

IS LIFE LIKE A LOTTERY?

Proverbs 16:33 “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.”

Gambling can become an obsession which rules, and often ruins, a man’s life. The lure of getting rich quick, without the tedious struggle of labor, is, for many, hard to resist.

One can always satisfy the urge to gamble, for there are many gambling establishments, some of them world-famous. How many fortunes have changed hands by the throw of the dice, the spin of the wheel, or the turn of a card?

It has often been said, “Life itself is but a gamble.” Is there any truth to that statement? Do we live in a world governed by blind chance?

IS LIFE LIKE A LOTTERY?

1. IT OFTEN APPEARS TO BE SO

“The lot is cast into the lap.” No doubt, these words refer to the custom of the Israelites to cast lots in an important matter of uncertainty. Stones, or some other objects with certain markings, were shaken up in the garments of the lap, and one or more withdrawn without seeing the objects. The prearranged markings would decide the issue, one way or the other. Seemingly then, the matter was decided by blind chance.



The future of the lives of the ten lepers was completely changed when they met Jesus. This meeting seemed to be a coincidence, or a result of chance.

There are many events in our lives which also appear to be the result of pure chance. What control did we have over our birth, or the land of our birth? Consider marriage, a sudden decision to go here or there, a brief glance at someone, and often the choice of a spouse is made. Our life's work is often determined by the local opportunities around us. Who can control death, or the manner of death? Look at the number of people killed each year on the highways, many of them pure accidents. Does it not seem strange that the failure of a tire can send us into eternity?

"Life is but a gamble." There are other considerations to support this thought. Where is God? Why does He remain unseen? He seems to have withdrawn from the world and has let things take their own course. The nations are at each other's throats, much blood is shed, many innocent suffer, and God seems to be disinterested and far away.

In fact, this is the philosophy of the present world, everything developed and evolved by itself, chance set the stage, and after millions of years the

world came forth of itself. The world and everything in it stands before us as the direct product of chance, so we are told.

Contrary to all appearances, life is not like a lottery, or a game of chance. Nor does the Bible, or our text, teach that doctrine.

2. BUT THE LORD RULES THE WORLD

Our text does say, “The lot is cast into the lap,” however, these words follow immediately, “but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.”

He Rules
the
World with
truth and grace

The children of God in the Old Testament used the casting of lots sparingly, and only then when they wished for the guidance of God in their decisions. Prayer usually preceded the casting of lots, so they did not intend to decide the issues by blind chance, but were asking the Lord to show them His will through the casting of lots. Thus Palestine was divided among the twelve tribes by lot because the Lord Himself directed them to do it in that manner. When the Apostles wanted to choose a man to replace Judas, they prayed, cast lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the other Apostles ([Acts 1:23-26](#)).

Casting of lots was actually an act of faith in the guidance of the Lord in their lives. Our text does not speak of blind chance, just the very opposite. There are many passages which tell us that the Lord is not a disinterested bystander in the affairs of the world. He rules the world, He sets up the rulers of the nations, He feeds and cares for all living things, He controls the weather, etc.

Man has a will of his own, in fact, the will is an essential part of man. God chose to create him so. After the fall of man into sin, man still retained his will. But sinful man has a free will only in external things of life, but not in the spiritual realm, not in the choice of good.

The Lord rules the world, and guides the events in the life of an individual, to try to bring all men to the knowledge of the Truth. That God does not always succeed is the fault of man and his perverse will, because man has the power to resist the Spirit of God and so reject the salvation in Christ. It is somewhat like the training of our children. We never want to destroy their wills, but we show them the dangers and guide them in the right paths with the hope that they will follow our guidance and instructions of their own free will. If parents have done all they could for their children, and they still turn to evil, it is not the fault of the parents. So it is with God ruling the world, He rules to try to save all men. It is not His fault if He fails, it is entirely the fault of man who can resist God and His Holy Spirit.

Consider the case of a believer in Christ. God, through the operation of the Holy Spirit on his heart, converted him, turned him, changed or altered his will to accept the fact of salvation in Jesus. Luther rightly states according to the Bible, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, nor come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."

Jesus told us the will of God toward the world, "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" ([John 6:40](#)). A true believer in Christ subdues his will to conform to the will of the Father, and he prays, "Thy will be done" and "The Lord is my shepherd."

*All For Thee,
Thy Will Be Done!*



Life is not like a lottery, life is not ruled by blind chance, the Lord has the reins in His hands. God's children in Christ are not taking "chances" in life, they are in the safe and guiding hands of the Lord.

If life were really ruled by chance, we would be driven to despair. How unthinkable, that the world came of itself, or that God made the world and then withdrew from it, to let things run their own course, guided by chance. All history cries out against this absurd idea. Paul said to the people of Athens (Acts 17: 26-28), "And God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being."

"My times are in thy hands," ([Ps. 31:15](#)). What a comforting statement! All the seemingly little things in life take on a new meaning for us. The Lord orders our lives, He guided and altered our wills, He brought us to our Savior Jesus Christ, and He will take us to heaven. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" ([Phil.2:13](#)). No true believer, no true child of God, can make the claim, nor would he want to make the claim, that he is a self-made man. The Lord is our Savior and our salvation. "The whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

It is no surprise to us, then, who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus, that we shall be spending all eternity singing with the saints and angels this song, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever"([Rev.7:12](#)). AMEN. PRAYER. We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Thou didst guide our lives, bring us to faith, and hast kept us until this present moment. Thou art our Guide and Shepherd, we follow Thee through life. With the greatest confidence we place our days into Thy hands, we fear not the future, we are confident that no one can pluck us out of Thy hands. To Thee be all honor and glory, O Holy and blessed Trinity, ever one God, world without end. AMEN.