM 8:30.**
- V. Refutation of the Calvinist interpretation.
 - A. Calvinism generally assumes that all the elect will be genuinely converted in this life.
 1. This would exclude all who reject the gospel, obviously.
 2. Since conversion involves *hearing* and *understanding* (**MAT 13:15**), this would also exclude the retarded, insane, infants and the ignorant. But **REV 5:9.**
 - B. **MAT 10:32-33** was a warning to the apostles (**MAT 10:5**). Was Jesus implying that they all might be pretenders of grace?
 - C. What about Peter (**MAT 26:70-75**)? Peter's confession of Christ was obviously genuine (**MAT 16:16-17**) but Peter did NOT persevere faithfully.
 - D. What about **2TI 2:12**?

1. Was elect Paul implying that he could unelect himself from eternal life and justification or that he was never elect to begin with?
 2. Such a conclusion would be seriously flawed, as the context shows. **2TI 2:13.**
- VI. If we confess Jesus as Lord, we have assurance that we are God's children indwelt of His Spirit and that we have been justified by Christ (per above).
- A. If we confess Jesus before men, we *publicly* acknowledge and own Him as *our* Lord.
 - B. He will confess us *publicly* before God (**MAT 10:32**) and before the holy angels who are *sons of God*. **LUK 12:8 c/w JOB 1:6; 38:7.**
 - C. Per the definition of *confess*, He will *acknowledge or formally recognize us* to the Father as sons of God and true disciples. This is a great honor.
 1. Believer's baptism is a public confession of Jesus as Lord. **ACT 2:36-38.**
 2. Those who refuse baptism are denying Christ before men. Their refusal is contrary to any confession of Jesus as "Lord." **LUK 6:46.**
 3. "This is my beloved son" are words for the *submitted*. **MAT 3:16-17.**
 - D. Honor from God is not to be taken lightly. **JOH 5:23; 12:26; 1SAM 2:30.**
- VII. A child of God can, like Peter, deny Jesus before men.
- A. Children of God are susceptible to any temptation. **1CO 10:13; ROM 7:8, 14-15.**
 - B. Peter stung for what he did. **LUK 22:61-62.**
 - C. As adamant as Peter had been about his dedication (**MAT 26:33**), the Lord's gaze (**LUK 22:61**) and the Lord's words (like **MAT 10:33**) cut him to his heart.
 - D. Such soul-troubling anguish is a thing to avoid.
- VIII. When Jesus witnesses one of His own denying Him before men *in words or deeds* (**TIT 1:16**), He denies such before God and the holy angels. **MAT 10:33; LUK 12:9.**
- A. Per the definition, He *refuses to acknowledge such as having a certain character or claims; He disowns* such.
 - B. Jesus will not acknowledge a denier as *having the character of one of His own*, or that such has the same claim on Him as one who DOESN'T deny Him.
 - C. When a father *disowns* a child, he does not undo the generated or legal relationship of the child, but rather *refuses to acknowledge that child as his own*: "No child of mine acts like that!" Recognition, praise, honor and benefits from the father are withheld.
 - D. There are certain benefits that accrue to the **faithful** child of God: assurance of election and the Spirit, sonship, no shame before Him, the Spirit not grieved, the rod of chastening withheld, prayers accepted, that such is *a vessel fit for God's use* (**2TI 2:20-21**), and His recognition. Deniers miss out on much.
 - E. If we are God's children, we should act *as dear children*. **EPH 5:1; 1PE 1:14.**
 1. Jesus instructed His followers how to "...BE the children of YOUR Father which is in heaven..." (**MAT 5:44-45**).
 2. Such instruction is not a formula for becoming God's child, but instruction as to how to be *a child of God without rebuke*. **PHIL 2:14-15.**
 3. Deniers have rebuke. **MAT 10:33; LUK 12:9; JOH 12:42-43.**
 4. Those who walk worthy of the Lord and confess Him have the promise of **2CO 6:17-18.**
 5. If a child of God would enjoy the fullness and richness of the Father's spiritual bounty through Christ, he would certainly want to live so as to have Jesus confess him before the Father and the angels, not deny him. This would include confessing Jesus publicly, submissively, and not denying Him before men.