

APPENDIX
Preached at the Annual Meeting of the Little River Baptist
Association, October 7, 2014

WHOSOEVER
JOHN 3:16

According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance "Whomsoever" is used 19 times; "Whoso" is used 52 times; and "Whosoever" is used 183 times in the Bible. By far the most familiar is the time it is used here in John 3:16: "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Almost as familiar is the Romans 10:13 text: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Then the last invitation in the Bible, almost the last verse (Rev. 22:17), is a "Whosoever will" invitation.

"Whosoever" is a scriptural word of immense importance. It is general and particular. It embraces all and touches each. It unrolls the welcome mat of heaven to humanity and invites the world to God. It sledgehammers racial fences, social fences, and denounces unconditional election as taught by some. It exports grace world-wide and makes evangelism and missions imperative.

1. WHOSOEVER MEANS WHOSOEVER

There is no reasonable explanation in the effort of some to explain or to interpret away the word "whosoever." One Baptist preacher recently made the statement on the radio: "It would have been better if John 3:16 was not in the Bible, because it is so misunderstood." What is to be misunderstood? The word means exactly what it means---whosoever! If it was only used in John 3:16 it would be enough. However, as already stated it is used repeatedly in God's word. Jesus used

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the word quite often. (See Matt.10:32, 10:42; Mark 3:35; John 3:15, 4:14, 11:26 for some examples). So there is no way getting around it. Whosoever means whosoever.

2. WHOSOEVER MEANS ALL

The scripture teaches no race, no nation, no individual is free from sin. All have sinned and are guilty before God (Rom. 3:28, 2:23, and Gal. 3:22). The "Whosoever" of John 3:16 is just as far reaching as sin. Christ died for all. Hebrews 2:9 says He tasted death for everyone. 2 Peter 3:9 declares He (Jesus) is not willing any should perish. 1 Timothy 2:6 tells us He gave His life a ransom for all. 1 John 2:2 states He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. In 1 Timothy 4:10 Christ is spoken of as the "Savior of all men, especially of those who believe." In John 4:42 our Lord is termed "the Savior of the world." We must take "whosoever" at its face value. It includes all. There are no exceptions. If it did not mean whosoever every "invitation" in church services would be a mockery. The great D.L. Moody said, with tongue in cheek: "Preach the gospel to everyone and if someone gets saved whom God has elected to be lost, He'll forgive you."

3. WHOSOEVER MEANS ANY

Whosoever may believe includes anyone may come to the Lord. Acts 10:43 states everyone---any---who believes receives remission of sins. Anyone who comes to the Lord, He will in no wise cast out. There is no "black list;" no "unconditional election;" no predestination as it is preached; no sin too evil or bad He can not forgive. This is what makes the gospel "good news." No one is beyond the reach of God's forgiving grace. No one is too wicked to be saved.

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4. WHOSOEVER MEANS WHEN-SO-EVER---WHERE-SO-EVER

There is no expiration date. There are those who believe there is only one opportunity to be saved and then you cross the dead line and you can not be saved later. They use Genesis 6:3 as a proof text: "God's Spirit will not always strive with man." However, it seems clear to me salvation is not the subject here. We know of death-bed confessions---the thief on the cross being one. We know of individuals in their 90's being saved. The danger is not the Lord refuses to save a person but for a person to become hardened to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Their hearts have become callused to the drawing power of the God they no longer hear God speaking to them. Jesus said: "No one is so deaf as he who will not hear." Some have rejected the truth so long they can't recognize the truth of God when they hear it. Certainly God will save anyone and He can save any time or any where someone comes to Him. He will not slam the door---"No, not you!"

5. WHOSOEVER INVOLVES THE WILL

This is an universal invitation and not an universal salvation. So not everyone "wills" to believe. Jesus said "You would (will) not come to me that you may have life." There is no salvation where there is no faith. God's "will" is involved. 2 Peter 3:9 declares "He (Jesus, God) is not willing any should perish. Jesus states in John 12:32, "I will draw all men to me." According to 1 Timothy 2:4 God desires all to be saved and then in verse 6 we read Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all. So the sad situation is not everyone "wills" to be saved. They choose not the Lord. Choice is all through the Bible. According To Revelation even the angels had a choice as one-third chose to go with Beelzebub. Adam and Eve had a choice. The history of Israel

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in the Old Testament is how many times they choose to follow other gods and God brought judgment upon them for their bad choices. Judas had a choice. Jesus in the upper room reached out to Judas trying to get him to change his choice. Recently in a Sunday School book the writer stated Judas had no choice but still he was responsible for what he did. How is that so? This would make God unjust and God is not unjust, but a God is love. I heard a Baptist preacher give the account of his salvation experience as follows: "When I came to know my name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life." There had been no conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit, no repentance of sin, no asking the Lord to save him---just knowing he was elected! So a decision is called for because the Holy Spirit has convicted you of sin and your need of salvation. John 1:11 states: "He came unto His own...they received Him not." It goes on in verse 12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." The individual has a choice "to receive" and "to believe." God does not save against someone's will.

6. WHOSOEVER MEANS ME AND YOU

Whosoever is better than your name. Someone else probably has the same name as you. So if your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life can you be sure it is you? Whosoever is more inclusive. When my wife bakes a cake or a pie, sometimes its for someone else or the church supper. So I have learned to ask. If she says its for "whoever" I know its includes me. The Baptist Faith and Message on its statement on salvation says: "Salvation...is offered freely to all;" is available "of all sinners who repents." It also emphasizes in its statement of "Grace," the free agency of man.

7. DANGERS OF NO WHOSOEVER

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- 1). Produces fatalists---we are puppets on a string.
- 2). Destroys free-will
- 3). Slackens our energies. Many reasons are given for the decline in baptisms for the last several years. Some of these reasons are valid. No one mentions the growth of the belief of "unconditional election" wave of doctrine.
- 4). Makes God's word contradict itself.
- 5). Makes God partial
- 6). Destroys, discourages evangelism and missions
- 7). Discourages prayer - A Baptist preacher was quoted in the magazine Christianity Today. He stopped praying for his father when he came to realize his father was not part of the elect and was doomed for hell. My question is if believed a person is saved or lost according to the "election," why pray for him in the first place.
- 8). Kills our best songs.
- 9). Kills all emotion in salvation
- 10). Makes for lazy Christians and preachers.

The Jewish rabbis said the Gentiles were fuel for the fires of hell, and heaven rejoiced when sinners went to hell. The Bible says, heaven rejoices when one sinner repents.

Calvin states (Institutes, Book 21, Section 5) God determines with Himself some are predestined to eternal life and some to eternal destruction. He said (Book 21, Section 17) God takes pleasure in dooming to destruction. In Book 12, Section 17 God has fixed the number and it pleases Him to demonstrate His wrath.

Fellow Baptists, this is serious business. Whosoever has been my passion in preaching these 63 years. Have I been preaching a false gospel. I don't think so!!