



Studies in Soteriology

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Soteriology Outline Studies

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INTRODUCTION

Word And Meaning

Soteriology is the study of *salvation*. The Greek word SOTERIOS or SOTERION is used in the New Testament over 100 times. Thus, it becomes a very important word and a very important study to students of scripture.

The theological term *Soteriology* comes from these Greek words. The word *save* is also used in the Old Testament when speaking of the wonders of God's deliverance to his people, Israel.

We can all remember the time when Moses stood at the Red Sea and said to the Hebrew people, *Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord* (Exod 14:13).

We can also remember when Peter was walking on the water after Jesus' invitation to do so, and Peter began to fall and cried out, *Lord, save me*. (Mat. 14:30).

James 5:15 speaks of the prayer of faith saving the sick and raising him up. But this is not the kind of salvation that is our interest in this study. We are speaking here of the spiritual salvation of the soul through Jesus Christ and only through him that gives eternal life to everyone that believeth (Rom. 1:16).

Interest of the Prophets

The Old Testament prophets had a keen interest in the idea that God could and would save people. They searched the scriptures to see if they could determine when this great transaction of redemption would take place,

to whom it would be revealed, and to whom it would pertain specifically. They could determine it only generally but not in a specific way.

They were, however, emotionally stirred by the very fact and the pure understanding that God provided salvation for men.

1 Peter 1:10 *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace [that should come] unto you:*

Not only so, but the angels themselves inquired into this very possibility. They, along with the prophets, looked into this wondrous subject.

1 Peter 1:12 *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

These prophets knew that the Savior would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). They also knew that he would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). They knew that he would be born of the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10).

Salvation of the Soul

In this study we are concerned with the

salvation of the soul, not the salvation of the body from illness or impending danger. Mark well asked in Mark 8:36 *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

It is not as important that our bodies be saved as for our souls to be saved. Paul encouraged the Corinth church to discipline (excommunicate) a member of that local church. See 1 Cor. 5:5 *To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* Paul was asking the church to discharge this man from their membership to Satan's world, admitting that the sins of this world will destroy the flesh, but he also admitted that in the end the man's spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The central subject of the entire Bible is the salvation of the souls of men. From the promise of God to Adam and Eve of a Messiah (Gen. 3:15) all the way through to the New Testament (Matt. 1:21) where Jesus is said to have come to save his people from their sins and throughout the entire divine record, salvation is the subject along with its author and finisher, Jesus Christ.

Jesus' Mention of Salvation

Jesus mentioned salvation much when he was here on the earth. He spoke of salvation when he talked with Nicodemus in John chapter three. He spoke of it again when he confronted Zacchaeus (Luke 19). He stated that he is the door: *by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved ...* (John 10:9).

But more than speaking of salvation, Jesus worked out our salvation through his work on the cross, and death, burial and resurrection, his shed blood, his substitution

for the sinner, his being lifted up as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness (John 12:32).

Jesus left much of the speaking of salvation to the apostles, and especially to the apostle Paul as he systematically laid down the thoughts of the Holy Spirit when he wrote his books of the New Testament.

Salvation as a Doctrine

We as Baptists believe in instant salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-10). We believe in eternal salvation (Phil. 1:6). But the doctrine of salvation takes in more than just that instantaneous new birth that comes when a person believes in Jesus Christ.

So we will be considering this subject in three tenses: past, present and future. For the past, we shall consider our condition before salvation and God's prevenient grace which was his watch-care until we came under the preaching of the Gospel and the work of grace in our hearts.

For the present, we shall consider the actual miracle of grace which God has wrought in our hearts that brought about a new creation in our lives (2 Cor. 5:17). We shall also under this section consider our sanctification, that growing in grace which leads us to maturity in Christ as we learn and submit ourselves to his will in this earthly life.

For the future, we shall consider what God has yet to do with us as his children, the eternal inheritance that we will experience, and the security of that possibility.

Structure in Outline Form

Let us take a look at this scheme of thought in picture form as we notice Figure 1.

Past - <u>Potential</u> : chosen to the potential of deliverance.	Foreknowledge, election, predestination, conviction, drawing, calling, gospel, common grace, prevenient grace
Present (1) - <u>Possession</u> : saved from the penalty of sin.	Grace, illumination, enabling, regeneration, faith, justification, repentance, conversion, indwelling, sealing, intercession,
Present (2) - <u>Possession</u> : saved from the power of sin.	Sanctification-maturity, hope, knowledge, preservation-perseverance, faith, works, commitment, leading, assurance
Future - <u>Prospect</u> : saved from the possibility or presence of sin.	2 nd Coming, glorification, inheritance, eternity, heaven, reign of Christ, rewards, praise to God, no more sin, victory etc.

Figure 1

The purpose in studying this subject in this way is to give us as believers an overall sketch of the subject and to give us a better appreciation of our free and glorious salvation.

Also, it is our desire that unbelievers will

hear this gospel of grace and repent of their sins and come to know Jesus Christ and him crucified, turn from their sins and trust Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls.

If these two things can be accomplished, then the purpose has been accomplished. God is the author of our salvation (Jonah 2:9), and it is to him that we owe not only our appreciation, praise and work, but also our dedication and praise, committing ourselves to faithful and fruitful lives as believers.

Pray with me that God will receive honor in this study and that we all will become more aware of the benefits of our salvation by God's free and undeserved grace.

In concluding the introduction to this great subject, I would like for us to consider a very short verse in Jer. 8:20, which says, *The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.*

I pray that everyone within the parameters of this message will be saved and know and understand what Jesus has done to bring our salvation to us, what God has given us in salvation, and what opportunities as well as challenges are awaiting those of us who will commit ourselves to his benefits.

PAST - FOREKNOWLEDGE

A Journey to the Past

We begin this odyssey of doctrinal thought far back in timeless eternity past before there was anything that we know physically, that which is real and tangible.

Theologians have in their minds played in this field of inquiry of timeless existence for many years. Some of those theologians surface to prominence with their writings and their in-depth thought and tantalize our brains with their learning and logic—Beza, Barth, Berkhof, Calvin, Boettner, etc.

But logic it is and nothing else. I am speaking of the doctrines that arise from a visit back in time to this time of eternal existence before time was ever created.

Theologians wander back to this timeless existence when there was nothing but God, and they endeavor to delve into the mind of God and surmise what God would be thinking in order to bring about his purpose in time and in timeless eternity future.

Two schools of thought exist in relation to this theology. One school of thought holds to the *supralapsarian* principle; the other school of thought holds to the *sublapsarian* or *infralapsarian* principle. Needless as it may seem, we must consider these two schools of thought, because they are brought up in conversations often.

Supralapsarianism

This long and perhaps strange-sounding word is from the Latin. The first part of the word is from *supra*, which means above or before. The last part of the word, *lapse*, is the same as our English word “lapse,” and it relates to the Fall of man. So, we have a

word that means literally “above or before the fall.” The theologians are interested in how God determined to do what he did or how he determined to execute his will through time and into timeless eternity future.

In the *supralapsarian* view God made determination in this order: (1) to elect some to eternal salvation and to leave others to themselves, (2) to create, (3) to permit the fall of man, (4) to provide salvation for the elect ones, and (5) to call the elect to salvation through the gospel. So, in this view, God elected before the fall of man.

You can see in this train of thought that election, which we will deal with later, was the first thing on God’s mind.

Infralapsarianism

Next we consider the train of thought called *infralapsarianism*. This word is made up of the word *infra*, which means “below” or “after” the fall. In this view God made determination in this order: (1) to create, (2) permit the fall of man, (3) elect some to salvation and leave others to themselves, (4) provide salvation for the elect, (5) call the elect to salvation. In this view God elected after the fall of man.

Arminianism

One other view that we must consider in this pattern of thought is that of what is now called *Arminianism*. In this view God’s determination was in this order: (1) create, (2) permit the fall, (3) provide salvation for everyone, (4) call everyone to salvation, (5) elect those who believe. In this view, God chooses his elect as they believe on Jesus Christ.

Calvinism

Calvinism is another train of thought named after the reformer, John Calvin. The followers of John Calvin take either one of the first two orders of thought: supralapsarianism or sublapsarianism. Some take one; some take the other.

As for me, I take neither as a basic principle of theology. I do not believe that any person has the right or the ability to determine the mind of God in timeless eternity past. I believe that we must take what the Bible says on these subjects and claim the promise of Deut. 29:29 *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

I am neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian, this latter name taken from Jacobus Arminius. I try to take what I believe from the Bible, and I am a Baptist because of my convictions on the Bible text.

Foreknowledge

Now that we have that little mess cleaned up and everyone is as clear as mud on the matter, let's go onto the subject at hand—the *foreknowledge* of God.

“There are two things concerning the foreknowledge of God about which many are in ignorance: the *meaning* of the term, and its Scriptural *scope*.”¹ So we shall consider this subject under these two topics as Bro. Pink has suggested.

¹A. W. Pink: http://www.pbministries.org/books/pink/Attributes/attrib_04.htm

Meaning and Scope

Rom. 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

The Greek word for “foreknow” is “pro” and “gnosko.” It means “to know beforehand.”

But this word means more in theology than just “to know beforehand.” It means “to know beforehand with intent,” and in salvation it means “to know beforehand with the intent to set affection upon the object of this knowledge.”

When God foreknew us, he determined beforehand to love us and to save us from our sins. He did not just simply look down through time in order to know us physically. This would not truly be foreknowledge but would be knowledge from experience.

Some would say that God looked down through time and saw that some men would believe in his Son and chose them upon this basis. This cannot be, because this would not be foreknowledge but experiential knowledge.

The meaning of the word “foreknow” is one that reaches further than just the cognitive usage of the word. It involves a feeling toward the one foreknown. The word is always used in reference to people, not to things. God did not foreknow things; he foreknew people with the intent to do good to them.

In Acts 2:23 we find these words: *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:* Notice the first word in the verse. This tells us that God's foreknowledge here was not to the event of the crucifixion but to the Lord himself as a person. The word is “him.”

Notice now Rom. 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* These verses are speaking of people, not actions or events.

In Rom. 11:2 we read, *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, These are people. He foreknew people, not events or actions.*

The last reference is in 1 Peter 1:2 *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.* So, God did not foreknow our repentance and faith. He did not foreknow our salvation as such, but he foreknew us individually and personally—he placed his affections on us that we might believe and trust in him. He loved us that we might be saved. This is God's foreknowledge. We are the objects of his foreknowledge.

If you are saved by God's grace, then you can be assured that sometime back in timeless eternity past God set his affection upon you personally for his own purpose and plan. This is so intense in its meaning that, once we get hold of it, we cannot let it go without becoming thankful in our hearts and committing ourselves to our Lord.

God's foreknowledge is based upon his decrees, his purpose and plan. God does not save any sinner because he foreknew or foresaw that he would believe; he saves the sinner because he purposed to do so in his own good judgment and reason.

God in timeless eternity past foreknew

me and determined, based upon his own purpose, that he would save me. He brought about that salvation in me through his own means and receives all the glory for it.

There is no merit in believing. We believed through grace (Acts 18:27). If that is so, it took God's originating act, his drawing us to him in order that we might believe. He did not draw us because he knew we would believe. He enacted the persuasion in us that brought us through the preaching of the Gospel to our faith in Jesus Christ.

In this lesson we must learn that all glory goes to God. He receives all the praise and all the credit for our salvation, because there is no merit in anything but God himself and his Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Thus, foreknowledge comes from God, extends in affection to us, then turns back and gives all credit and glory to God. Thanksgiving must redound to the glory of God (2 Cor. 4:15).

PAST - ELECTION

What Is Election

The word for “election” in the Greek New Testament is the word *eklektos*, and it means “to pick out or choose.” This is the work that God does in election. This is the word from which our word *eclectic* comes, I think, after being washed through Latin.

We should not fear this word, because it is used 23 times in the New Testament in one form or another.

Mark 13:20 *And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.*

Here we have a redundancy, the Lord's using the word “elect” and “chosen” in the same verse, which is the same word used both times. God's divine purpose in salvation is, then, toward the elect, the chosen.

Now, if there is a choosing, then there is one who chooses. Some today would say that the sinner chooses himself. There is a philosophy that God has one vote for you, the Devil has another vote against you, and you cast the deciding vote. Well, if that is the way election works, then it is not election at all—it is a lottery or at best guesswork.

If God voted for you and you are not saved, then God made a mistake for voting for you. If the Devil voted against you and you are not saved, then the Devil is the winner, and God's victory of the Devil has no value at all.

If you chose yourself, then God is not choosing, and you do not belong to him but to yourself. I am not the choosing one; I am the chosen one. Notice Mark 13:20 says, “whom HE hath chosen.”

However, I admit that, when the Lord shows us by his Holy Spirit that we have been chosen by him and “accepted in the beloved,”

we immediately respond to that in a positive way, and we look to him, find him, receive him, believe on him, and we are in favor of the transaction. God does not choose and save us against our will, but he tenderly changes our will to desire the things in the spiritual realm and the glories of heaven.

What Does Election Do?

Election sets certain people upon his mind for special love, compassion, benefit, and an eventual assurance that God is the author of our salvation and the finisher of our faith.

Election guarantees that we shall be saved. Election is not salvation, nor is salvation based upon election alone. It is simply God's plan before the foundation of the world to save people from their sins.

Because of God's election, our names are written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world.

Rev. 17:8 *The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. See also Phil. 4:3; Rev. 20:15; 21:27.*

Look At The Word Chosen

John 15:19 *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

Just as the Lord chose his twelve apostles out of the world, so he has called us out of the world with this same election. To be chosen is to be picked out at the exclusion of others. This goes against the grain of the human emotion, but it is nonetheless true with God.

Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

This makes the whole concept a little simpler and to the point. There is no doubt what this verse tells us. God has chosen US in him before the foundation of the world.

He did that so that we would be holy and without blame before him in love. This does not mean that the Lord chose that we should do holy things and try to do our best. It means that his election and choosing of us guarantees that we shall be one day delivered to his Father perfect and without blame in love.

Jude 1:24 *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ...*

And this he will do, because this is the purpose and plan of God in Jesus Christ. We shall be presented to God the Father faultless in his presence with the exceeding joy of Jesus Christ, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the angels of heaven (Jude 1:24).

What Has God Chosen Us To?

2 Thessalonians 2:13 *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

God's election is "unto salvation;" and when God speaks of salvation, it is eternal

salvation. He has chosen us to eternal life; therefore, we cannot lose that life. We are safe in him due to his election. Eternal security is based upon God's election, because we are chosen in him unto salvation before the foundation of the world.

If election is anything less than what we have considered, then our salvation is not sure. If we must wait until we believe for God's election to take place, then we must wait until we have died before we can be sure that we are going to heaven. This is only logical, and it is scriptural.

1 Peter 2:9 *But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:* The word "peculiar" in this verse means "of his own," so we are a people of his own-chosen.

Election Is Not Salvation

I want to emphasize again that election is not salvation. We are not saved because we are elected. We are saved because Jesus died for our sins and because his grace was effective in our lives and we trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. No, election is not salvation; we are elected TO salvation.

If you are lost today, you do not need to determine whether you are elected or not; you need to know whether you have repented of your sins and have trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

If you are saved, isn't it wonderful to know that God receives all the glory.

Election Is Not A Random Selection

God does not make random selections. What God does has a purpose, and that

purpose is designed to be fulfilled, and it will be fulfilled.

Rom. 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.*

The election of God is based upon this purpose, and this purpose is good for them who are called. We know that God's purpose cannot be thwarted.

Daniel 4:35 *And all the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and [among] the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

When Were We Elected?

2 Timothy 1:9 *Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

The purpose of God was given to us before the world began. His purpose was to save us and call us with a holy calling and that not according to our works.

Now, if God says this, we as his children should have no problem with it. We should not second-guess God. We should not say that he is not fair or just in what he does.

We Are Chosen To Be Given To Christ

John 6:39 *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which*

he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

God gave some to his Son, Jesus Christ, that he might save them and lose nothing. There is not even one person whom God gave to his son that will be lost; they all will be saved because of the guarantee of the election of God in timeless eternity past.

John 6:37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

John 6:40 *And 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 17:2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

John 17:9 *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*

What Does Election Mean To You As A Christian?

Election means that God had his mind on you before the world began. It means that your name was written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world.

You were not saved before the foundation of the world, but you were chosen in him before the foundation of the

world, and God's election is the assurance that you would hear the Gospel of grace and come to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

Election guarantees that you will be kept by the power of God unto the day of redemption and that you will have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God unto salvation.

The doctrine of election is for mature Christians. I hope today that you are a mature Christian. If you are, you will rejoice in this doctrine and will praise the Lord and give thanks to him for what he has done in your behalf.

Who Are The Elect?

With the effect of the fall of Adam abiding upon each one of us and with that same knowledge and wisdom of the world, we do not and cannot know who the elect are. God has not revealed this to any man except in a general way. He told Paul regarding Corinth, "I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10).

So, if I do not know who the elect are and you do not know who the elect are (but only God knows), then how should we deal with the elect? We should preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). You may be surprised one day who will be and who will not be in heaven.

You In Heaven

I was shocked, confused, bewildered
As I entered Heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of it all,
Nor the lights or its decor.
But it was the folks in Heaven
Who made me sputter and gasp—
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics, the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbor
Who never said anything nice.
Herb, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, "What's the deal?
I would love to hear your take.
How'd all these sinners get up here?
God must've made a mistake.
And why's everyone so quiet,
So somber? Give me a clue."
"Hush, child," said he, "they're all in shock
No one thought they'd be seeing you." -Copied

PAST – PREVENIENT GRACE

The word prevenient means “coming before, preceding.” We all know that grace means “unmerited favor,” or a benefit from God’s own free will. So, prevenient grace refers to God’s benefit to his elect before their actual regeneration and salvation.

Gal. 1:15 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called [me] by his grace . . .* This wonderful verse of scripture explains to us that God separated Paul from his mother’s womb, which reveals much about God’s prevenient grace.

First, this reveals to us that God was with Paul in the womb of his mother, protecting him from harm until he was separated from his mother’s womb or born into the world.

Isaiah 49:5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb [to be] his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

Secondly, the Lord separated Paul from the womb (Gal. 1:15). God had formed him in the womb, and now God separates him from his mother’s womb, meaning that he was born.

Thirdly he called Paul by his grace. This was the Spirit of God’s coming upon Paul to show him his sinfulness and to enlighten him of the need of Jesus Christ as his substitute. This happened on the road to Damascus.

Now look at Gal.1:16 *To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*

Fourthly, then, the Son of God, Jesus was

revealed to Paul when he saw the great light from heaven and saw the Lord himself.

Fifthly, he was “ordained a preacher” of righteousness to the Gentiles (heathen). 1 Tim. 2:7 *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, [and] lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

So, in prevenient grace God sets a mold for our lives, and we are being fashioned in that mold even before we acknowledge his benefits, his mercy, his grace in believing in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Formative Grace

Even before we were born the purpose of God was working in our lives. Charles Spurgeon says that prevenient grace is “a working of them in the clay.”² He shows this by referring to the creation of Adam from the dust of the earth. Before he was ever Adam, complete and whole as a man, he was dust in preparation just as we are clay in the preparation before we come to full assurance of our faith in Jesus Christ through salvation.

Before God brought the apostle Paul to salvation and apostleship, he first trained him at the feet of Gamaliel. Before Paul was saved, he was “the chief of sinners.” He was diligent about his work. He was diligent and faithful to hold the clothes of a young man named Stephen before Stephen was stoned to death as a believer. This diligence is what God gave him so that he could be used in God’s vineyard.

Before God revealed a message to

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Spurgeon’s Sermons on Sovereignty, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Baptist Examiner Book Shop, Ashland, Kentucky, 1959, pg.108.

Ezekiel, he gave Ezekiel an imagination. Before God used Jeremiah, he gave him a great affection for God's people. God put even his Son in the human mold and made him the perfect man, the suffering Savior, the ultimate person and the coming king.

God worked in the lives of these people, because God had a work to do that would fit each one of these, including the apostles and the ladies of the New Testament that God used to bring about his purpose. This is formative grace.

Preventive Grace

Just as God "... *brake up for (the sea) my decreed [place], and set bars and doors* (Job 38:10), so has God put restraints upon our lives, many of us, who would have long ago gone deep into sin or would have ruined our own lives with such sins as would have taken our own lives from us, but God's preventive grace placed bars and doors that we would not go into these depths of sin.

The blind man cannot see that which he is not to see, because God's preventive grace is willing that he not see it.

The crippled man's feet will not go, because God's preventive grace is willing that he not go and do what he could have done if he were not made lame.

The young man's or woman's dream of dancing on the dance floor with a swooning partner could not happen because God gave him or her a wonderful mother who would not allow it.

The man who would have lost himself in the love of his money could not have that temptation, because God was sure to put him in a family of deep poverty to mold him into what God wanted him to be.

The young heart which may have had hatred and murder in it has been restrained

by the hand of a stern father who would not allow a child's anger to go beyond what it should. This is God's preventive grace.

Yes, many things that we take for granted in our lives may very well be observations of God's prevenient grace if we would only take the time to ponder them.

Are you short or tall? Are you quick or slow in your actions? Are you musically inclined or not? Are you good at math, or are you better at grammar or literature? These things God holds deep in his store of implements to be used in his prevenient grace long before we ever come to know him as our personal Savior and love him as our friend and serve him with our whole heart.

Preparatory Grace

What do you think was the difference between the men of Thessalonica and the men at Berea?

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

I think it is God's prevenient grace, because he prepared the hearts of the Bereans to receive the word of God. The seed fell on good ground. This ground was prepared before the preaching of the Gospel came to Berea.

Now the preparatory work of good ground must be done, but sometimes it is done slowly, and sometimes it is done quickly. When the spring rains make the

land too wet to till, the farmer must wait until the rains subside before he can go and prepare the soul for sowing; and this preparation must be done quickly lest the sowing be too late and the crop fail.

In another season, the rains may not come in so great a drenching, and the farmer may from day to day go into the field and prepare the ground slowly as he wishes and will tenderly work with it, plowing, then harrowing or discing it until a tender clod is made suitable for the sowing of the seeds or planting of the seedlings to bring forth a very proper harvest.

God has so prepared the hearts of us who are his children. For some of us, he slowly prepared our hearts for his winning and for our conversion. He began early in life to sweeten our minds and hearts toward the things of God. Many of us here today as very young children had a longing to know about God, read his word and understand the things that God has for us, while others who are here today had occasion and took that occasion to turn toward sin and harden their hearts, adjusting them to the leanings of the world and sin. Then God at the last broke your heart suddenly, perhaps upon the hearing of one sharp sermon against your sins.

And so the apostle Paul turned from being God's enemy to his friend in a moment, without first looking for him or desiring him, Saul of Tarsus changed from foe to friend.

God can do this either way he wants, but it is proof plenty of God's prevenient grace. God began to pique my interest in the things of God at a very young age. I wanted, not to live as the world and curse and steal and murder, but to live above that and please God. He gave me parents who had a deep love for the things of God, and God used that to tenderize my depraved heart toward him and his love for me so that, when I was 13 years

old, he tenderly gave me repentance and faith, and I was gloriously saved.

God restrained me with the malady of Polio, for what reason I do not know, and I do not want to know, but I do know this, that it was his prevenient grace, and I cannot protest that. Therefore, if you have a weakness, a handicap, a limitation of some kind, do not resist against God about it. It is a part of his prevenient grace, and you will be the more blessed if you will admit it and thank God that he was gracious to you even before you were saved. He is so loving, so tender, so kind to all of us.

Conclusion & Invitation

With all of this discussion of prevenient grace and its operation in a man or woman before salvation, we must not lose sight of the very purpose of grace. That grace, whether prevenient or present or future is all designed for the salvation of the soul of sinners. It is God's act of divine mercy toward a depraved sinner who has no way in himself to rise to heaven or to convert his life.

If you can today turn from your sins and trust the Lord Jesus Christ, in his death, burial and resurrection and his eternal intercession for us, then you can know the grace of God first hand. You can experience and know that of which I speak to you today.

Isaiah 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else.

The invitation is certain and sure. It is for the entire world as far as the preaching of the Gospel is concerned. The message of

grace reaches out to all men and will reach those whom God would by his own divine wisdom call to himself by grace.

Has he called you today? Have you seen your life as worthless and undone and unworthy of the Savior? Are you sorrowful of your sins? You can be cleansed today by his blood, for the scripture says, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin" (I John 1:9).

The Lord has for your whole life shed mercy upon your body and mind. He may have been preparing you for the hearing of the Gospel today. Look to him and realize that his leadership in your life is divine and is of a significant purpose. He is drawing you to himself with expectant arms just as the father of the prodigal drew his own son to himself with his own love. The love of God constrains us. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Come to the Savior today. You will see that he has been preparing you for this day all of your life. He has touched your life, saved you from harm, blessed you in special ways just so that you would see him eventually as your Lord and Savior, so that he can keep you by the power of the Holy Spirit and take you to be with him in heaven.

Don't delay! Come today! Trust him, and he will make you whole. He will give your life purpose and direction. He will lead you unto the truth of the scriptures, and you will be directed by his Holy Spirit to live a life that will have meaning.

E'er long I waited till I found
The repercussions of the sound
Of Gospel message loud proclaimed
To come and trust in Jesus' name.

Ne'er had I ever thought
That his name could e'er be sought,

But through the years his tender grace
Brought me to this lovely place.

Surrendered love and faith divine
No other grace could make him mine
His loving grace as years go by
Has brought his great salvation nigh.

Ronnie Wolfe - March 9, 2006

To Whom Does Preventive Grace Apply?

To many the doctrine of Preventive Grace applies to all people without respect. They teach that God deals with people through their entire lives, bringing them to trust in him. Eventually they will either believe on him or reject him.

This sounds logical until we give a little thought to a verse in Philippians:

Phil. 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:

If God ever began a good work in you such as leading, conviction of sin, or whatever work he may do to bring you to salvation, he will perform that work until the day of Jesus Christ. He is not about to turn back from his purpose.

So, the doctrine of Preventive Grace belongs to God's elect alone and to no one else. God does not lead every man the same. He leads one to repentance: Rom. 2:4 *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* He leads only his elect to repentance. He disregards another person according to his own will and purpose. Rom.

9:15 *For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

PAST - CALLING AND THE GOSPEL

What Is The Gospel?

1 Cor. 15:1 *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

The gospel is a message. It is the good news or good message. Paul takes the time in these verses to explain to us what this message is. Briefly, it is the message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is important that we know this message, because it must be preached to every creature.

Mark 16:15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

The churches of the Lord Jesus are to be busy about preaching this message to every creature; that is, to every human being. The gospel is not given for animals and trees.

It is our great privilege to take this message around the world, beginning at home and then progressing outward to include all nations.

How Many Gospels Are There?

This is a simple message. It need not be complicated, because the complicated part God handled. The simple part is its message, and that is where we come in. We may never

understand all the complexities of the work of God that brought about this wonderful message, but the message must be learned in a specific way, because God will bless no other gospel than that which Paul the apostle gave to believers and that our Lord instituted in his ministry.

Gal. 1:6 *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

When Paul speaks here of “another gospel,” he is not intimating that there might be another true gospel but that any other message that is called the gospel is not truly the one gospel that will save.

This is the only gospel that will save a man, woman, boy or girl. It is the only message that has the power to save, and without it no one can be saved.

The Power of the Gospel

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

The word for power here is “dunamis” in the Greek and it means power like dynamite. When the gospel is preached, it does what God wants it to do. God’s word does not return unto him void.

Isaiah 55:11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it.*

As God allows his word to be sent out to people around the world, it does exactly what it is supposed to do.

2 Cor. 2:16 *To the one [we are] the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who [is] sufficient for these things?*

The message of the gospel is a message of death to those who will never trust it and believe it. It will be their destruction, and they will awake in hell hearing the message over and over perhaps. They will cringe at the thought of pushing this message aside.

But this gospel message is a message of life to God's elect. The message is sweet to them; and when they hear it for the first time in their hearts, they repent of their sins and trust Jesus Christ, his death, burial and resurrection for eternal life that is given to them. They will rejoice throughout all eternity for the saving grace of God and the message that brought them to know they were sinners and taught them that they needed to turn from their sins and trust Jesus Christ.

The Gospel and the Calling of God

There is a *general* and a *special* call of God. There is a *universal* and an *effectual* call of God through the gospel.

The Gospel is to be preached to every creature, and that is without exception. We are not to choose our audience according to our own personal preferences, according to

race or creed or any other standard. We are to preach the gospel to all. This is the *general* call. This sincere call of God goes to all creatures. This must be; otherwise, preachers would need to know who the elect are so that they could preach to no one else but them. But God has not revealed the elect to us. Only God knows for sure who is saved and who is not.

When I preach, I am preaching to you, whether you are lost or saved. I am preaching to you whether you ever will be saved or not. This message is for everyone. This must be so that those who will repent and trust Jesus Christ will hear this wonderful message, their hearts will be turned, and they will see the beauty of their Lord and be converted and be the children of God.

Some people will hear this message of the gospel and will not turn from their sins and trust Jesus Christ, but they will take it into their bosoms and will desire their children to hear it and encourage them to stay under its teaching and preaching.

Others will hear this message and will have nothing to do with it but will hate it and will do everything possible to rid the world of such a ridiculous message. Some will even go to lengths to kill those who preach this message. Our history is replete with incidents of this cruel punishment upon God's preachers of good news.

This simple message is detestable to the highly educated with worldly wisdom.

1 Cor. 2:1 *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

They have thought this message too low for their highbrow intelligence, their worldly intelligence that would save no one. They would see the whole world go to hell (which they think does not exist) in order to save their high-minded rhetoric.

But they must remember that this ancient message of the gospel has not changed throughout its history. It was not so clear but was effective in the Old Testament. From the time of Jesus Christ the message has been clear and plain, and it has been the power behind a myriad lives being changed to bring us a world that is much better than it would be without its effect.

The message of the gospel is at the foundation of the United States of America. The message of the gospel was the foundation of our education system in early America. The message of the gospel is the foundation of our medical system, our legal system, and our benevolence system.

This is a good message for all. It is a sweet message of how a precious Savior came to earth from heaven and lived among men that he might give his life a ransom for many. It is a precious message to those who have believed it and who have families who live together in harmony because of it.

Then there is that *special* call of the gospel where this message rings loud and clear to those who are burdened with sin, those who have lived their lives astray from God and who need their sins cleansed and dismissed.

The gospel is the only message that seeks out and finds every elect of God and brings him to a knowledge of his sins and shows him the Savior, Jesus Christ, dying on the cross for his sins, shedding his blood to cover the sins of the believer. It is the only message that will bring peace to that troubled soul who has come to his last attempt at living life and cannot live any longer without God and Jesus

Christ.

This is called a *special* call or an *effectual* call, because it affects only the elect of God, the lost sheep. He finds his precious sheep, and he draws them to himself. He calls their name, and they hear his message.

John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

He calls their names by the preaching of the gospel. Each and every one of his sheep hear the message, and they follow him. He gives them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

John 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

This drawing is done by the preaching of the gospel. The difference is in the effect that it has on the heart. In this special call, God turns the heart and tenderly changes the will to see and understand God as never before. He gives his lost sheep new life, and they have eternal life.

What Is The Message of the Call?

Isaiah 55:1 *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without*

price.

Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Matt. 11:28 Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

PAST - THE ATONEMENT

Rom. 5:11 *And not only [so], but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

This is the only place the English word “atonement” is used in the New Testament. The word means “to bring into favor,” or to reconcile.

So, in the atonement, the satisfaction that Jesus Christ made on the cross, is a process by which we are brought into favor with God by the payment of a ransom. God required it, and Jesus paid it. By that payment Jesus brought us to God.

1 Peter 3:18 *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*

His death was a substitutionary death. The song says, “I should have been crucified, I should have suffered and died.” He paid the price for me; and because he suffered in my place, I do not have to suffer my own punishment in hell. What a wonderful thing the Lord did for his children! He made a way for each one of his people to come to his Father. He said in John 14:6 ... *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

The Necessity of the Atonement

Notice that the atonement of Jesus Christ was necessary. Notice these scriptures:

Mark 8:31 *And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and [of] the chief priests, and*

scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Luke 17:25 *But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.*

John 3:14 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:*

Acts 17:3 *Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.*

Here are some reasons why his atonement was necessary:

(1) Because of God’s righteousness and justice. Psalms 89:14 *Justice and judgment [are] the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

Rom. 9:14 *What shall we say then? [Is there] unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*

So, God’s perfect righteousness demands an atonement in our behalf. No righteousness can be had from any other source than from God, and that righteousness comes through his atonement.

When Jesus was baptized, he made an interesting statement in Matt. 3:15 *And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer [it to be so] now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*

He said, “it becometh US to fulfill all righteousness.” He was baptized to show that he would die, be buried and resurrect to perform the righteousness that we need for our salvation. We are baptized because it is a righteous act which comes from his death, burial and resurrection and faith in that Gospel and him as our Savior.

(2) Because of God’s holiness. Exod.

15:11 *Who [is] like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who [is] like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful [in] praises, doing wonders?*

Holiness is the opposite of sin, and only God has perfect holiness, which we need if we are to live in his Heaven. Heb. 12:14 *Follow peace with all [men], and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

(3) Because of God's law. Rom. 1:18 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

Gal. 3:12 *And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.*

Rom. 6:23 *For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

1 John 3:4 *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

(4) Because of Obedience. Obedience must be perfect. James 2:10 *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one [point], he is guilty of all.* Even one offense of the law makes us guilty of the whole law of God. Only Jesus Christ obeyed the law perfectly. Then he transferred that perfect obedience to us when we believed in him.

Obedience must be *perpetual*. Deut. 5:29 *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*

The Extent of the Atonement

Much has been made of this subject, but we will speak of it briefly.

If God foreknew his people, and if God's justice must be met on an exact scale; then how can Jesus Christ die for everyone in the world when he knows those that are his, and he knows those who will not come to him (John 5:40)? He could not overpay the price of God's justice and judgment and allow certain ones to be doomed; otherwise, he would be guilty of double jeopardy—once dying for his own people and once for the Devil's people (John 8:44).

The Cause of the Atonement

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

The cause was not because of the necessity; it was not because of a demand from human beings; it was not because man begged Jesus to die. The cause was LOVE.

1 John 4:9 *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell
It goes beyond the highest star
And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled
and pardoned from his sin

Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!

How measureless and strong!
It shall forever more endure
The saints' and angels' song.

Rom. 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

To the sinner who is right now doomed to hell's fire, come to Jesus and be saved. You will see that love. You will understand his care. You will wonder why you had not earlier trusted him. He is so sweet a friend and brother.

If you are that sinner, won't you now trust in the Lord's death, burial and resurrection, believing him for eternal life? He will certainly save you if you do.

PRESENT - SAVING GRACE OF GOD

John 1:14. Grace, what a wonderful word! It has a smooth quality to it as you easily speak it from your mouth. The Greek word for grace, CHARIS, means “a gift.” Grace, then, is first of all, a gift from God.

Grace, A Gift From God

Actually, grace is not the actual gift that is given, but it is the name of the act of God whereby he gives us repentance, faith and eternal life, etc.

We have talked about prevenient grace, which watches over the lost man and brings him under the preaching of the Gospel. Now we are concerned with that grace that comes to us in the moments of conviction of sin and true repentance from dead works to the living God, that grace which saves us for sure and for good.

Saving grace is a grace that is given to us at the time of salvation; it is not given before the Holy Spirit begins to regenerate us and bring us to God. It was not inherent in man before his salvation; it was not abiding with him before he was brought to conviction and repentance. This is a special grace given at a special time. It cannot be sought, and it cannot be earned. It is sent from above, from Heaven. That is the reason the Bible says “Ye must be born again (John 3:3). Actually the Greek for “born again” is “born from above.”

Before grace can do anything down here, something must happen from above. God must send his grace to us. If he doesn't, then it will never come.

John 1:17 *For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

Acts 18:27 *And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:*

Grace Is A Free Gift

Rom. 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

This verse says that justification (salvation) is free by God's grace but only through redemption. Redemption is the payment that Jesus made on the cross for our sins. It was there on the cross that Jesus laid down his life and paid for all of my sins.

Salvation is free to the believer, but it is not free to the Lord. The Lord has paid a great price for my soul. He was willing to come to a sinful earth, be put into a body like my body and be made sin for me that I might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:21).

Abounding Grace

How big is grace? What will it do? What will it accomplish?

Rom. 5:20 *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

To abound means to run over, to be more than sufficient. I am reminded of Psalm 23:5 *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

Sometimes grace is more than I can bear practically. Sometimes, when God is showering blessings upon me in my life, both spiritual and physical, it seems to be almost overwhelming. His grace abounds.

Paul said in the verse we just read in Rom. 5:20, where sin abounded, went over our heads, was overbearing and overwhelming to us, grace did MUCH MORE abound, suppressing our sins and ridding us of every one of them. Grace met the demands of the law through Jesus Christ. Grace brought us up out of sin and set us on a solid rock.

Grace abounds in God's word. The word grace is found in the New Testament 122 times. We need to study grace and love grace and depend upon God's grace for our lives.

Reaching & Lifting Grace

Grace reached to the bottom and lifted all way to the top. Ephesians 4:9 (*Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.*)

I was at the bottom, and God's grace lifted me up.

From sinking sand, He lifted me,
With tender hand, He lifted me,
From shades of night to planes of light,
O praise His name, He lifted me!

In my sins I was far from God and was down in the pits of death. I had no heart for God; I had no desire for God; I had no righteousness to offer him; I had no goodness in my whole being. But he came down into the heart of the earth. He was dead in the flesh as I was dead in the spirit.

1 Peter 1:3 *Blessed [be] the God and*

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

It was through the resurrection of Jesus Christ that I was raised up from my death into a new life which cannot be reached by man's efforts.

1 Timothy 6:16 *Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom [be] honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

This is where Jesus brought me: to his light eternal and to a hope of entering into that celestial city where he will be the light. Now Jesus is the light of life for me; then he will be the light of that glorious city—the New Jerusalem.

The Gospel of Grace

Acts 20:24 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

Paul was willing to proclaim this message of grace wherever he went. He did not care how rich or poor, how famous or infamous a person was, he knew that they all needed the Gospel of God's grace.

Notice, this is not a gospel of works. There is no Gospel of works. Rom. 4:4 *Now to him that worketh is the reward not*

reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Jesus gave a commission to his disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature. This is not a Gospel of works, which many teach today, having perverted the grace of God.

Many teachers and preachers today are fallen from grace, which means that they have turned from the teaching of grace to a message of works and a social gospel.

Brethren and sisters, we must not turn from grace or fall away from teaching it. We must continue to teach and preach grace in our generation and show it to our children so they, too, will be teaching their children of this wonderful grace.

Free Grace

Now, not all that is called grace is real grace. Some would say that the grace of God follows the pleading of the sinner; but I say to you that, if the sinner has not received the grace of God first, he will never in a million years plead for his soul.

As I have already stated, when I was 13 years old, I was as righteous as I wanted to be. I did not know that I needed a Savior; I thought I already had Jesus as my Savior. It was not until his grace fell upon me freely on that day that I saw myself a worthless sinner. It was not until then that I truly believed and trusted in him as my Savior.

If God had waited for me to plead for my salvation, he would have waited an eternity, because I did not know I was lost. Therefore, it took God's grace to bring me to repentance and faith in him.

And this is not a common grace which resides in every person on earth, a common grace that works in our lives to allow us

approach God. There is no such grace as this that is bestowed upon us at conception. The grace of God in salvation operates on us at the time we are being convicted and brought to him, drawn to him by his power.

If God had given all of us common grace that was sufficient to believe upon him, then grace would not be free. Grace's being free means that God can execute it anytime and in any way he wants without reservation. It is free, also, to us; because in our sinful state we cannot approach the light of righteousness. It requires the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to us to make us righteous. If we had a common grace worthy of believing, then we would already be righteous.

God's grace is free in his hands to do with as he pleases, and it is free to us, because he saves us without charge to us.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Rom. 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Amazing Grace

How amazing, this grace which reached down from heaven in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and put him on the cross in my place so that he could die instead of me, that he could suffer instead of me, that my hell would be laid upon him.

How amazing this grace which satisfied the justice and judgment of God for me! How amazing this grace which came to my soul and saved me from a world of sin and

from the wrath of God to come, from hell itself
and from the fear of ever going there.

How amazing this grace that works in my
life every day to bring me to service of my
Lord, Jesus Christ! How amazing that he
would call me to preach the Gospel of grace
and to sustain me by his grace and to give me
promise that his grace will continue upon me
throughout all eternity!

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found,
Blind but now I see.

Read Eph. 2:8-9

PRESENT - REDEMPTION

To redeem means to pay a debt, to pay a mortgage balance, to purchase property that is about to be foreclosed.

Redemption is deliverance by a price from a worse state to a better state. Notice God's redemption of Israel from Egypt.

Redemption also indicates a deliverance which demands by the relief in the deliverance a service to the Redeemer: keeping the law.

A Purchased People

National Israel was delivered by a purchase.

Exod. 15:16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be [as] still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, [which] thou hast purchased.

Deut .32:6 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? [is] not he thy father [that] hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?

We were redeemed spiritually by Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers;

A Purchase of Blood

National Israel was purchased

symbolically by the blood of bulls and goats.

Exod. 12:13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye [are]: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy [you], when I smite the land of Egypt.

We are purchased spiritually by Jesus' blood.

Eph. 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

1 Peter 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Apolutrosis Redemption

Apolutrosis means a loosing away from something. When we are redeemed, we are taken away from something: away from our old life, away from death to life, away from night to day, etc. We are taken away from the Devil's clutches and the world's defeat.

Matt. 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The payment is not just canceled but is

fully paid. Otherwise, God's justice could not be met, and we would still be in our sins.

This payment is not by exercise of power, doctrine, example, moral influence, subjective influence on people, but by satisfaction of God's divine justice.

God's redemption is a ransom from the curse of the law, exercising mercy toward the sinner:

Gal. 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree:

Ekagorazo Redemption

Ekagorazo has to do with the marketplace, since the word **agorazo** means "marketplace." The word literally means "out of the market."

The idea comes from the selling and buying of slaves, which was very popular in Bible days. This is as if the sinner is on the slave market for sale to the highest bidder. Jesus purchased me and brought me out of the slave market. When that was done, the slave could never be on sale again.

In the Old Testament, when a slave was bought in this way, the master would mark the slave as his own, and the slave would serve him for the rest of his life, and he could not be sold ever again.

Exod. 21:6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

But this word also has to do with the

purchase of a slave for the benefit of the owner. We have been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ for his honor and glory. He saved us to bring glory to himself, which is the ultimate purpose of redemption.

Gal. 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Rev. 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Rev. 14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, [being] the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Conclusion

Have you been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ? Are you saved by his grace?

To be redeemed means to be loosed from the wrath of God, the bonds of sin, and the curse of the law. You are loosed when you repent of your sins and trust Jesus Christ as your Savior with nothing added.

PRESENT - ILLUMINATION

Matt. 4:16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

Into The Darkness By The Fall

When Adam was created, he was in perfect light. He could see clearly God's creation and could understand it with a perfectly formed brain. He could appreciate what God had done. He could speak to God audibly, and God spoke to him audibly. Each day, it seems, God came into the garden and spoke to both Adam and Eve with an audible voice, and they enjoyed his fellowship. That must have been a wonderful relationship!

But when Satan entered the Garden of Eden, things began to change. Satan must have hated the light that was glistening in the garden. He must have hated the fellowship that Adam and Eve had with God.

Now, when Satan entered the garden, sin did not enter. Satan's sin was on a different level than that of Adam and Eve. He lived in the spiritual realm, and sin affected that sphere of angels and unseen things. Satan wanted earth to be as cursed as he was, so he tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit.

When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, sin entered into the world.

Rom. 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Then death passed upon all men, not only physical death, but spiritual death. This death is darkness. We know that, because that is what we are delivered from when we

are saved. God brings us out of darkness into the light.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

We know this, because men love darkness rather than light (John 3:19). Oh, that deep darkness that sin shrouds over our being! Oh, that lonely night in which the sinner lives! Oh, that hard darkness that keeps us from seeing the light of life in Jesus Christ! Oh, the desperate condition that the sinner is in, not being able to approach the light that will save his soul! What hopelessness this is! What danger abides upon this sinner. What wrath of God, who destroys darkness with an eternal destruction in the end!

The Unapproachable Light

1 Tim. 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom [be] honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Man cannot approach the brightness of the light of Jesus Christ. Jesus exists and lives in a brightness that cannot be comprehended by man in his own mind.

John 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Helpless is the sinner who endeavors to

approach the light of Jesus Christ on his own. Many have thought that they could approach the righteousness of Jesus Christ on their own effort and merit, but they are sadly mistaken.

So, because we are helpless to approach this light, we must be brought to the light, and that is just what our Lord does for us.

2 Cor. 4:6 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

God commanded the light (Jesus Christ) to shine out of darkness, and that same God has shined in our hearts to give us light. This is the only way we can receive true light: it must come from God. This is done by his grace.

1 Peter 2:9 *But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Notice here he called us out of darkness. If we had not been called out, then we would never have come out.

How many times have you had to call your children away from a dangerous place because they did not know it was dangerous? The Lord called us out of darkness, because we did not know that we were in the darkness. We did not know the peril that lay ahead of us. We did not know that we were slowly slipping into hell.

When I was saved at 13 years of age, I did not know that I needed a Savior. I thought I was already saved, so I was not looking for

one. I was still in the darkness and did not know it. But God shined the light in my heart, and now I am saved. He called me out of darkness into his marvelous light, and it is very marvelous. I can see things that I could not see before, spiritual things that my carnal eyes could not comprehend.

1 John 2:8 *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*

When God by his grace has called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light, the darkness is past or is passing away.

It is as if we are looking at the progression of the night into morning. The darkness is slowly passing away, and the light of the new day is coming.

We have been called out of darkness, and we now are living in the light, but that light does not have the brilliance of the new day that will arise when Jesus comes again.

Every believer should realize that the darkness of sin and the world is passing in his life, and we should all live that way. This old world is on its way out, and a new kingdom is on its way in.

2 Peter 1:19 *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day stars arise in your hearts:*

If you are saved, the light of the Gospel is shining in your life, the light of life is in you by Jesus Christ, and that light is shining in a dark place, this world, where we still live. This light will shine in the

world until the day dawn. At dawn the day star (Jesus Christ) will arise in our hearts, and we will live in a new day, a day when all darkness will be erased and will vanish away. We will never see the darkness again. The darkness of sin and disgrace has been cast into the Lake of Fire with the Devil and his angels.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to hell, and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Read Jude 1:11-13

Rev. 16:10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

This is the end of those who never see the light, those who are never called to the light and who never receive the light.

If you have never trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, then you have never seen the light. You have never come into the light, and you will be in darkness for eternity.

If you know that God is calling you by his Gospel to trust Jesus Christ, his death, burial and resurrection, his shed blood, and his righteous life; then trust him today.

So many today are living in darkness. They need a new life, which is the new birth. You must be born into this kingdom of light. You must be born again or born from above. May God grant it today for you!

This is illumination. This is the work of grace: an opening of our eyes that we may see, a brightness of his glory shining in our hearts and lives.

Matt. 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

We are the only light that some people see. They must not see us as the light. It was said of John the Baptist:

John 1:8 He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light.

Our witness of the light is so crucial in this dark world. Do not belittle your witness for Jesus Christ. It can have a great impact upon people and upon the darkness and upon our churches.

This is illumination. It comes from God, and it is divine. It is glorious and marvelous. I pray that God will touch hearts today to be saved.

PRESENT - REGENERATION

John 11:43 *And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*

What Is Regeneration?

The word regeneration literally means “new life.” So, regeneration is the new life that God gives us when we are saved. Regeneration is called the new birth in scripture, and Nicodemus was taught that he needed to be “born again.”

A. H. Strong says “Regeneration is that act of God by which the governing disposition of the soul is made holy, and by which, through the truth as a means, the first holy exercise of the disposition is secured.”³

That which is from God’s point of view called regeneration, which God does himself without the aid of the sinner, is on the human side called conversion, in which the sinner is active.

Regeneration, God’s part, and conversion, our part, are completed simultaneously. That is, they happen instantly at the same time. There is no progression in this process; therefore, there is no action on the part of the sinner that takes any time at all—thus baptism and other religious activities are eliminated from the salvation requirement.

Eph. 2:5 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* 6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

³Strong, A. H., *Systematic Theology*, The Judson Press, Three Volumes in One, pg. 809.

Suppose that you were a piece of film that is to be used in photography. You are actually just the base of the film—you have not yet been sensitized. This is what the sinner is before the Holy Spirit quickens him or makes him sensitive to the light of the Gospel.

The act of God we are calling regeneration is that act of sensitizing our souls. Just as the base of the film is sensitized with chemicals that will react to light, so our souls are sensitized by God to react to the preaching of the Gospel.

In the old photography, light comes through the lens of a camera, focuses on the sensitized film, and the film responds with a chemical reaction. When the film is developed, the part of the film that was hit by bright light changes. The other parts of the film which had no light will wash off the film base in the development process. This leaves only that image that the light has effected on the film.

The only thing wrong with this illustration is that the process of making a negative with this film takes time. The process of making a lost sinner into a new creature does not take time. It is an instantaneous transaction between God and man. You may be sitting there right now lost and on your way to hell; but if the Holy Spirit quickens you today, then you will respond to this message just as the film responds to the light that enters the lens of the camera.

The film that is altogether black takes on the image of the object that reflects light outside the camera, and when we are saved, we take on the image of the one who is the Light of the world, Jesus Christ.

Now let us look at a few scriptures that show us some of the characteristics of regeneration.

Regeneration is an act of God:

John 1:13 *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

1 Cor. 3:6 *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*

God uses truth to regenerate the sinner:

James 1:18 *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

1 Peter 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

Regeneration changes the heart:

Acts 16:14 *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

Regeneration changes the moral relations of the soul:

Eph. 4:23 *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

Regeneration is instantaneous:

John 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and*

believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

So regeneration makes a dramatic change in the sinner. He is now in union with Christ Jesus, and his motives and attitudes will now respond to that union. This is the new birth, which makes a new creature.

What Does Regeneration Do?

As we have considered, regeneration gives new life; and in that life is a new idea, a new outlook, a new personality, a new attitude, a changed person.

The change may not be so dramatic in some as in others. Henry Clay made the remark that he did not know what the change of heart spoken of by Christians may mean, but had seen Kentucky family feuds of long standing healed by religious revivals, and that whatever could heal a Kentucky family feud is more than human.

Regeneration heals families. It makes good honest business people. It stops the thief from stealing. It melts the heart of the murderer. It makes for friendly and spiritual churches. Regeneration is a real change, not a reformation. Reformation is temporary; regeneration is forever.

The Necessity of Regeneration

John 3:7 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

The necessity of the new birth is upon every human being. A person cannot assist in his own resurrection, which is what the

new birth is, so he must rely upon Christ Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith.

The sinner does not know his need of a Savior and is reminded of it only when the Holy Spirit sensitizes his soul. Then he hears for the first time the word of God, which is also used in regeneration as an instrument, and the soul receives the light of the word and captures the image of Christ as it is preached through the word of God.

It is necessary for the word of God to be preached before sinners can believe. God has determined that for his pattern. So, if you are not born again, then stay under the preaching of God's word. Through that as an instrument, you may trust the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Without the word of God, the Bible, you cannot be saved.

Regeneration is necessary in changing our culture, in changing the religious error that is being preached today, in changing the prejudices that people have toward a divine knowledge of God and a love for him and his word. It will bring enjoyment and peace to every believer.

When you are regenerated, your whole will is changed.

Psalms 110:3 Thy people [shall be] willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

You will be willing to surrender your whole life over to God. You will be willing to submit yourself to scriptural baptism, which is a sign of regeneration. You will be willing to become a working member of the Lord's kind of church and to commit your lifetime to serving Jesus Christ. You will be willing to tell others about Jesus Christ and this

regeneration through his death, burial and resurrection.

If your soul is dead to God today, if you have never been born again and have never received the light of the word of God in your soul, won't you today turn from your sins and trust Jesus Christ and his death, burial and resurrection.

If you do your part, you can be sure that his part is accomplished.

PRESENT - REPENTANCE

Jer. 31:18 *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself [thus]; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed [to the yoke]: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou [art] the LORD my God.*

What Is Repentance?

The Greek word translated repent is METANOEO, and it literally means “with the mind,” or a “change of mind.”

When a man is lost, he has his mind on sin, the world, and earthly things. That is the reason the Bible says that the world consists of the things mentioned in ...

1 John 2:16 *For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

Those who are not saved have their minds on these three things: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and the human mind needs a break from this kind of thinking. We all need a change of mind. When we are born, we have our minds set upon these worldly things. We are trained in the things of the world. We need deliverance from this train of thought.

When we speak of total depravity, we are speaking about our slavery to this worldly attitude. We are speaking about the inability of any man to have any other frame of mind except this one. We need to turn from this frame of mind to a new frame of mind.

Now, we cannot do that on our own. We are slaves to worldly philosophy, and we

cannot break ourselves away from this mold of the mind.

Notice that this is a command. Notice this scripture:

Acts 17:30 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

Yes, this verse says “all men” and “everywhere.” That means me, and that means you. That is because “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

So, then, how can we accomplish this command if we do not have the ability to approach God or to change this enslaved mind that we work with? Notice this verse:

Acts 11:18 *When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

So, then, repentance is “granted” by God. It is not earned by man. It is something that God grants, but it is at the same time something that man does. Man is required by God’s command to repent, but he cannot by his own power; but with God’s power he can repent and does repent. He turns from his own sins and sees himself a lost and worthless sinner. He sees that the way he is going is the way of death. The Bible says in Prov. 14:12 *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof [are] the ways of death.* Then he turns to Jesus Christ, sees him on the cross dying for his sins. He changes his mind about himself, about the world, about God, and about Jesus Christ. He turns from his own ways to

God's ways. He turns from the world to Heaven. He turns from his own opinion to God's opinion.

Remember our main text for today: *turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou [art] the LORD my God.* Turn, turn from your wicked ways and trust the Lord.

What Happens If I Do Not Repent?

Ezek. 33:9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Notice the words "if he do not turn (repent) from his way, he shall die in his iniquity." Now let's look at

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And then ...

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

To perish means to go to hell and suffer for eternity for the sins you have committed against a holy God. To be saved from this horrible end, you must repent of your sins and put your faith in Jesus Christ. This does not say that some will perish; it says that "all" will perish who do not repent.

If repent means to turn from something, it strongly implies that it means to turn TO something. When a person repents or turns from his sins, his own righteousness, his own merit, his own dead works, he turns to the living God.

Heb. 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

We turn from dead works and toward God. You cannot turn from one thing without turning toward another. This is true repentance.

Repentance and Faith

Repentance and faith are twin graces. You do not receive one without receiving the other as a part of your conversion or your salvation.

Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

This verse so closely connects repentance and faith that they seem to be the same; and although they are not the same, they are twin graces, because they come together. There is not a second of time between them. When one action is done, the other action follows. Repentance always comes logically before faith, and faith always comes logically behind repentance; but one does not follow the other. They are done in one act of grace.

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

So, you must repent from your dead works, and you must believe the gospel. The

gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Can you repent today? Can you believe today? They must come together.

So many people repent, but they never believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and trust him with all their hearts. This is of no value as far as salvation is concerned. They are no more saved after they repent than they were before they repented.

Some people believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as much as they can, but they have never repented. These folks have the right object for their faith, but without repentance they will likewise perish.

Repentance is not enough, and faith is not enough. Sinners must repent and believe the gospel.

Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

PRESENT - SEALING OF HOLY SPIRIT

2 Cor. 1:22 *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

The Sealing and The Earnest

The word “sealed” can mean to authenticate. So, God authenticated us as his children. We will see in some of our verses today that this sealing is done by the Holy Spirit himself.

The word “earnest” means an assurance, or today we would call it a down payment as a promise to pay the rest later. When the Lord saved me, he sealed me with the Holy Spirit and gave me the earnest (down payment) of what he will do later.

Later

By Ronnie Wolfe 4/25/2006

Later he will take me home—not now.

Later I will never roam—not now.

Later I'll be free from sin;

Later, I just don't know when;

Later I will live with him—not now.

Later my body will be free—not now.

Later lovely things I'll see—not now.

Later I will cry no more;

Dwelling on the peaceful shore;

Later with the eagles soar—not now.

The sealing of the Holy Spirit promises us, as did the rainbow in the time of Noah, that God keeps all of his promises. He promised that he would never destroy the earth by water again, and the promise is true. God promised us that he would deliver us from this vile body (Phil. 3:21) and create a body like unto his glorious body, and that promise is true as well.

Eph. 1:13 *In whom ye also [trusted],*

after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

First, we heard the gospel of our salvation; then we believed. When we believed, we were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.

This is a great thing that God has done for us who believe. He took the gospel message and put it into our hearts; then he sealed that message and made an indelible impression of God's image upon our hearts. How can we forget such a gracious act from God? How can we turn away from such a divine transaction?

We have that seal within our hearts every day that we live, and we have the knowledge that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and seals us.

Unto The Day of Redemption

Eph. 4:30 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

We find from this verse that the Holy Spirit is sensitive to our actions and attitudes. He is grieved when we forget that God has saved us through Jesus Christ. He is grieved when we do not work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure (Phil. 2:12-13).

We should every day be so thankful that God has saved us, because, not only does he save us, but he also keeps us or seals us with his Holy Spirit. That Spirit seals us unto the day of redemption.

Now, what is this day of redemption? This is the day when Jesus returns and raptures his people out of the world and when he brings about our complete redemption.

Luke 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Our complete redemption, the redemption of our body as well as our soul, is nearing. We will be redeemed in our body by having our bodies changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Our souls will be saved from their presence on the earth. We will be delivered out of the world forever.

So we see that this sealing lasts until Jesus comes again. It is not temporary; it is eternal.

Great & Precious Promises

2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Peter calls these promises exceeding great and precious. By these promises we become partakers of the divine nature and have escaped the corruption of the world.

In other words, we now have the nature of God within us, because Jesus Christ lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. We have escaped the corruption (the ultimate end of death) in this divine nature. That means that we will not go the way of the world but have passed from death unto life. We are for sure on our way to heaven.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Oh, what a Savior we have! What a precious promise of eternal life! Are you ready to go with me to heaven? Trust the Lord today, and he will seal you with his Spirit and keep you until Jesus comes again to take us away to heaven.

PRESENT - INTERCESSION

Heb. 7:25 *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Probably one of the most neglected doctrines of Soteriology is the intercession of Jesus Christ. It is not that we intentionally neglect the doctrine, but I think it is that we just assume everyone knows about it. In our Gospel messages we leave out this important aspect of the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

So today let's take a look at this wonderful grace for which Jesus is worthy to be praised.

Intercession In Righteousness of Life

2 Cor. 5:21 *For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Jesus was made sin for us. He did not have sin of his own, but he was "made sin." He lived a perfect, sinless life, and that righteousness that he lived was lived in my place just as much as his death and resurrection were accomplished for me.

Therefore, because Jesus lived a perfect life for me, he was able to give me the righteousness of God in him. This is our Christian perfection.

Without a constant intercession in heaven, Jesus would not be able to be our righteousness. We would need to depend upon ourselves for our own righteousness, which God will not accept as valid righteousness.

Hebrews Chapter 7 concerns the priesthood of Jesus Christ, and he is the High

Priest that lives forever and makes eternal intercession for his people. That is the reason that he is able to save them to the uttermost or completely.

The righteous acts that we perform in our lives come from this intercession. These works are not works that we do arbitrarily; they are works that are spawned by the righteousness that God has worked in us to prod us to righteous living. No righteousness or good works can be given to our credit as far as their merit is concerned, *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* Php 2:13

Intercession In Prayer

Rom. 8:26 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Prayer is not an easy thing to do right. We are so weak in our relationship with God that we are unable with our own meager efforts to reach God with our prayers.

So, the Spirit of God helps our infirmities, our weaknesses, our ignorance, our human frailty to help us to know what to pray for. How many times have you approached God not knowing what to say. The next time that happens, ask the Lord to reveal to you what you need to pray for, and he will.

Many of the things that we need to pray for are things that cannot be explained with words; they are too deeply emotional or spiritual to express. But the Holy Spirit utters those things to God when we cannot. This makes our praying more enjoyable, powerful and effective.

Job wanted to stand before God to contend with him; but when the time came for him to stand before God, he asked for a Daysman, a go-between, a lawyer, a mediator, an intercessor. He found that intercessor in the Lord.

Intercession For The Saints

Rom. 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God.

Rom. 8:34 Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

In order for us to be saved continually, there needs to be a continual intercession for the saints of God. Notice how Jesus is our High Priest.

Heb. 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things [pertaining] to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

Heb. 5:10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec

He is our “faithful high priest.” That means that each morning we receive new joys, because we know that Jesus is still on the throne and doing his high priestly duty.

He is faithfully making reconciliation for the sins of the people. He does not miss a day or a moment.

He is a high priest after the order of Melchisedec, which means that he is eternal and will not and cannot fail his job of interceding for his people.

As surely as the Father is on the throne, Jesus is doing his duty as intercession. He never tires of that wonderful job. He does it with joy, and no one can stay his hand or say to him, “What doest thou?”

Heb. 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

We Are Little Interceders Ourselves

1 Tim. 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men;

We cannot be faithful like Jesus Christ. We cannot save anyone from their sins. We cannot sit on the throne of God and intercede for people, but we can intercede in a wonderful way with prayer.

As we bring the name of people before God, we reach out to God in their behalf. Through this we learn to have compassion and to be sincere in our religion.

The Need For An Intercessor

Eph. 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Eph. 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made

nigh by the blood of Christ.

Lost sinners need to be reconciled, because they are aliens and strangers to God. They are not under the promises of God. They have no hope, and they are without God in the world.

Through this wonderful intercession Jesus has brought us who believe into a covenant relationship with God.

Gal. 3:29 And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Now we are heirs according to the promise or covenant that God made with Abraham that he would make him a great nation, a nation of Jews and Gentiles alike, a nation of holy people.

Everyone needs an intercessor, one to go between him and God. We cannot get to first base without our intercessor. He must "bring us to God."

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

There is only one intercessor; no other will do. This intercessor is Jesus Christ and him alone.

1 Tim. 2:5 For [there is] one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

There is only one. If you do not take this one, then you will not find another. There is no other God ...

1 Cor. 8:4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol [is] nothing in the world, and that [there is] none other God but one.

There is no Messiah but one ...

John 6:68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

There is no other Gospel but one ...

Gal. 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

There is but one Mediator. Will you take this one? Will you today surrender your life to him? Will you believe on him? Will you trust him with your life and your soul? He is the only intercessor you have. He is the only one who can give you eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

PRESENT - SANCTIFICATION

1 Thes. 4:4 *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;*

Positional Sanctification

The Greek word HAGIAZO has variations of meanings, but it is the basic word for holy, to become holy, to be holy, and to act holy. So, when we speak of sanctification, we speak of holiness.

But how can we be holy before God? Can we produce holiness in ourselves? Absolutely not! We are holy because of the following things:

(1) God is holy. Ps 99:9 *Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God [is] holy.* Yes, God is holy, but his holiness is perfect holiness. He is holy by his own nature—he can be nothing less than holy. Therefore, God the Father is a part of our being holy because of this wonderful attribute of holiness.

(2) Jesus is holy. Ac 2:27 *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.* Jesus is holy, because God is holy. Jesus and God the Father are of the same God essence. They are both by nature holy. Jesus holds the same qualities or attributes as God, except that he emptied himself when he came to earth in his incarnation to be made like unto sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3). He could take my place on the cross and die as my substitute, because he was perfectly holy. Because of his holiness, God accepted his offering for my sins as complete satisfaction for the justice of Almighty God.

(3) The Holy Spirit is holy. Acts 13:52 *And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.* The Spirit of God is

called Holy Spirit, because he is holy. He has the same attributes as God the Father and the Son of God. He is holy by his own right and his own existence. He is essentially holy. He did not need to become holy. He is holy by his own nature.

(4) The scriptures are holy. Ro 1:2 *(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.)* God saved us through the preaching of the scriptures. Jesus said in John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.* But the scriptures must be holy in order for them to be used as God's instrument to bestow grace upon believers. They are certainly holy. Notice Ro 7:12 *Wherefore the law [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.* Also notice that the scriptures were written by holy men. Eph 3:5 *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;* 2 Peter 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost.*

(5) We are holy. Ro 6:22 *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.* How do we know from this that we are holy? Notice what Paul said in Ro 11:16 *For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.* The firstfruit is the salvation of the patriarchs by faith in a coming Messiah. The lump is the nation of Israel, also called the root. We are the branches which have been saved without the law and have been grafted into the root, which is Christ.

This is how we become holy: God the Father gives grace, Jesus Christ is our

mediator between us and God, the Holy Spirit uses the scriptures to call us unto God, and through faith we become holy, holy enough to be accepted in the beloved, holy enough to have assurance that we will one day be with our Lord in eternity, holy enough to be comforted by the scriptures, and holy enough to live for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice now 1 Cor. 6:11 *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Practical Sanctification

1 Thes 4:3 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*

Positional sanctification is that which we have abiding with us due to God's grace and the work he has done in us through the Holy Spirit. Practical sanctification is that which is worked out in our lives to the glory of God because of the sanctification that has been worked in us by God himself.

Notice in our verse that it is God's will that we are sanctified or "set apart" for the master's use. God sanctified us when he saved us. He set us aside from the world for his honor and glory. As we surrender to his will in this life, he also sanctifies us for his use and his further glory.

Notice in this verse that part of this practical sanctification is our own willingness to separate from the world and have a new mind, turning our backs on sin; thus, abstaining from fornication.

Rom. 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is*

your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

First, we present our bodies for the service of the Lord. These bodies are vessels the Lord uses in his service.

2 Tim. 2:21 *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

We must purge our bodies (clean them up from sin) in order for the Lord to use us in a practical and spiritual way to his own honor and glory.

Secondly, we refuse to be conformed to the world, to be put into the world's mold and made what the world system would have us to be. We are in that mold most of the time. Our working habits, our relationships with other people, the classes we study, the books we read, the TV programs we watch; these all place us in the world's mold. Remember, the world is run by Satan. He has control of the cultural influences, humanistic teachings and philosophies, etc.

To break from this mold, the Christian mind must be transformed, changed from the philosophy of this world to the study, meditation, worship and service of Jesus Christ. This is a renewing of the mind. It is the only way the Christian will be sanctified in a practical way. He must also be in regular attendance to the Lord's house. He must not forsake the assembling together of believers. Without that assembling, the

Christian grows weaker, not stronger. He grows colder, not hotter. He grows complacent, not excited or interested about the work of the Lord. He turns into himself and away from God. He must spend much time in prayer and in Bible study, meditation and memorization. He loses interest in the salvation of others and refuses or at least neglects to be a witness of the saving grace of God.

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

This growth is not automatic for the Christian. There are only two directions in the Christian life. They are summed up in two words: growth and backsliding.

We all know about Israel's backsliding habits. No matter how close they came to the Lord, they almost always eventually went backward from that fellowship. It is the nature of man to backslide. Only with constant meditation and dedication to the Lord can we as believers remain in good fellowship with the Lord.

Some will try it for a while, but the old man has a very strong pull on us; and many will grow discouraged and quit serving the Lord. Paul says we are in a race and that we should run that race with patience.

Heb. 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Can we turn from the witness of our forefathers, who gave their lives in the fire

and the water and at the hands of the ax-wielding executioner? Can we turn from the witness of those great men who preached the word of God under great distress and under great persecution, giving their livelihoods and their fortunes to preach the word and witness of his grace? Can we turn our backs on those believers who have carried the torch down through a myriad generations that there may be faith on earth today? Can we turn our backs upon God, who has made this all possible, upon Jesus Christ, who was willing to give his own life for our sins?

We must lay aside every weight, or sin, that easily besets us, such as our possessions, entertainment, fame, or even friends. Otherwise we will turn back from the Lord, drop out of church and begin to serve the world instead of the Lord. Each one of us has a sin that easily besets us or gets us off balance. It is that sin that we must watch. It is that sin that we must crush. It is that sin that will draw us away from the Lord. You know what your sin is, don't you? Now you must take care of that problem so that you can grow in the Lord's grace.

PRESENT - HOPE

Acts 24:15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

Illustration: A little over a month before he died, the famous atheist Jean-Paul Sartre declared that he so strongly resisted feelings of despair that he would say to himself, "I know I shall die in hope." Then in profound sadness, he would add, "But hope needs a foundation."

Every believer has hope, and that hope has a foundation. First, let us talk about hope itself and what it is; then let us talk about the foundation of our hope.

The Nature of Hope

Our English word hope comes from the Old English word *hopian* and basically means *to trust*. It also means *to expect*. I have hoped for many things, and I have expected many things. Many of those things have never come to fruition. So, we should consider two types of hope.

First, there is a worldly hope, and then there is a divine hope. The first hope is one that we have every day. We hope to make it through the day. We hope to be able to accomplish a certain amount of things. We hope that our children will grow up and have happy families. We hope that nothing bad happens to us or our family or friends. Some hope they win the lottery—and some wish they had not won the lottery.

There are many people today who think they have a hope for heaven, but they have their faith in the wrong thing. They believe in themselves or in some religious rites or activity. They may believe in themselves

that they have the ability to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. They may think that they can perform some good works and please the Lord. In this they have their hope of eternal life; but this hope is the same as the world's hope. It has no foundation. There are two scriptures in the New Testament that deal with the world's having no real hope.

Eph. 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

These are the people who have their hope shattered when they stand before God, thinking that they have done so well in the world. Anyone who does not have faith in Jesus Christ is in this same condition. He has no hope and is without God in the world.

1 Thes.. 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

When people of the world lose people in death, many do not know how to deal with the death. Some of them will sorrow beyond control, because they have no hope that they will see that loved one again.

Surgeons speak of a 50-50 chance of survival from surgery. The weather man talks about a 50% chance of rain. Neither one knows much about the subject. They are simply establishing a hope upon the basis of past experience, logic and prognostication.

The 50% rain comes down in buckets sometimes. The patient survives with flying colors and lives many more years. This is the kind of hope we have in this world. We just do not know what tomorrow may bring—that is not much hope, because it is not based upon a firm foundation.

God's Divine Hope

But we as believers have a hope in Jesus Christ as the foundation of our hope. Let's notice a few things about this hope.

2 Cor. 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

We do not faint as we serve the Lord. We look with anticipation for what God has in store for us, because we know that the things that are not seen are eternal.

Hope in Christ's victory

Rom. 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ

Jesus our Lord.

Notice the words “through him that loved us.” This is the believer's foundation. The foundation is Jesus Christ,

1 Cor. 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

We have hope in this foundation because of the victory of his death, burial and resurrection.

Rom. 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

We find hope in the scriptures as we read his book, searching the scriptures, for in them we will find Jesus Christ; they testify of him.

Hope in his sufficiency

1 Thes. 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

God is faithful, who will do it. He will do everything that he has promised. That is our hope. He is able to accomplish everything that he has laid in store for believers. Therein lies our hope. It is in Jesus Christ, our foundation.

Hope in his righteousness

Christ's righteousness is perfect. It is eternal. It is sufficient for us. We have no righteousness of our own, but we have been imputed with righteousness, which is Christ's righteousness. This righteousness is enough for us to hope in and to depend upon. It will bring us to our inheritance.

Eph. 1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us—ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power; 20 Which wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

Hope in eternity

The hope of the world begins and ends here. Our hope as believers begins in heaven and ends in heaven.

1 John 3:1 *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he*

shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1 Cor. 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

Is your hope that kind that will not last? Is your hope full of doubt and skepticism? Then turn your heart from the world to heaven. Repent of your sins and trust Jesus Christ as Savior, and you will have a hope that is steadfast, a hope that you can actually depend upon and trust to be completed even as God has promised.

Heb 6:19 *Which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*

No Hope

A hope that is earthly is no hope.
A hope that is in man can't stand.
A hope that is human is no hope;
That human hope is all around the land.

A hope that cannot with mind be trusted,
A hope that has no foundation
Is a hope that falters from the start
Has no sure consolation.

A man who thinks he has hope in life
But in fact is in the Fall,
If he does not in Christ have hope,
He has no hope at all.

-By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe
May 6, 2006

PRESENT - GOOD WORKS

Eph 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Many people think that Baptists do not believe in good works, but this is contrary to Baptist doctrine.

We as Baptists do not believe that a person can be saved by works, because the Bible is very clear about this.

The Direct Commandment

Rom 9:31 *But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;*

Ga 2:16 *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Gal. 3:2 *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Eph. 2:9 *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

The Necessity for Death

If we could be saved by the works of the

law, or by good works, then we would not need the death of Jesus Christ at all; and he wasted his time and effort coming to earth and surrendering to the wicked hands of those who arrested him and crucified him on a cruel cross.

Jesus' death was necessary for our salvation. In his death, burial and resurrection, he both took our sins away and obtained new life for us through his own resurrection. That is why our salvation is in him and not in ourselves.

We owed an eternal debt to God for our sins against him. The only way that this debt could be paid is for someone to suffer for our sins in our place, since we are not able to do it.

Rom. 4:4 *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

Necessity of Grace

Tit. 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

Salvation is according to his mercy. If we could work our way to heaven, then we would need no mercy, but we would be boasters concerning our salvation. The Bible speaks specifically concerning this boasting ...

Rom. 3:27 *Where [is] boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*

So we find, then, that we are not saved by works but by the grace of God.

Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Works After Salvation

Baptists have no problem with the doctrine of salvation, knowing that salvation is not by works but by faith in Jesus Christ.

The problem Baptists have is the doctrine of works after salvation. We want to sit on the “stool of do-nothing” and sing “I shall not be moved.”

But the Bible is very specific about the doctrine of works after salvation, works for the believer, works for every child of God.

James deals with this in a very pointed way when he says in ...

James 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

James speaks of the difference between a dead faith and a living faith. If you claim to be saved by grace, and you do not produce any good works, then you are very mistaken about

your faith in Jesus Christ. Even the devils believe, and they tremble, but they are not saved.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

The devils believe and tremble without any good works. Therefore, they are not saved. When a person believes in Christ without his faith’s producing good works in his life, then he has the wrong kind of faith in Jesus Christ. It must be a working faith. This is not to say that any good works are merits toward our salvation; this is simply saying that the faith we have in Jesus Christ is a faith that will produce good works.

Matt. 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

When the Lord saves us, he makes us a “good tree,” and we can produce good fruit (or good works). A person who believes in Jesus Christ with just a head belief or a simple assent to his doctrine is not actually saved, so he does not become a good tree; therefore, he cannot produce good fruit, or good works.

Matt. 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

When we see a person who does not bring forth good fruit, or good works, we cannot know that the person is saved, because he shows no evidence of it. It is

only through good works that a person can be a valid witness of his salvation in Christ.

So good works are very important to Baptists, but they are important after salvation and not before. If you have no good works, how can you be assured of your salvation? Do you suppose that is the reason so many people have doubts about their salvation? I think it might be the reason.

Matt. 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

What kind of light do you think we shine on the world when we do not do good works? What kind of Christians are we when the world cannot see the light of the Gospel? What are we doing when we neglect so great a salvation that God has given us?

Heb. 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard [him];

Discipline For No Works

Heb. 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard [him];

What makes us think that we will escape the disciplinary hand of the Lord if we neglect the salvation that he has given us. To neglect our salvation means to have it and not use it. But why should you have such a wonderful gift and not use it? This verse indicates that, if we do not use our salvation for good works, that the Lord will discipline

us. I don't think we need to go into all the verses concerning God's discipline, because we should all be very familiar with them. God is serious when he saves us, and he is serious about our using that salvation and not neglecting it.

Col. 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

1 Tim. 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

We all have a work to do, and God is expecting us to do it. I think we as Baptists are so very far behind on our good works; that is the reason that Baptists are losing their influence in the world.

We must be busy about the Father's business: the business of witnessing, the business of studying, the business of teaching, the business of assembling, the business of praying and praising God. This is our business. It is our main business.

We work for the world. We work for our friends, our work, our family; but do we work for the Lord? Here are some good rules to keep:

1. Smile - things are not as bad as you think.
2. Speak to others - one day you may need someone to speak to you.
3. Help others - some day you may need help yourself.
4. Have faith in God - Do not trust in the flesh or in man.
5. Work, for the night is coming when man can work no more. Our work is to be done now, and we do not know how long that is, so work!
6. Be a light in the world - Tell others about the Lord. You may be telling someone who has been waiting for just such a message as the good news of the Gospel.

FUTURE - SECOND COMING

Heb 9:28 *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Our Future Salvation

Our salvation is very current. It is relevant to this present life, but our salvation also has a future.

1 Cor. 15:19 *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

Those who preach a social gospel have little faith in that which is to come but have faith in what is now. That is why they have little hope for their followers. That is the reason that many churches have become involved in so many social and political groups. They think that Christianity is only for the here and now.

I understand that we need to be concerned about our fellow believers and that churches should look out for their members, but as churches of the Lord Jesus we should not be involved in political or social organizations. If individual Christians want to be involved, that is one thing, but churches are for the purpose of feeding the world. They are for the purpose of growing up in the knowledge of the Lord and for worshiping the Lord as a body of Christ.

If this life is the only life we have as believers, then why be believers? Why do we even take the time to come together to worship the Lord and study his word?

1 Cor. 15:32 *If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus,*

what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

If this life is all there is, I would already be disappointed in my salvation. I would lose my faith easily. I would be discouraged in whatever I do. I would not be as assured that what I do is worth anything.

The Second Coming of Christ

Our text tells us that Jesus is going to appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:28).

He appeared once on the earth, but that was as a servant and a minister. He came to give himself a ransom for many.

But the second time he appears, he will appear as the King of kings and Lord of lords. He will take us out of the world to be with him.

Acts 1:11 *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

1 Thes. 4:15 *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

This is such an encouraging verse of scripture. We believe that God will send his

Son again to rapture his saints out of the world. There is no rapture of the church, but there certainly is a rapture of the saints.

1 Thes. 4:17 *Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

We who are on the earth at the time of his coming will be “caught up” or raptured together with those who have gone on before us, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. We will never again be absent from the Lord. This is grand news, and it is all a part of our salvation that has been granted by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The rapture is an event that will never need to be repeated. It happens only once. If you are not ready when it takes place, then you will not go with us in the rapture. You will stay on the earth to experience the wrath of God that will come upon the whole earth at the coming of Jesus Christ.

2 Thes. 2:1 *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

In this verse the rapture is called the “gathering together unto him.” It is called other things in other places in scripture.

Mal 3:17 *And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own*

son that serveth him.

Here God is making up his jewels. This is like making an ornament of love. He will make us what he has always wanted us to be. We will be perfect in his presence.

Jude 1:24 *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*

I have most of my life wanted to please the Lord. When I get to heaven, then I will be able to please him, for he will make me perfect in his sight.

Now, there is only one second coming. When the Lord comes the second time, he will not ever come again. This is the final act in the drama of life for us all.

A Place Called Heaven

The word “heaven” is used 238 times in the New Testament, and 313 times in the Old Testament. The word “heavens,” which usually means space, is used 108 times in the Old Testament and 19 times in the New Testament.

Thus, we learn that the Lord has a lot to say about a place called heaven, and we should be very interested in this place. There are several things we should do before we move to that heavenly home.

(1) Enter into the Kingdom of God. Mat 7:21 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

(2) Seek the Kingdom as a Believer. Mat 6:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things*

shall be added unto you.

(3) Lay up treasures. Mat 6:20 *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*

(4) We should have our anchor there. Heb. 6:19 *Which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*

(5) Expect the manifestation of the sons of God. Rom. 8:19 *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

(6) Worship until he comes. 1 Cor. 11:26 *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

(7) Look for our complete redemption. Luke 21:28 *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

(8) Look for our Savior, Jesus Christ. Phil. 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

Are you ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The scriptures tell us that we do not know when he is coming.

Matt. 25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

FUTURE - OUR INHERITANCE

1 Peter 1:4 *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Description of the Inheritance

Our text today gives us a description of the inheritance that each believer longs for and looks for.

We find, first of all, that our inheritance is incorruptible. This word means “not liable to decay.” Everything we see and touch in the world is corruptible. Even the wisdom of man and the intelligence of science is corruptible; but our inheritance in Heaven is not corruptible—it does not decay.

Secondly, it is undefiled. The root word here means to stain with a dye. It would be like a new shirt or dress being stained with ink and would be unfit to wear to a formal gathering. Our inheritance has not been defiled or stained with anything that will ruin its appearance or cause it to be less than perfectly satisfactory to stand before God and to live with God in eternity.

Rev. 21:27 *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Thirdly, our inheritance will not fade away. This word means to never perish.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that*

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Fourth, our inheritance is reserved in heaven. This word “reserved” means to keep in the same state—not to change. Our inheritance is not changed from day to day or year to year. It has been the same since eternity past, and it will be the same throughout all future eternity. I do not need to worry about something happening to my inheritance. It is reserved for me.

Fifth, our inheritance is reserved for those who are kept by the power of God. This word “kept” has to do with observation, with looking out for the care of something. God is looking out for our welfare and is protecting our inheritance and us so that we will finally be there without any question or fear.

Sixth, our inheritance is ready to be revealed in the last time. It is not and will not be revealed to us now. That revelation is for our future. It is not for us to know the day nor the hour now; but when that time comes, our inheritance will be revealed. It will be like receiving a gift from a special friend. I can hardly wait to open the gift of my inheritance.

Acts 26:18 *To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

We Receive This Inheritance

This inheritance is not earned or worked for. It is received from God as a gift.

Acts 26:18 *To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

Paul was sent on a mission to the Gentiles that their eyes may be opened and that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus Christ.

When they received forgiveness of sins, they at the same time received inheritance. There is no span of time between belief on the Lord for remission of sins and the receiving of the inheritance of the saints. It all happens at the same time.

Col 1:12 *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

When we are saved, we are made meet (acceptable) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. It is a wonderful thing to have this inheritance.

If we receive this inheritance, then it is not by the law.

Gal. 3:18 *For if the inheritance [be] of the law, [it is] no more of promise: but God gave [it] to Abraham by promise.*

We Can Know About This Inheritance

It is nice to know that we can have a personal knowledge of this inheritance. It would be a shame to have such a grand

inheritance and not know about it.

Eph 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

We can know the hope of the calling of God and also the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

We cannot know everything, but we can know through the Spirit of God that it is a reality and that it is wonderful.

1 Cor. 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

We do not know everything, but we know enough to be glad and happy and even excited about this inheritance. When we lose sight of this gift, we get discouraged and leave the work of the Lord to do our own work and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. That is why I am trying to give us all a fresh look at what God has in store for those of us who trust him and know him as our Savior.

Some Will Not Have An Inheritance

Eph. 5:5 *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

These who have filled their lives with sin do not have such an inheritance that we have. No one who has these sins dwelling in their lives can proclaim or pronounce that they have an inheritance in heaven. They know nothing of the kingdom of Christ and of God.

1 Cor. 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Flesh and blood are what we are made of, and that cannot inherit the kingdom of God. We must be changed and made meet or fit for the kingdom of God. This is done, of course, in our new birth, the regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

We Shall Inherit The Earth

Mt 5:5 Blessed [are] the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Just think! We shall inherit the earth. John saw a new heaven and a new earth in Rev. 21:1.

Rev. 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

What Must We Do To Receive This Inheritance?

The question, then, remains, "What must we do to inherit eternal life?"

Matt. 19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or

children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

We as believers must leave houses and brethren and sisters and father and mother and wife and children and lands. This does not mean that we must forsake them. It means that we must individually, without their co-operation in the matter, be responsible to the Lord on our own.

We must not take carnal advice from our families or our friends or have our confidence in our lands or in our children for our inheritance. We must reject all earthly help and rely completely on the work of Jesus Christ. Then we can receive the inheritance of eternal or everlasting life.

Matt. 19:16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for

he had great possessions.

Here is a young man who seemed at least to have an interest in eternal life. He is asking the question that many today need to ask, “*what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?*” He already had his own definition of what needed to be done. He thought that he must do some good thing in order to have eternal life. That is the concept of the world today.

Jesus answered that, if you are to do a good thing, you must keep the commandments. The conclusion was that, if you can do that, you can have eternal life. Little did the young man know that he had not kept the commandments and could not keep the commandments of God. He said that he had kept them from his youth, but that was not true. The Bible tells us that there is none good, no not one. There is none righteous.

Even if he had kept all of the commandments from his youth, he still lacked one thing: he must turn his back upon everything that had meaning to him in this world and let go of it. Think of others instead of self and not to be sorry about it.

He was very disappointed, because he wanted to have eternal life and hold onto his worldly possessions, also. This is not possible. When we surrender to Jesus Christ and put our complete faith and trust in him, we must turn our backs on the world and on our own efforts. God will accept nothing less than this.

Just as many today go away from the presentation of the Gospel, this young man went away sorrowful..

Notice, first of all, that he went away. He did not stay around to listen to more or to consider what else he may say. There was nothing more to say, and Jesus had put it all

at his feet. He was not willing to submit completely to the Lord.

Not only did he go away, but he also went away sorrowful. The word “sorrowful” can also mean offended. He probably was offended at what the Lord said, and that is what people do today. They do not like the truth, so they go away offended.

I cannot help whether a person is offended or not. I must tell the truth about our eternal inheritance and how to receive it. If I tell you wrong, then I have your blood on my hands; but if I tell you the truth, it is left up to you, and I am not responsible for your destiny.

May God touch your heart today if you still have your love in the world and not in the Lord. Listen to the truth today and hearken to it. Jesus will save you today if you will come to him and lay everything at his feet, trusting him with all your heart, turning from your worldly efforts and beliefs, repenting of your sins and turning to Jesus Christ’s dying and resurrecting for you that you might have a good inheritance.

May God touch your heart today with this truth.

Preached May 21, 2006 AM

FUTURE - GLORIFICATION

John 7:39 *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

Jesus Is Glorified

The word glorified in this verse means “to make glorious.” Jesus was not made glorious until he was resurrected from the dead. He was not completely glorified until he returned to heaven; then the Holy Spirit would come.

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

In his glorification Jesus received a new body, a perfect body that would not be like the one he had when he was on the earth. On earth, he had emptied himself of all of his heavenly glory, set it aside that he might become like unto sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3).

We are here speaking of the future glorification. The sense in which we use the word glorify many times is that of magnifying a person or a thing. Today we are speaking of a future glorification. In the case of Jesus, it was the time when he resurrected from the dead and then left the earth to be with his Father in Heaven to sit at his right hand and make intercession for us in his glorified body.

We Are Glorified

Rom. 8:30 *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and*

whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Notice the order here of the work of God in our lives in salvation: Predestinated, Called, Justified, and Glorified.

These are spoken as if they have already been done, so in the purpose of God our glorification is already accomplished.

Our Glorified Body

Phil. 3:21 *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

These old vile bodies are worthless to the Lord except to be used to his glory after we have given ourselves completely over to him. Thank God he uses us for his glory.

But one day these vile bodies will be changed to be fashioned like unto his glorious body. His body is perfect. We all should look forward to having that kind of body: a perfect mind, a perfectly operating body with no ailments, a body that will live forever and never get older or weaker or decay.

Therefore, we can praise him and serve him throughout all eternity without any imperfections at all.

Notice that this glorification of the body is dependent upon his being able to subdue all things unto himself. Our Lord has no problem subduing the things that may otherwise hinder our being glorified and becoming like him. Jesus has this all well in hand, and his Father is in complete agreement with it.

Creation Glorified From Corruption

Rom. 8:21 *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

The word “creature” here is creation. This is God’s whole creation. It will one day completely surrender to the change that God has planned for all creation. He will change plants and animals alike to be in his new kingdom on earth. He will deliver the whole creation and give that creation the same liberty that the children of God have by faith in Jesus Christ.

The trees will die no more. The animals will die no more. The air will always be fresh. There will be no need for heat and air conditioning. There will be no hate or violence or war, etc.

A Glorified Place

John 14:2 *In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

The Lord went to the cross to prepare a place for us, and he is in heaven today, some believe, to continue preparing that place so that he can come again and receive us unto himself. Heaven, what a beautiful place! Notice as we read Rev. 21:1-8 what kind of place it is.

Read Rev. 21:1-8.

Glorified In The Resurrection

Matt. 22:31 *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

We turn our thoughts now to the resurrection, because this is an integral part of our glorification. The question comes concerning those who have already gone in death to heaven.

Some say that the soul sleeps, but it does not sleep. A sleeping soul is a dead soul. Instead, the saved soul goes to be with the Lord immediately upon death. Paul said in 2 Cor 5:8 *We are confident, [I say], and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

God is the God of the living, not the dead. Our souls do not sleep or die; they are with the Lord when we die, even though we do not yet have our glorified bodies.

What Is That Resurrection Like

Luke 20:35 *But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: 36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.*

When we are resurrected, we will neither marry or die. We are equal to the angels on the par of being unmarried and never dying. We are not equal to angels in any other way. The angels will always be

amazed at what has happened to these depraved souls who trust in Jesus Christ. They will always be amazed at what God has done for them in saving their souls from sins, forgiving them and giving them a home in heaven with a glorified body like that of the Lord Jesus Christ. The angels will never have bodies like the Lord Jesus Christ. They will never have the same glory that we have with him, for we are his chosen children; the angels are not.

If There Is No Resurrection

1 Cor. 15:13 *But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:*

The Sadducees said there was no resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead.

Paul explained that, if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Jesus is not risen from the dead, and the Gospel which Paul preaches is vain, of no value. So, then, Paul is wasting his time preaching if Jesus is not risen from the dead.

But contrary to that idea, Jesus is risen, and we have a hope as a result. Here is what we have.

1 Cor. 15:42 *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

Our Glorification Is At The First Resurrection

Rev. 20:6 *Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

In this first resurrection, that of the saved, we will receive our glorification, our new body and our new home.

Those who are in this first resurrection will not be subject to the power of the second death. But not only that; we shall be priests of God and shall reign with Jesus for a thousand years here on the earth. This is part of our glorification.

Where will you be when Jesus comes again to resurrect the saved and to give them glorification? Will you be in that number? Will you go with us who are ready to be revealed in the last time?

You can go with us if you will truly believe and trust on Jesus Christ as your Savior, trusting his work on Calvary and his power to resurrect us at the end of this life.

There is a second death, and it is the Lake of Fire. Turn from your sins today and flee to the Savior. Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be in that first resurrection.

Preached 5/21/06 PM

FUTURE - THE REIGN OF CHRIST

Rev. 20:6 *Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

Rev 20:6 is our text verse, and we will consider several things in regard to what is mentioned in this verse for our message today.

We have considered before that there are two resurrections, but they do not happen at the same time. These two resurrections are separated by a period of a thousand years. Let's notice, first of all, the first resurrection.

The First Resurrection

Again, as we have already considered, if there is a first resurrection, then there must be a second resurrection. We will refer to the second one in a moment.

Luke 14:13 *But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*

Here the first resurrection is called a "resurrection of the just." To be just means to know Jesus Christ as Savior. To be just means to have eternal life within you. To be just means to know that you are going to heaven when you die or when the Lord comes again. To be just means that all of your sins have been forgiven, and they are all cast in the sea of forgetfulness.

Of course, only the just will be resurrected

in this first resurrection. This resurrection takes place when Jesus comes again. We read about this in 1 Cor. 15:51-58, which read at this time.

I want to be in that first resurrection, because I am not excited about the alternative.

John 5:29 *And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

In this verse we see that the first resurrection is called a "resurrection of life." That means that those who are now dead will be alive. It means that in that resurrection no one will be dead physically or spiritually.

Those who have done good will have this resurrection of life. To have done good means to have submitted to the saving grace of Jesus Christ and to have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and to have become servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is good to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is good to repent of your sins. It is good to know Jesus Christ in forgiveness of sins. It is good to be a servant of Jesus Christ.

So, the first resurrection is the resurrection of life, resurrecting the dead to new life with glorified bodies and resurrecting us who are saved and living to a new life, a life eternal with Jesus Christ in our glorified bodies.

I hope you are looking forward to the first resurrection. I pray that this is your hope and your confidence in this life. As we noticed in Luke 14:13-14, those of this earth cannot recompense us, but we will be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. That is our reward. We have no reward

here except what people give to us, but there in that eternal judgment hall, God will reward us for our goodness, the goodness that God has given us by his grace, by faith in Jesus Christ.

The Second Death

Rev. 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Now in these verses we see what we sometimes call the second resurrection, but the Bible does not call it the second resurrection but rather the second death.

That is because it is not a resurrection of life. It is not a resurrection of the just. It is a resurrection unto death.

All who are resurrected this second time are dead in their sins. They are destined by their lack of faith in Christ to be cast into the lake of fire.

Those, however, who are in the first resurrection have no worry about this second death. Over us it has no power. The power of Satan and his kingdom has been eradicated from any power against the believers.

Priests of God

Rev. 1:6 And hath made us kings and

priests unto God and his Father; to him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

This verse tells us that we are now considered to be kings and priests unto God and we are given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18).

But in our verse from Rev. 20:6 we “shall be” priests of God and of Christ. That is, when we are resurrected to new life, we shall be priests of God, giving up sacrifices of praise to him eternally. These sacrifices are not the same as the ones given by Old Testament priests. They do not typify the coming of the Savior, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins, but they only give praise and honor to God and Christ for the work done for our redemption.

Re 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

I think part of being priests of God is singing that new song that we will learn in eternity. It is such a sweet song that we will never tire of singing it. Everyone will sing the same song, and it will bring eternal praise and glory to our God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We Shall Reign

“they will be wholly devoted to and employed in the service of God and of Christ, and will be continually offering up the sacrifices of praise, or singing

the song of the Lamb, adoring the grace and goodness of God and Christ unto them, shown them both in providence and in grace: “
(John Gill)

This does not mean that we will reign in Christ’s stead or rule over anyone or any portion of the kingdom of God; it simply means that we shall be servants in a kingdom where Jesus reigns.

A Thousand Years

This reign of Christ will be for a thousand years, and I cannot think of a thing that would cause me to believe it is anything but a thousand years.

This phrase “thousand years” is mentioned six times in the book of Revelation, and they are all in this chapter. With those verses, let’s notice some things about this 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ.

Rev. 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

First, let us notice that when this period of Christ’s reign begins, Satan is bound for a thousand years. Personally I will be glad to be rid of him. He is my worst enemy. Now, I have more trouble with my wife’s first husband than anyone I know, and I am my wife’s first husband. But then comes Satan. He is the serpent, Beelzebub, the enemy, the evil one, the adversary, the devil, the deceiver, the Dragon, the father of lies, the murderer, and the sinner (1 John 3:8).

He has fought against holy angels, conspired against God, deceived human beings, and he has a conspiracy to destroy

God’s kingdom. I will certainly be glad to be rid of him.

In this 1000-year reign there will be no Satan to deceive us, challenge us, question our faith, or try to kill us. Won’t that be glorious!

Rev. 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

After the 1000 years, the devil will be loosed for a little season. Watch out! The devil is loose. He is running about. What fear should we have at this time?

None! Notice Rev. 20:7-10.

Rev. 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

In this verse those who are in this wonderful kingdom of God are described. They have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus Christ and for the word of God. That is, many who believe in Jesus Christ have been killed for their faith. All we need to do

is read the history of God's people, and we find that many millions have died for their faith in Jesus Christ. They will be rewarded in this glorious and literal kingdom of God.

Secondly, they have not worshiped the beast, which is the kingdom of Satan. They have not surrendered to the deceit of Satan and his wiles. They have been saved from his kingdom of darkness and have been brought by God's grace into the kingdom of light and the kingdom of his dear Son, Jesus Christ. These have not joined with the cult worship of the anti-Christian groups but have been saved and separated from these things and from that philosophy. Image worship is idolatry, and God's children see no need for that nor a desire to participate in it. This is the image of Satan's religion.

Thirdly, they have not received or accepted the mark in their foreheads and in their hands. They have not been duped into thinking that image worship and sacerdotal and sacramental worship are proper and right. They shun it and do not become a part of it but rather rebuke that kind of worship.

Then, notice fourthly, that they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, said in the past tense as if it has already happened; because that is God's eternal plan and purpose in his children—to bring them with him to earth to be in that kingdom with Christ.

Zech. 14:5 And ye shall flee [to] the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, [and] all the saints with thee.

Jude 1:14 And Enoch also, the seventh

from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

Rev 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

What a day that will be
When my Jesus I shall see
When I look upon his face
The one who saved me by his grace.

When he takes me by the hand
A leads me to the promised land,
What a day, glorious day
That will be.

Preached on 5/28/2006

FUTURE - THE CHRISTIAN'S REWARDS

Possibility of Rewards

Matt 5:12 *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

The Greek word MISTHOS is translated “reward, hire, or wages” in the New Testament, and is a word that can be used for good or bad rewards. In 2 Peter 2:15 we read of the “wages of unrighteousness” and in Acts 1:18 “the wages of iniquity.” Here in Matthew, it is for good, since these believers were being persecuted for their faith, and they will receive a reward for their persecution.

Now let's notice some scriptures on rewards:

Matt. 6:4 *That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

Matt. 10:41 *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.*

Matt. 16:27 *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

Mark 9:41 *For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose*

his reward.

Rev. 22:12 *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

So, there are rewards for God's children. We may as well expect them, and we may as well surrender ourselves to our Lord and serve him; because it is that surrender and service that brings out the spiritual praise and sacrifice to God that brings our rewards.

May God give us wisdom to build up treasures in heaven:

Matt. 6:20 *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*

Loss of Rewards

Matt. 5:46 *For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*

There are certain things that we do that we think may give us reward, but they are not the kinds of things that bring rewards.

Notice our verse here. If we love them which love us, we will not receive a reward for it. That is a natural thing. It is not necessarily a spiritual thing to love those who love you.

Matt. 6:1 *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

In doing good things for others, do not give or help others because of men or to impress other people. Do it because of your love for God. If you do not contribute for the right reason, you will not receive a reward from your Father in heaven.

Col. 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

Some would love to beguile us or trick us into some other kinds of worship rather than true worship of God. They may want to lead us into a cult-like worship or the worship of angels. These are not to be done.

If we allow men to lead us into false worship of God, then we will not receive rewards. In essence, that person will be stealing our reward from us.

We must spend our time in the word of God and not to simply follow some man's devised way of worshiping God. Remember, there is a reward for those good things we do by the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 8:18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

So, how can we lose rewards? I believe this verse explains it to us. It is not that we have rewards and lose them, but we THINK we have rewards, or it SEEMS that we have rewards. Then when we are judged by the Lord, we do not see these rewards in heaven. It is not because they were there and somehow God erased them away; it is that we

never had them to begin with. We only think we have them. I believe many people will be surprised how few rewards they receive in heaven. I believe that there are many who will look at others and be surprised at how many others receive that we did not think would receive them.

God is the judge. We are not the judges of those things. God will give rewards to whom he desires, and we have no say in it. Let's not worry about someone else's rewards; let's be concerned about whether we ourselves have rewards from the Lord.

Do everything in honesty and in praise to the Lord, and the rewards will come according to God's judgment.

Purpose of Rewards

Luke 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and [to] the evil.

This is a hard verse for many. God tells us here that we should be kind to everyone whether or not they are saved. We should not ask anything in return from those to whom we lend money, especially if we are helping them with necessities of life. We are not to lend money for necessities with the idea of the money's being paid back with interest. It is not a business proposition. The necessities are food and shelter, not new cars and swimming pools.

The Lord says that our reward will be great for this, and we shall be (in eternity) children of the Highest, which is God. This means that we are showing our true character as believers in Jesus Christ when we lend without requiring repayment. This

is the true nature of God's children.

God is kind to the unthankful and to the evil person. These are the ones, the lost, to whom we lend gratitude and help, for we are the children of God, and our love is to our neighbor whether lost or saved.

God sends the rain upon the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45). Sometimes he sends a little money or a smile or a helping hand by way of his children. Be kind to those who may be unthankful or evil. He uses us to show that little kindness to the lost world. I believe the world needs a little more kindness from Christian people.

So the purpose of rewards is to encourage us as God's children to be kind to everyone and to lend to those who may not be Christ-like, to be joyous in doing it, and not to expect payment back from them.

Our rewards will come in due time. We are not to be anxious but to wait for that hope.

Gal. 5:5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

This hope of righteousness by faith includes the rewards that we shall receive at the hands of our Savior when we meet him in our eternal home.

The Place of Rewards

You may not agree with me on this, but I believe that we will receive our rewards in the future kingdom of God on earth.

Rev. 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped

the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

I don't think I am wrong about this; but if I am, there will still be rewards for God's children, and they will live with him eternally as he promised to everyone who believes in him.

Conclusion

Are you as a believer laying up treasures in heaven, or are you building treasures on the earth where moth and dust corrupts and thieves break through and steal?

Be careful about your character and your sincerity, about your worship and about your love for God and how you express it. These all will make a difference when you stand before the Lord in judgment.

Rom. 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

If you will read the context of this chapter, you will see that this verse speaks specifically about believers, Christian people. We should all be sure that no one beguiles us concerning our reward in heaven.

There are rewards in heaven, and none of us should miss out on them. If you are not saved today, no rewards or treasures are being laid up for you in heaven. You must first repent and believe on Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Then you can begin laying up treasures in heaven and can expect and look for those rewards when you appear with him in eternity.

THE END