

**GRACE**

***NOT***

**CALVINISM**

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## PREFACE

The reader will soon notice that this book does not follow any normal style of writing. The reason for this is that it had its origin in 12 messages, preached from the pulpit of Bethel Baptist Church, of Lawton, Oklahoma, in 1990. The series was recorded on cassette tape and later published in *The Baptist Watchman*, a monthly publication of that church. Due to this origin, the book will contain the repetition of clauses, phrases and sentences, which would not be normal in the course of writing. It is my prayer that the reader will take this into consideration and not be offended by these violations of normal writing style.

I hope that you will also understand that this series was delivered over a period of more than three months. Since new people entered the congregation during that time and since some in regular attendance missed some of these services, a certain amount of summarization, and repetition was necessary. This also is, of course, contrary to what would be normal writing style. One who reads this book chapter at a time may hardly notice this, while one who reads it in three or four settings may really see the repetition. Again, I ask, please consider the reason, and bear with me in this area.

Finally, let me add that the content of this book is for a wide variety of students. Many seasoned pastors and missionaries have heard the tapes and encouraged me to put it in book form. I have purposely tried to discuss these issues on a level from which seasoned ministers can profit. Hundreds of ministerial students are grappling with these issues today, and I hope to help point them in a right direction. At the same time, I have carefully addressed the Christian in the pew, who may never have heard the issues discussed, or who may have heard them discussed in a very unbiblical light. It is my hope and prayer that this work may be beneficial to all of these people, whatever their level of study.

I know that I shall soon go the way of all flesh and it is my prayer that many who pass this way after me may, by God's grace, profit from this lowly work.

Forrest L. Keener – April 30, 1992

## INTRODUCTION

I cannot claim for this work either scholarship in its content or academic excellence in its presentation. My purpose is not to display philosophical attainment nor to please men. I hope and believe that this work is presented because of and addressed to a particular doctrinal need.

For many years I have heard brethren discuss the issues of this volume, some in sincerity and some in a purely argumentative spirit. I have heard and seen good men maligned, inquiring men discouraged, honest and godly men wounded and churches destroyed, by the misunderstanding of these issues. I have seen fellowship broken between preachers who loved each other, not because they were at great doctrinal variance, but because one or both of them thought they were. Such things ought not to be. It is my earnest prayer, that by this work, I may encourage men to abandon the practice of name calling, and begin to objectively approach the issues of Bible doctrine. Everyone, necessarily, believes something on these particular issues; let us try to study.

Some men think the solution is silence and I must admit, in the early years of my ministry I agreed. I no longer do. I have found that Spurgeon was perfectly right when he said, 'Unity at the price of truth is treason against God.' Jude wrote unto us that we "should contend for the faith... ." When we neglect this duty, Satan will always take advantage of our lethargy and propagate false doctrine. While a spirit of anger and contention is out of order, silence is certainly not the solution. I have heard men make such references as "That damnable doctrine of election," etc. When such Bible words as election are ridiculed and blasphemed, by men who think they preach the Bible, silence is no longer golden, it is yellow. Indeed, it is wicked cowardice.

In my lifetime, I have seen the great message of free, sovereign grace, which was clearly taught by our Lord Jesus Christ, and was preached by Spurgeon, Judson, Carey, Taylor, Boyce, Pendleton, Graves, Carrol and multitudes of others, including the Apostle Paul, minimized, ridiculed and denied. If I accept, or any other preacher, who knows better, accepts this in silence, I am guilty of cowardice of the worst sort. If any one of us sees other issues as too important to turn aside for this one, or unity too dear to risk on behalf of this doctrine, that one is unworthy of the title, 'Gospel preacher.' Let the Holy word of God dictate our message, and not the pressure of men. Let the fear of God guide us and not the fear of men. I have far less grief with brethren who think I am doctrinally wrong about this matter and so oppose me, than those who know I am right and who, for the sake of friendship or ministerial standing, have nothing positive to say.

It is my hope that this work may motivate men, both now and after my death, to speak the truth in love. Let's never let the definite truths of grace make us void of the spirit of grace in our teaching, or in our personal communication. The knowledge of grace should tend to make us display grace in our lives. It is also my hope and prayer that men who think ill of this body of doctrine, will be of an humble enough spirit to give this work a fair consideration, before they pronounce it heresy. Let us all remember it is far better to be proven wrong and motivated to find truth, than to have the skill to prove ourself right, when we are, in fact, wrong.

A few words concerning the title of this book: I am not taking issue with any of the divisions or titles, which have been used to systematize this body of soteriological doctrine. I am not quarreling with the great men of the past two hundred years, who have referred to this system of soteriological teaching as "Calvinism." I am neither academically or mentally able to critique these men. Let us remember, however, that terms have changes in their meanings as the years pass. If a word is profaned or misused often enough and widely enough, it may become necessary to abandon the common use of that word or term, so as to

prevent the abusers of it from speaking for us. Few, if any, of the men of years past, who affirmed their belief in "Calvinism" were denominating themselves disciples of John Calvin. They were not so much as hinting that they believed all he believed. Even Princeton theologians who referred to this body of doctrine as "Calvinism," were not making reference to John Calvin's beliefs in general, even though they might have agreed with him. By this term, they were only referring to these particular issues of soteriology.

The sad fact is that in my lifetime there has arisen a new breed of teacher which has chosen to use, or misuse, this word "Calvinism" as a derogatory, rather than a descriptive title. They have even gone on to incorporate the term "Hyper-Calvinist" into their vocabulary and to completely equate it to "Calvinism." These two terms are in no sense equal, and always were intended to draw a clear line of difference in soteriological opinion. While this ignorance and terrible dishonesty is to their great shame, the responsibility to teach truth weighs no less heavily upon us. My purpose has, therefore, been to take this great system, which so well divides and delineates the doctrines of God's saving grace, from false saving combinations, and to strip away the human smoke screens. It is my purpose to show that these doctrinal issues are not thoughts originated by John Calvin, or any other man, but that they are the clear teachings of our Triune God. What I am teaching herein, is not doctrine intended to vindicate Calvin, Spurgeon, Judson or anyone else. It is not to belittle or discredit any man who disagrees with me on this doctrine. It is all to teach one simple truth: Salvation is of the Lord. It is of the Lord in its conception, its implementation, its revelation, and its perpetuation. May this work bring praise to God.

# Chapter One

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE SUBJECT

Open your Bibles to II Timothy chapter 2, and I want us to read there the entirety of the chapter. I am taking my text tonight from verse 15. Start to read in II Timothy chapter 2, and in verse 1: *"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 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. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."*

For our text, I want you to notice verse 15, for it is indeed the theme of this entire series. Hear these words: *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* We need to be workmen approved of God, not of men, but of God. This evening, I want to begin the re-preaching of a series which I did in early 1978. It is a series called, "Grace Not Calvinism." That is the name I gave it at that time, and I will not change it now. The reason for the series was to try to establish from the Bible, that we are dealing with the doctrines of salvation by pure grace, and that it need not, and ought not, have a tag such as "Calvinism" hung upon it. I hope I can do a better job this time than I did before. I do not like to be referred to as a Calvinist. I do not like to hear other men, who believe the word of God referred to as Calvinists or Arminians. I do not think it is often accurate or proper. So the purpose of re-doing the series this: Hopefully, I will be able to get people revitalized in the lost art of studying, that we might be able to get rid of some of the misunderstanding, and the "misoverstating" of these issues, that needlessly divide brethren. I simply plan, in the process of this series, to cover the issues that

deal with the doctrines of salvation. How is a man saved? This is the issue of the series. Is he saved by God, does he save himself, or is it partly of God, and partly of himself? That is the whole issue of this entire series, and I hope that we can approach it as honest and humble students. I plead with you, who sit here in this auditorium tonight, and I plead with those who will hear this series on tape, and I plead with those who may later read it in print, if the Lord sees fit to let that be done, to enter the study humbly, as students. Look at it as students, not as judges. We are not judges of one another. And we are not judges of the word of God. We need to be students. We need to enter this study humbly.

Here in the passage that I read to you tonight, in verses 16 and 17, Paul said, *"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus."* Now, beloved, we do not want to approach this in such a way that we are involved in profane and vain babblings. Hopefully, you and I are students of God's word, doing good for the cause of Christ, and not evil. We need to approach this as subjects of the word of God, and not judges of the word of God. For instance, have you ever heard someone say, 'I know the Bible deals with that, but I do not really think that is as important as...,' and they go on to something else. Well, beloved, I do not really have the right to decide what is as important as. In other words, if God said it, we ought to preach it. We ought to study it. We ought to seek to understand it. And when there is an area of the word of God that you do not understand, that is the area that you ought to be studying more definitely than any other.

I want to touch upon four things tonight, and I want to try my very best to keep each of these messages within a 45-minute time limit, so that they will go on one side of a tape. I am going to make that a goal, and I hope I can carry it out. So if I seem to cut some things off rather quickly, know that I had a reason for it. I did not just run out of something to say, and as I go on into the series, I will try to pick up on it and complete it at an appropriate time.

#### DEFINING THE ISSUE UNDER CONSIDERATION

First of all, I want to define the issue: What is the subject matter of this series? What are we dealing with? Now, I said that we are dealing with the doctrines of man's salvation, but let me go a little bit farther and say, that it is a doctrinal system which scopes all of man's salvation. In other words, it reaches from the fall of man, which is the thing that necessitates his salvation, all the way to the glorification of the Christian, when he is given a body like unto Christ's glorious body. It has to do with God's purpose to save. It has to do with God's means of reconciliation. It has to do with the Holy Spirit's work in the heart of regeneration. It has to do with the touching of the heart through the preaching of the word of God. It has to do with his faith and repentance. It has to do with God preserving him, and with his element of perseverance in that. It deals with all of those issues, that progress from the fallen state of man—that is his lost condition—to the ultimate position of the saint in the presence of God. It is, in essence, a simple enlargement upon Ephesians 1:1-11. If you will just carefully study that some time you will see, that if I were to really go through and outline that passage of scripture alone, I might very well have exactly the structure that I have here. Listen to these words: *"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."* Do you know what all of those terms mean? An exposition of those terms would bring us right to the issues that we will be dealing with in this series. *"In whom we*

*have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."* If we were to go over and borrow the first three verses of the second chapter that Paul uses as he goes on to remind these people where they had been brought from, and use it to deal with the first portion of this series, we would have the entire series outlined right there. We would have the fallen state of Adam's race. We would have the electing grace of God for depraved men. We would have the atonement of God. We would have the calling, in which God has abounded to us in all wisdom, bringing us to Himself, and we would have the preservation of God. The entire scope of Salvation would be seen right there. This deals with the following Bible subjects. Let me quickly give you the subjects which I will be dealing with.

First of all, it states the fallen state of mankind. What is man--What is the state of man as he came out of the Garden of Eden? No, No, NOT as he came from the hand of God, for he was in no wise in that condition when he came out of the Garden of Eden. When God placed at the garden gate that sword that pointed every way lest man take of the tree of life and live for ever, what was the condition of mankind? That is very important, for it will determine what MUST be done for him in salvation.

Secondly: What is the purpose of God to save? Does God have a purpose in saving? Did He purpose to save everyone and fail? Did He purpose to save no one in particular, but to simply give everyone an equal chance? What was God's purpose? This series must deal with that.

Thirdly: The means God uses in removing sin. Does God simply forget about sin, if we repent of it? Does God simply forget about sin, if we really try to change our way of living? If not, how does God remove sin?

Fourthly: What is the work of God in bringing men to faith and repentance. When God sent His Son to the cross, is that all that ever must be done in order for man to be saved? Must man not also repent and believe? What is done to bring that about? That is the fourth thing that we must deal with.

Finally: The preserving work of God and the result of that. Can any man who has been brought to genuine faith and repentance lose his blood-bought salvation? Can he, on the other hand, as some slanderously say we teach, just come up to the front of the building, shake hands with the preacher, and go on out and live any way he wants to, and go to heaven? What does the Bible have to say about that? Do you see how this carries us all the way, from the fall of man, completely through to the glorification of man? So you see, this is not a 'small body of doctrine over in the corner of the Bible, that intrigues men to plunk at one string on the fiddle,' not by the farthest stretch of your imagination. It deals with all of the Bible's doctrines of salvation, when it is properly approached. And I hope by the grace of God, that I can do that. I know that I could not do it otherwise.

Each of these issues is inseparably tied to the other, and every Christian believes something about every single one of these. Now, I know that none of us is totally consistent on everything. I realize that a man may be right on part of this, without being right on all of the other parts. But the point is this: None of us should say, 'Well, I believe, or I approve of this part, but I resent the teaching on, or the entrance of any thought on the other part,' because every one of these parts is inseparably tied to the other, and both the friends of these doctrines and the enemies of these doctrines fully agree on that. They agree that they are, indeed, tied together.

## THESE ARE ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES OF SAVING GRACE

Secondly, I want to point out to you that these are doctrines of saving grace. They are not Calvinism. I used to have a very dear friend that believed these doctrines, and he taught me a lot about them. His name was Dr. Frank A. Godsoe. He, very unintentionally, offended me one time by preaching on the doctrine of limited atonement in this church, long before I understood anything about it, or believed anything about it. I really did not even know what atonement was, and I was somewhat grieved with him. I told him so, right on the spot, and we got over it in a matter of two or three minutes, but I said, 'Doc, you know I do not believe that,' and he kind of laughed and said, 'Yes, I believe you did tell me that.' And so we talked about it a little while and there was no more to it. My point is this: I might, since he taught it, call it "Godsoeism." Somebody might now call it "Keenerism." It would be just as accurate to call it either of those things as it is to call it Calvinism, for none of us can be credited with the origin, of either the doctrines or the system. I have heard good men who believed the system say, that it is rightly called Calvinism. Well, I disagree with that. With all due respect, I say that it is wrongly nicknamed Calvinism. It would perhaps be more accurate to call it anti-Arminianism, because the origin of it did not come from the followers of Calvin, but came from the followers of Arminius negatively. James Arminius was a teacher in a university of Amsterdam many years ago. He died in 1609. One year after James Arminius died, some of his followers wrote an article called the Remonstrance and presented it the Dutch Reformed Church in Holland. It might surprise you to know that the university that Arminius was teaching in, was the university over which John Calvin had had tremendous influence, and at the time they were not essentially considered enemies, or competitors, but would have been considered friends. I am not saying that they were close personal friends, but I am saying Arminius was teaching in a university where Calvin had had great influence, and professed to believe essentially the same thing. Arminius was more of a modernist, or a liberal in that line of thought, and so these followers brought together, in 1610, the five issues that are set before us here, and in their original statement, they are far different than what they are today. Indeed, in the ORIGINAL statement, they held to the necessity of an effectual call. Did you know that? It was later that the Arminians moved away from the idea of the necessity of an effectual call, making themselves consistent with the philosophy that brought about the other issues. John Calvin had died in 1564, forty-six years before this issue was brought to bear in that country. The Dutch Reformed Church rejected the demands of the Remonstrants, and stayed with the established teachings and they themselves said these are the things that Calvin taught. After all they were Dutch Reformed, in doctrine they were Presbyterians of a sort, and Calvin had had his effect upon them. But Calvin was not the originator of those things, they did not claim he was and he did not claim he was. If you read the writings of James Arminius, you will find that it was not John Calvin that he was continually arguing with, but it was men who far preceded John Calvin in years. I mean they had already gone off the scene, and he was arguing with their position. So these were positions that were held, and struggled with, long before Calvin.

I was told something very interesting by a friend, who was working for his doctor's degree in an institution in Memphis, Tennessee, some years ago. He said that while he was there, he had a history professor who was a Presbyterian. He said, that one day there were some men arguing about the "five points of Calvinism" in the history class. The professor came in and listened to them for a moment, and he asked, 'What are you fellows talking about?' When they answered, 'We are talking about the five points of Calvinism.' He said, 'What is that?' They related to him the "T-U-L-I-P" format of the so-called five points of Calvinism. And this man said, 'I have read everything that Calvin ever wrote at least twice, and you will not find those five points as such, or in any such order as that, in any of his writings. Though Calvin apparently believed those things, you will not find those five points in any kind of order such as that in anything



that Calvin ever wrote.' Nor were they in this order as the Arminians or the Remonstrants put them to the Reformed Church of Holland. And so, what I am saying to you is this: that it is not wise for us to try to categorize this as Calvinism, or to try to categorize the other side of it as Arminianism, and just dismiss it. That is not wise, it is not fair, it is not spiritual, it is not a good thing for us to do in any sense. We do not want to do that. We do not want to use the cheap tactics of "pigeonholing" another preacher.

I wrote an article some years ago in which I pled with preachers, not to call other preachers Arminians or Calvinists. If they are Baptists, they are not Calvinists, and they are not Arminians. They are Baptists, and Baptists seek to study the Bible. I believe that is a cheap tactic. I detest the idea of hearing a missionary Baptist being called a "Hyper-Calvinist." Some years ago I was preaching in Canada, and I heard of a man there who had been referring to a man as a Hyper-Calvinist, over in Ontario. This man had a doctor's degree, and was a professor in a college there, and he kept referring to someone as a Hyper-Calvinist. One of the students asked him, 'Doctor'... I almost said his name, I will not do that. 'What is a Hyper-Calvinist?' And his answer came back, 'It is a Calvinist.' Well, that is not only ridicules, it is very ignorant. A Hyper-Calvinist and a Calvinist are two entirely different people. I do not intend to get into those things this evening, because those titles are not important. The point is we just must not use the cheap tactic of categorizing men, and calling them names, or caricaturing what they believe. Do you understand what I am talking about? We are always hearing jokes about other people and some of the jokes are very much out of order. Some of them are funny, but unfair and out of order. I hear preachers get up and joke about these Calvinists going out to preach to God's elect. Now, I have never met a man that thought that he was only going to preach to God's elect. I do not know anybody like that. That is something of a caricature. I have heard of other men that joke about the Arminians. They say, this fellow was out visiting and someone was saved, and he came home and got on his knees to pray. And he said, 'Lord, You will never guess what happened today.' And we listen to those things, and we laugh about them. They tease about the Calvinist TULIP. Some years ago I was about to go deer hunting, and a preacher said to me, 'I bet you would not shoot a five-pointer would you?' And he was teasing about the thing. Someone else said, you know, the Calvinists have their tulip, but the Arminians also have their flower. It is a daisy. 'He loves me. He loves me not. He loves me. He loves me not.' Now I confess these things are funny and I enjoy the humor. We can say those little things, and laugh about them. But we really do not accomplish anything by categorizing men, making fun of men, and caricaturing what they believe, or by throwing those little darts at one another. It is just not what we are looking for. Tonight, I am simply saying, do not categorize men. Do not credit these issues to John Calvin. He is not worthy of this credit. I mean that seriously. Do not credit those things to him. Look at the Bible, try to learn what the Bible teaches on these issues. Teach what the Bible teaches, and do not feel any necessity of being bound and shackled to any kind of a title, or falling neatly into any category. When someone comes along and says, 'What do you believe about so-and-so?', be careful about identifying yourself by their stock title, because you may answer a question that will give them a totally wrong idea about what you believe. Just shun those categories, and try to stay within the framework of Biblical issues.

#### MY REASON FOR PRESENTING THIS SERIES OF SUBJECTS

Very quickly, let us move on to this question, and this will be the last thing that I will deal with in this message. I want to approach this question from two directions: Why am I presenting this series? First I want to talk to you about things that are not the reasons why I am doing it, and then the reasons why I am doing it.

First of all then, I am not doing it to take a jab at any other man. Before God, there is not a man who takes issue with me, on the direction of this series, that I want to take any jabs at--not one that I know of anywhere. Certainly many do take issue with me, but I feel neither need nor impulse to do them anything but good. I have no animosity, I have no reason, and I have no need of any kind, to take any jabs at those men. The Bible says, for we know in part and we prophesy in part. I believe that every man that I know upon this earth knows in part, and prophesies in part. I know in part and prophesy in part. Now I understand that he is talking about until the word of God comes, and I know we have the word of God, but I still know that I do not know it all. And they who disagree with me do not know it all. Because of that, there needs to be a charitable attitude between us. Folks, please keep a charitable attitude. When someone disagrees with you about these things, do not be hateful and haughty with them. It will not accomplish one thing. It will not help them, and it will not help you. It is not my purpose to take jabs at anybody. My purpose is not to separate men, or to vilify those who disagree with me. I am glad that when I first began to make statements of what I believed, and take stands in the early years of my ministry, that there were men around who had enough charity in their hearts, and enough patience with my ignorance, that they did not just shove me away and categorize me a heretic, and separate from me. If they had, humanly speaking, I would have been forced into an area of believing many things, very differently from what I believe today, and they would have been wrong. We will not help men by doing that. We will not help men by vilifying them. None of us knows every thing. Therefore, each of us is sure to be wrong about something. Because a man is wrong about something, does not mean he is bad. It does not mean he is ungodly. It does not mean that he is an ignoramus, and it does not mean that he is not worthy of our fellowship, our love, and our patience. So, we need to be careful to keep the right kind of an attitude. My purpose is not to separate brethren, and say, 'alright, fellows, I want to let you know where I stand, and if you do not stand with me, you get over there and I will stay over here.' That is not my purpose at all! I want to say that these issues have occupied honest students of the word of God for centuries. There have been men who have been honest and sensitive students of the word of God, who have dealt with these issues, and have honestly, and charitably disagreed upon various parts of them for centuries. It is not a Christian spirit in our attitude, for us to be cocky, or smart alecky, or to try to shove other men away. That is not my purpose. Why then, am I presenting this series of messages? What is my purpose?

First of all, I want to respond to some honest inquiries. I said this, when I first presented this series eleven years ago: I wanted to do that at that time, and I hope by the grace of God, I did so. We received a lot of inquiries. I have no idea how many responses we got to the series at that time, many, many responses, hundreds, from all over the nation. I did not keep track. I am not a good statistic keeper. I have had some other inquiries later--some very lately, and I really wanted to respond to them a little better than in my first series of discourses. I thought I could do a little better job on the series, a little more studious job, perhaps, and hopefully, more charitable. Hopefully, I could do a job that would reconcile brethren, more than separate them. That is one of my purposes in doing this. It is for the benefit of serious students.

Secondly, it is to refute some teachings, that I consider to be serious error today. The doctrine of falling from grace is not dead. I received a very hateful letter recently from a Nazarene preacher, somewhere in the New England states, in response to my tract "The Doctrine of Falling from Grace." Every once-in-awhile I will hear someone get up and tell a joke concerning election or something, that is almost blasphemous. It is amazing, sometimes, how unintentionally wicked a preacher can be, in making jokes about the blood of Christ or the purpose of God. I hope that I can help some men to see this error, and not in the sense of straightening them out, but in the sense of, in love and patience, helping them a little bit.

Thirdly, it is to try to remove some misunderstanding about this system of doctrine. For instance, have

you ever heard someone define the doctrine of election like this? 'God chose these people to go to heaven, and these people to go to hell.' Well now, that is a misrepresentation. I do not know of anybody that teaches that! Bro. Wayne Camp, some years ago, started a series and he wound up doing quite a long series entitled, 'Election Claims No Victims For Hell.' He was patiently showing that the people who teach the doctrine of election are not teaching that God has chosen men to go to hell. There are a lot of misunderstandings, such as the idea that God has chosen men to go to hell, that is, if He has chosen men to go to heaven, He necessarily chose the rest for hell, or that by not choosing them for salvation, He necessarily chooses them to go to hell. There is a lot of misunderstanding about this way, that I would like to shed some light on, if by God's grace I may.

And then, above all, I present this series to simply teach God's word in consistency. I believe it is important for us to be consistent. I think, sometimes, when people come into our services that are lost, their minds may be functioning more intellectually than we imagine, more than ours are sometimes, and more than we give them credit for. And some preacher stands in the pulpit and says to the lost out there, 'Now God has done all He can do to save you.' 'The rest is up to you.' You have heard that said. And then at the same time, he says, 'God does the saving.' 'You do not do it.' Or he says to the congregation when he gets through, having preached that God has done all He can, 'Pray for the lost.' People who cannot possibly see the truth of the gospel, see the inconsistency here. It is frustrating! If we think at all, it is bound to cause us to look with some misgiving, at such careless and inconsistent preaching. I hope that I may teach the word of God with all the consistency of which I am capable. To show something of the inconsistency there, we see a great many of the statements about the irreconcilability of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. People are continually saying, 'You cannot reconcile the sovereignty of God with the responsibility of man.' Well, you do not need to. Do you know what I am talking about? They are two different things. You cannot reconcile your bank account with my bank account, or mine with yours. You see they are two different things, and it is not necessary. I have told you this story in the past. I may have used it in connection with this series before. But it is to illustrate how inconsistent, or how illogical we can be, sometimes, in our thinking. It is a story about three hunters. If you have heard this, listen to it again. Maybe you can solve the puzzle. It really is not a puzzle at all. But it is a story about three hunters, who went away to hunt. The first night they went into a hotel and got a room. The man at the desk charged them thirty dollars. They each gave him a ten dollar bill and went to their room. When they had gone to the room, he said to the bellboy, 'I charged those men too much. I am ashamed of myself. They are "out-of-towners" and I just decided that I would just gouge a little bit.' He said, 'I want you to take this five dollars back up and give it to them.' So the bellboy took the five dollars in his hand, and on the way to the room, he began to think, 'those men will never know how much was to be given back to them, and so I am going to do is this: I am going to give each of them a dollar, they will be glad to get the dollar back. I will keep two, the clerk will be happy, his conscience is salved, those men will be happy, they will get a dollar back. I will be real happy, because I will get two bucks for nothing.' And so, he did that. Now, the men had given the clerk thirty dollars. They got back a dollar each. Three dollars from thirty dollars is twenty-seven dollars. The bellboy has two dollars. Two plus twenty-seven makes twenty-nine, where is the other dollar? Twenty-seven and two make twenty-nine. Where is the other dollar? Now, do you see what I have done to you? I have given you a wrong set of figures to put into your computer. The man at the desk has twenty-five dollars, the bellboy has two dollars, the men have three dollars, and that is the full thirty dollars. But if you say the men paid twenty-seven dollars, and the bellboy has two dollars, you come up with twenty-nine dollars. I used to have that on the back of a calling card when I was in retail business, and I have had any number of people come back to the store and say, 'Where is that other dollar?' Well, what I had done is this. I had given them a wrong mathe-

mathematical formula. I had put wrong numbers together. Many times people do this in the studying of the word of God.

My purpose here is to try to put these things into a biblical, and then a logical format. Let us see that truth is the thing that prevails with us. Let us seek truth. It is not my purpose to try to prove the error of anybody else. I do not need to do that. You do not need to do that. We do not necessarily need to point out the error of someone else. Our purpose is to teach truth, and as we do so, then the error will automatically be exposed within itself.

In closing, let me say this to you: This has been only an introduction to this series of messages. I will get into the doctrinal aspect of the series as I go on. I pray you will find this very interesting, and more importantly, informing. I do not know of anything that is more evangelistic than the doctrine of the depravity of man. I suppose the subjects under which I see more people saved, in meetings and so on, than any other subject, will be the subjects dealing with the depravity, or the sinful nature of man. These are evangelistic doctrines. They should be doctrines that will bless your heart. So do not come in here with a hard hat on, thinking 'this is something that I do not want to believe, I will not be shaken, or this is something that I want to judge, or this is something that I do believe and I am going to see to it that nothing happens to shake me in it.' Please, come to hear these messages as a student of the word of God, praying and trusting that God will bless us as we study together.

## Chapter Two

### HUMAN DEPRAVITY VIEWED NEGATIVELY

Open your Bibles, this evening, to Ephesians 2:1. Holding that place in your Bible, go to Genesis 6:5, and to John 3:3. I am not just leading you around all over the Bible. I am going to speak basically from the book of Ephesians, but I want to give you these other verses of scripture, to show you what we are studying in this message. As most of you already know, this is the second message in the series that I am calling 'Grace Not Calvinism,' and tonight I am going to be speaking on the doctrine of human depravity, negatively. That does not mean that I am going to be speaking against the doctrine of human depravity, but I am going to be speaking on what that doctrine is not. This is necessary because there is so much misrepresentation of this doctrine today. There are those who think they understand, and take this doctrine farther than they should. And there are those who deliberately caricature this doctrine to make it look like something that it is not. So tonight, I am going to be speaking upon the subject of what the doctrine of human depravity is not. In the book of Genesis, chapter 6 and verse 5, we see the scripture speaking of man in his very early existence upon the earth: *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* This may be one of Scripture's very best descriptions of human depravity. Notice also, in the Gospel of John, chapter 3, and verse 3, that passage of scripture that we are all quite familiar with: *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* I want you to notice the word see. He does not say there, merely that he cannot enter. Certainly that is supposed. But the statement is more than that. He cannot see the kingdom of God. Now the word see there, does not simply mean to view it with our eyes, our optical abilities, but it means that he cannot perceive the kingdom of God. It is not something that is understandable or perceivable to a man, except he be born again.

Having read these passages, I want to go to the book of Ephesians, chapter 2. Begin to read with verse 1 and read through verse 5: *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"* The condition of man's soul necessitates his salvation. Man does not need to be saved unless he is lost. He does not need to be regenerated unless he is dead. The condition of his soul necessitates his salvation. Not only so, but the condition of his soul determines the means that are necessary for that salvation. That is simply to say, that if he is only astray, as many religious groups today think he is, then all he needs is a way-shower, just someone to point him to the right way. And certainly if he is really looking for the right way, if he has a genuine desire to go in the right way, if he has the spiritual propensity to go the right direction, then if there is someone to point it out to him, he will go in that direction. If that is all that is wrong with him, if he is only astray, if he is only sick, all he needs is to have the right medicine. If he is only sick in a minor fashion, all he needs is access to the medicine. He will get it and he will administer it to himself. If he is so sick he cannot read the label, if he is so sick he cannot find the bottle, if he is so sick he cannot get the lid off, then he is in worse condition. We heard, some years ago, of a man who had a heart condition, an old man, who had been found dead. In the process of dying, he had tried to get the lid off of his bottle of pills, and he could not get it

off. He had beaten the bottle on some furniture, and he could not break the bottle. He had finally taken something, and he had nearly gotten the bottle crushed, but he died before he could take the medicine. At least he knew what he needed, and he had a determination to go after it. Is man, spiritually speaking, in his natural state, that well off? Is he seeking that which he needs, or is he in such bad condition that he does not know what he needs? Is he in such bad condition that he is not trying to get it? Is he in such bad condition that he would refuse it, if it were offered to him, under normal conditions? What are his circumstances? If he is only sick, he only needs medicine! But, if he is dead, what medicine would you prescribe? What medicine can the doctor give that will cure that problem? Something very different is needed. Now listen, most soteriological misunderstanding (by that I mean most doctrine that concerns salvation) starts right here. What is the condition of man in his fallen state? I am not asking what man was as he came from the hand of God, and walked in the garden of Eden, but what is he as he comes from his mother's womb? What is he as he grows up in this world as a young man? What is he, as he reaches maturity and as he begins to make the choices that are natural to him, and that he has the opportunity and responsibility to make? What is the direction of his will and of his decisional movement? In this message and the next message, I am going to be dealing with the spiritual state of man, the state in which he naturally exists. In this message I am going to deal with it in a negative sense. In other words, I am going to try to show you some misrepresentations that have been given, and some misunderstandings that frequently attach themselves to this doctrine. Then I will denounce those things, and try to explain why they are not the truth, and why they are not what we are teaching when we refer to human depravity. In the next message, I will be focusing upon this doctrine of human depravity, positively. I will be showing you what it is biblically.

This evening, I am going to try to briefly speak of five things that this doctrine is sometimes accused of being, which it is not. The first one that I am going to mention to you, is this:

#### IT IS NOT AN INCIDENTAL DOCTRINE

It is not a mere insignificant Bible doctrine. I hear, from time to time, men who will confess that they believe in human depravity, but they object to anybody dwelling at great lengths upon it. Because after all, they think of it as being a negative doctrine, and already we know that Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost. And so let us move away from this incidental and negative doctrine and get into something that is more "mainline."

Let me tell you something, we will not look very far in our Bible until we find this doctrine of human depravity, and we will not go very much farther until we find its repetition. Let us take, for instance, the first man born into the human race. His father and mother were Adam and Eve. His name was Cain, and he killed his younger brother out of jealousy. Now, that is depravity. When you see a man who rises up against his own flesh, his blood brother, some say in this case a twin brother, I do not know, and slays him, you must confess that man is a depraved creature. But he did not stand alone, for we find that his conduct was common among his posterity and contemporaries. Scripture speaks harshly of those people who lived before the flood, and please realize that you have almost overlapping generations from the time of the creation to the time of the flood. Adam had been dead only a short time when Noah was born. The flood came 1656 years after the creation of the earth. Adam lived to be 930 years old. Noah was 600 years old when the flood came. So you can take the life of Adam (930 years) and add Noah's life to it of 600 and you have 1530 years. So you only have about one hundred and twenty-six years difference between the birth of Noah and the death of Adam. They are almost overlapping generations. And the Bible says of those people in the book of Genesis, chapter six, that "the imagination of their hearts was somewhat tainted with evil!" That is not what it said at all, is it? It said, "*that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil*

*continually.*" In other words, He said they were totally evil by the greatest possible definition of the word. Any serious and honest Bible student understands that total human depravity is a fundamental doctrine of scripture.

Come on up, in time, to Noah, and you will find that Noah got drunk after God had delivered him through the flood. Look at his son Ham, a pervert, who reveled in finding his father undressed in his drunkenness, and was judged by God for that. Consider the man Nimrod, who started organized idolatry, and promoted it in a very big and "ecumenical" way. Yes, he was the father of ecumenicalism. The great desire and goal of the religious world today, is the same sin as that of those men led by this man, by the name of Nimrod. Think of Abraham, who was about to allow his wife to become a member of another man's harem, to protect his own life. His son Isaac did the same thing. Depravity filled their very hearts and souls! Remember how Rebekah, the mother of Jacob, conspired to deceive her husband, in order to have her will done, regardless of the will of her husband. I hope none of you ladies would do that, but I have known of women who did such things as deceiving their husband, so as to get their way. And Jacob, of course, lied to his father and stole his brother's birthright.

Look at Jacob's sons, who sold their brother to the Midianites, into slavery. They even considered killing him and throwing him into a pit. Remember Achan, who took of the accursed spoil of Jericho, and brought the judgment of God upon the nation of Israel. Of course, we cannot forget Israel, who went continually into idolatry, even while God's arm was being made bare for them to behold.

Consider Judas Iscariot, in the New Testament, who sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver; and Simon Peter who denied Him and said I do not know Him. Consider John Mark, who because of the hardness of the way, turned back and left the work into which God had called him.

We do not have to go far in our Bible to find human depravity. Nor, may we ever think of it as being an insignificant Bible doctrine. This is what I am trying to establish. Human depravity is a fact of scripture that must be dealt with. It is a very predominant part of scripture, and if we will not deal with this, we must neglect a very great and decisive section of God's Holy Word. We must deal with it!

#### HUMAN DEPRAVITY IS NOT MORAL IGNORANCE OR INSENSITIVITY

Secondly, I want to point out that human depravity is not moral insensitivity. There are those who believe in this doctrine of human depravity, and they take it farther than the Bible takes it. There are others who do not believe in it and they try to accuse all men who do believe in it, of taking it to the extent of indicating that it is a total, moral insensitivity. That is, that man in his natural state has no moral understanding or sensitivity at all.

In the book of Genesis, chapter 3, and verse 7, the Bible says: *"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden."* We find record here of the first fallen creatures upon the face of the earth, and we can clearly see that they were not morally insensitive. They perceived that there was right and wrong, and that they were in the wrong, for they hid themselves from God.

Those teachers who understand this doctrine rightly are not implying, that inherent depravity equals amorality: that is, that a man does not know good from evil, or that he has no concept of good and evil. The doctrine of human depravity is certainly not that. I want to tell you this, if you were to pick out the most evil of those men that I mentioned, or perhaps you will think of someone else, whom you consider to be more evil than Cain. Maybe someone like King Herod the Great, or Adolf Hitler, or Pharaoh, who demanded all

of the boy children of the Israelites be thrown into the river, or be slain. You might say, I think he is the most evil man. Well, pick him out. Pick out the most evil man that you can find, and set him along side any animal within the creation, and you will find that there is a very distinct difference in their moral sensitivity. The animal is absolutely amoral. You may scold the animal, and cause him to have fears about certain things he does, but you watch his conduct, and you can perceive that in him, there is no moral sensitivity. I do not need to be overly graphic for you to understand what I am saying. You can see this by the mating of the animals, and you can see it by the animals' killing of each other. You can see that they do not have any moral inhibition, or moral sensitivity. Yet even the most wicked and hardened man in all of the world knows something of right and wrong. Cain after he had slain his brother set out to originate some kind of a self-justification. Man always feels some kind of a need to justify himself.

Man is a free moral agent. By that I mean he acts out of his own volition, and he acts with the realization of moral truths about right and wrong. He knows and he acts, and within accurate limitations is a free moral agent. Now, I do not want you to carry that too far. This truth must not be carried too far in either direction. If you say man is a free moral agent, and you intend to say by that, that he can simply choose that which is spiritually good, or he can choose that which is spiritually bad, and it is strictly up to him, that he may do so without outside constraint or grace, then you are at odds with the most basic principles of the word of God. The word of God definitely denies that. He does not have the ability to rightly perceive spiritual things, (1 Cor. 2:14) and he will always choose the evil. But within the boundaries of that evil, he has a great many options. Will he go out to a house of drunkenness and prostitution on Sunday, or will he take his family to a picnic at the lake? One of these is surely a better activity than the other. One is more immoral than the other. It is very obvious to anyone who will think, that they are not equal. But they are both wrong, for on that day he should take his family to the house of God, and there he should worship. And even if he does take his family to the house of God and he is yet in that fallen condition, then he is doing even that for himself, and it remains wickedness. So he has all kinds of options within his fallen limitations, but they are still the options of a fallen creature. Can he, on the other hand, act in such a way that he would please God? No! *"For without faith it is impossible to please God,"* and faith is the fruit of the spirit. No, he cannot do that. But within the realm of who he is, the kind of person, the kind of being that he is, he can act with all kinds of personal freedom.

However, as I said earlier, as a moral creature, even when he does that which is wrong, he has a tendency to justify himself. And the very fact that he would tend to try to justify himself, in any way, no matter how foolish, no matter how shallow, no matter how inaccurate the attempt may be, the very fact that he would try, does prove that he is a morally sensitive being. Often a person does something, and turns to look at you and say, I do not really think there is anything wrong with that; do you know what he has just confessed? That he is morally sensitive, and he thinks there might possibly have been something wrong with it. There is at least a moral sensitivity.

#### **HUMAN DEPRAVITY IS NOT ABSOLUTE MORAL INCAPABILITY**

Thirdly, the doctrine of human depravity is not a teaching of total, moral incapability. In other words, sound teachers of human depravity are not saying, that man cannot do anything that is morally good. When someone claims that this is being taught they are caricaturing the doctrine, or they are representing a very small minority of its teachers. They are not being honest, or if they are being honest, they are very, very ignorant. For very few, if any, really teach that about this doctrine. A man who is unsaved may do loving things. Do you believe an unsaved man can love his wife? I have no doubt about that. How many unsaved men have been willing to die, and indeed have died for their families. Probably untold thousands have done



that. Yes, they can love their wife, and love their family. Can they do charitable things? Can they be a good neighbor? Can they do decent things for their neighbors? Can they perform morally good, and legally good acts? Can they abstain from adultery? That is a morally good thing. Maybe you would not call it an act, it would be an abstinence. Nevertheless, it is morally good, and some lost men have been true to their wives in this sense. So we are not saying that a man who is a depraved creature is morally incapable, in a total sense, at all. What I want to establish is this: He has a total, spiritual incapability toward God. That is, he cannot do anything that has a real and a proper purpose in the glory of God. Once again, *"for without faith it is impossible to please him."* Faith is a gift of God. Faith is the fruit of the Spirit. Faith is not an attribute of the fallen creature. It just simply is not, he has total, spiritual incapability toward God.

I am not saying that a lost man cannot do religious things. But even the religious acts of the unregenerate are for themselves. A brother was asking me tonight about a particular sin, and of course, he did not at all agree with this false concept, but he said he had been told that a certain sin was the one sin for which you could not be forgiven. If you committed that sin, you were just automatically going to go to hell, because that was just too bad or final. He said, I noticed that the Bible does not say anything about it. And I said, no, it does not, it does not need to because either your sins are under the blood of Christ, or they are not under the blood of Christ. If they are under the blood of Christ, you are not going to go to hell. If they are not under the blood of Christ you are going to go to hell. It is that simple! Now, the point that I am trying to make is this: That false doctrine comes from a philosophy, not from a scripture. Well, what is the philosophy? The philosophy is this: that a man must do something, and does do something, or he must abstain from certain things, and does abstain from certain things in order to secure his soul. When a man abstains from evil in order to get to heaven, when a man does something good in order to get to heaven, all he does, is to prove he is really on his way to hell. That is all he does! He proves he is on the way to hell, because he is doing that thing, not for the glory of God but for himself. He is not doing it to please God, except in hope God will reward him. He is not doing it for God's glory. He is doing it for his own eternal comfort. Do you see? It is a whole different thing. He is not pleasing God. That does not say he is morally incapable. It says rather that he is spiritually incapable.

#### I AM NOT TEACHING THAT HUMAN DEPRAVITY IS TOTAL IN DEGREE

Let us quickly move on and consider fourthly, that human depravity is not total in its degree. I heard two statements within a matter of a few months, from two preachers who I met years ago, one on tape, the other in the process of reading. One of them is dead now, the other is not; but both of these preachers took this doctrine of depravity to task. They were essentially denying it, and in the process they said that the people who preach and teach this doctrine, essentially imply that all people are equally evil. I believe that the names that they used were these: He said, we teach that Hezekiah was no different than Herod. And he used some parallels like that. He took godly men of the Bible and ungodly men of the Bible, and said, what they are teaching is that there is no difference. They are in essence teaching that all men are equally bad. Now, that is what is called building a straw man. In other words, if you have an argument and I want to argue against it, and I do not have the intelligence, or I am not willing to do the research that is necessary to withstand your argument, then the thing I do is to build a straw man and set him on fire. Let me illustrate what I am talking about. How often have you heard someone, who did not only disbelieve but they detested the doctrine of eternal security? And they said, "I just do not believe this old Baptist teaching, that you can just go down to the front and shake hands with the preacher, and go on out and live like the devil the rest of your life and go to heaven when you die." Well, I think they have an awfully good argument there. I do not believe that you can just go down to the front and shake hands with the preacher, and go on out and live

like the devil all the rest of your life and go to heaven. No, I do not believe that either! But the point is, I do not know of any Baptist that does believe it. I have never met a Baptist who taught that the plan of salvation was like that. There may be some, but I have never met one. There may be some but I do not know them. As far as I know there are none who teach that God's plan of salvation is "come down to the front and shake hands with the preacher" or that a person may do that with the intention and the follow-up of just going on out and living like the devil. That is a typical straw man. In other words, they build a doctrinal structure that is not at all what the other person believes, then they easily and accurately defeat that doctrinal structure. If I wanted to disprove the previous caricature, I could find multitudes of scriptures to disprove it. No problem at all! And so, these men were building this straw man, and in the process of doing so, they were implying that we teach that all men are equally evil.

In the book of I Kings, chapter 16, and verse 30, the Bible makes a statement that ought to put this to rest once and for all. You can find this same type of statement, indeed, almost word for word, about other people throughout the Chronicles of the Kings, but I call your attention to this one: *"And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him."* That means, simply, that the scripture is saying that he was more wicked than any of the other kings that had preceded him. Does that imply that they were all the same, that they were all equal? No! And we are not teaching, when we teach total depravity that it is total in degree, or that all men are equally sinful. Nor, are we teaching that any man is as sinful as he could conceivably be. I do not know how sinful a man can get, but it is my opinion that God has not allowed any man to yet become as sinful as a man can possibly be. I do not think He has. I do not know that I could prove that, but if I set out to do so, I might find something that would seem to teach it, perhaps by applying it to the antichrist. But as far as I know now, I do not know of any scripture that I could just throw down before you which would prove that. I do not believe that any man has reached the total degree of depravity to which he could potentially come. Sometimes we are falsely accused of teaching that, but we do not.

Some years ago, a young man who had recently finished seminary, wanted to talk with me. He offered to buy my lunch, because he wanted to "counsel" with me, he said. I thought he had some problems that he needed to discuss with me. I found out that what he wanted to do was to straighten me out. He bought my lunch that day, we were working in the same building, and he bought my lunch, and during lunch he said this: When I went to school, I was an Arminian. And he said, after I had gone for awhile, I was a "Five-Point Calvinist." Boy! he did not hesitate about throwing the terms around. He said, "I was a five-point Calvinist, but I began to see through that stuff, and now I am an Arminian again." I said to him, you are not any of those things. I had known the young man for years. He went on and on with his foolishness, and I tried to explain to this young man what I meant when I said that a man was totally depraved.

I made a terrible mistake. When you try to explain something that is above someone else's intelligence, or when they are not willing to be objective, you had better be careful. You better get it down there and speak in simple, unquestionable terms. But I said to him, a man, in his fallen state is meaner than a dog, or a wolf, or a snake. In other words, when a dog, or a snake, or any of these animals goes out and kills, he does it out of instinct. He does it for survival. Whereas, men do it with malice aforethought, and intent, and anger, and hatred. I was trying to point out to him the depravity of the natural man. It was not long before he quoted me as saying, that a man in his fallen state is no different than a dog, or a snake.

That was not what I said at all! It was not even close to what I said, but that is what he got out of it. That was my mistake, I suppose, but in any case, what is frequently implied that we are teaching, when we teach human depravity, is that man has fallen to the lowest state to which he could possibly fall, and that in that state he is morally no different than a dog or a snake.

Men say we teach that man, in regard to moral sensitivity, is no different than a stick or a stone, that he does not know right from wrong, and that he could not do anything right if he wished. No, No! that is not what we are teaching. May I say to any brother who hears this message on tape, and who might possibly say, well, that is what I am teaching: I want to say, with love, my brother, you are wrong. He is wrong! That is not what the doctrine of human depravity teaches.

Next week I will be preaching positively on the doctrine, but tonight I am approaching it negatively. Surely, you understand that I do not have time to also explain the other side of this issue, in one message.

#### **HUMAN DEPRAVITY DOES NOT IMPLY ABSENCE OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY**

Finally, Human depravity does not imply lack of responsibility. This is perhaps the most devious and inaccurate attack that is brought against the teaching of this doctrine. Some have said that when you teach human depravity, you teach that a man cannot do anything right, or good. They say you are teaching that man cannot know about God, therefore, he is not responsible to know anything about God, and thus not responsible to do anything right or good. This is never, never, what this doctrine is intended to teach, nor what it does teach. As I said, this is a very devious, and I think a dishonest and insincere attack. What they are saying is this: to teach inability, teaches the lack of responsibility. Now, their misconception of this false conclusion, flows from a false equation. I mentioned last week the riddle about the thirty dollars, and I did it very badly. But let us go back to the thirty dollars. Remember that the man at the desk took thirty dollars of the money from the three hunters. He sent the bellboy back with five dollars. The bellboy kept two dollars of the five. He gave each of them a dollar. These men had originally paid ten dollars, they got back one dollar, so now they have paid nine dollars. Three times nine equals twenty-seven, which is what they paid. The bellboy has two left. Twenty-seven and two makes twenty-nine. Where is the other dollar? Difficult? Well, you see I have given you a false equation. I have caused you to look for the thirty dollars in the wrong place. Twenty-five dollars are at the desk. The man at the desk still has twenty-five dollars. The bellboy has two dollars. That makes twenty-seven. And the three men have three dollars. That makes thirty. All the money is still there. But if I draw a false equation for you, and you do not catch it, you will draw a false conclusion, or perhaps think a right conclusion cannot be drawn. This is what false teachers have done with this issue. Their false equation is this: Responsibility comes from, or at least is equal to human ability. Have you never heard anyone say, 'I do not believe God would tell you to do something you cannot do?' Well, la-de-da! Since they do not believe it, that really cuts a lot of ice with God, does it not? I mean that really puts freckles on the clown's nose and fixes the word of God. Since they do not believe it, it must really be important. Men had better establish that with the word of God, before they accept too many amens and take too many bows. The Bible says, thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might. I do not believe you can do that. Prove to me that you can, and I will bow on my knees and cry, holy. And I will confess that you are right and I am wrong. Do you understand what I am saying to you? It is not in man to love so perfectly! Well, then since you cannot do it, certainly God would not hold you responsible to do it. That is an absolutely asinine conclusion. It is totally wrong. Our responsibility does not flow out of our ability. It flows out of God's sovereignty. You are responsible to do what God tells you to do, because He is God, not because you are able. Do you not understand what I am saying to you? He is God. You are responsible to obey His commands because He is God. If I were a king, and I am not, but if I were king, I would make a law that said, anyone who was caught driving drunk would be given at least ninety days of hard labor. Now, I do not mean watching television. There would be no television. There would be no meat. There would be beans and rice, and a built-in weight loss program. There would be twelve or sixteen hours a day of extremely hard work. There would not be any of these long sentences. You

would not need long sentences. You would not have prisons full, because people would be running from them. I dislike very much this idea of people being allowed to hallucinate, or ingest anything that will cause them to hallucinate, in a society such as we live in today, because in such condition they will not, indeed they cannot, drive safely.

You have heard the illustration, that I have used many times. If a man gets drunk, he cannot drive safely. Does he then not have the responsibility? In other words, if the police catch him, having wrecked his car, torn up some other property, having injured or killed other people, and he explains to them: I was doing the best I could, under the circumstances, because I was as drunk as a hoot owl smoking a cigar, and therefore, I could not drive safely. Do the law enforcement authorities then say, 'Oh, in that case we would never hold you accountable, after all, you were unable to do it rightly. You are innocent because you were unable.' He was indeed unable, but he was not innocent.

You see, the law was made with respect to his ability--now follow me carefully--in a sober state, not in a drunken state. Laws are made for sober people. If laws were only made for drunk people, they would not amount to anything anyway. They could not accomplish anything. They are made for sober people. Listen, God's laws are made for man as he came from the hand of God, not as he exists in his fallen state. And so you need to understand, that he is responsible to carry out that which he could have carried out, before the fall. It is because of the fall that he is unable to carry it out. So do not confuse this idea, of responsibility and ability. We are responsible because God is God. We are unable because we are fallen creatures, and that is exactly why salvation is necessary.

That is why the Lord said, except a man be born again he cannot see (perceive) the kingdom of God, and again, except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God. How many people upon this earth today believe that if you do the best you can, if you do what you honestly feel is right, that you can enter the kingdom of God? Did you know most religious people think that? Where did God ever get the right to make some other kind of a rule that says, except a man do something he cannot do? How can a man be born again? What can you do to be born again? He said he is not born of man, or the will of the flesh, or of the blood, but he is born of God. How are you going to do that? You cannot do that, only God can! But the Lord said, except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. I am saying, that to claim that inability cancels responsibility--listen to me--is to dethrone God in your reasoning process. It is to say God does not have the right to make a rule, or to enact any kind of restriction upon us, unless we are able to comply with it. Once a man has embraced this error, it is not but a step farther until he feels, God does not have a right to enact a rule, or to make a law, unless man agrees with it. It is not very far from that, when man in his mind becomes his own god. I mean, it is very close to the same thing. It is a dethroning of God, and an enthroning of man.

Let me close in saying, that man is a voluntary participant in his depravity, not an innocent victim of it. He is involved in an aggravated assault upon the kingdom of God, and I say to you, tonight, if you are thus, the only hope for you is to fall upon God's mercy, crying out to Him for mercy and forgiveness. You cannot win a fight against God or the argument against God's demands upon you. If you are unsaved, you are a creature who cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Did you hear me? What you are, by nature, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. You must be born again. If you have not been born again, it does not make any difference how much you dislike it, it does not make any difference how much you disagree with me, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. You have no hope but to cast yourself upon His mercy. Will you not do it even this moment?

## Chapter Three

### HUMAN DEPRAVITY VIEWED POSITIVELY

Open your Bibles to the book of Genesis, chapter 6 and verse 5: *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*

I want us to ask ourselves, was this some particular kind, or particular group of men, or was this mankind in general? And does the Bible indicate, that after the flood the condition of man's heart was different? Of course, if you are familiar with your Bible, you would answer first of all, 'No, it is not a particular group, but it is mankind in general, of whom God speaks here.' Anyone who was different was the exception, and not the rule. And secondly, you would admit that their conduct was no different after the flood than before, for God repeated immediately after the flood, that the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually. You find both of those facts plainly recorded in the Bible, so this conclusion is not merely my supposition.

Now, move in your Bible to the Gospel of John, chapter 6, and begin to read with me in verse 41: *"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 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. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God, Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father."* Now turn in your Bible to the book of Romans, chapter 5 and verse 19: *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,..."* notice that statement. *"...by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* Now, go back to the book of John once again, chapter 6 and verse 44: *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at he last day."* This is my text for the evening.

In the book of Romans, chapter 5 and verse 19, where we read a moment ago, a very definite and a very profound statement is made. And that is: "by one man's sin many were made sinners." If you are basically familiar with your Bible, you know that the one man's sin that he is talking about is the sin of Adam. And you also know that the many who were made sinners makes reference to all men who are born naturally into this world; that is, all the offspring of Adam. You did not become a sinner by committing sin. You committed sin naturally because you were a sinner. You were born a sinner, because you are the offspring of Adam. And that is very clearly a Bible doctrine. By one man's disobedience were many made sinners. Now, this statement has a two-faceted truth, or this truth comes out in two very distinct areas: One is the sinner's standing before God: That is, he is guilty before God as a sinner, and secondly, his state, or his condition: He is corrupted in his nature. In other words, if there were some way that a man could just have all of his guilt taken away, that would not solve all of his problems. For he is still corrupt in his heart. Someone has said, 'If the sinner could get to heaven, he would not enjoy it because he would be out of place.' 'He would not fit in.' He has this corruption of heart, and that is a real problem. There is the guilt before God, and his corruption of heart.

In this message I am dealing with this corruption of heart which is referred to theologically as depravity. The guilt was imputed. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners. You were born into this world guilty before God. Do you hear me? Were it not for the blood of Jesus Christ, were it not for the

saving grace of God, never a baby would be saved. I believe that babies who die, die in the Lord. I believe they are saved. I believe they go to heaven. But they would not go to heaven merely by virtue of vague, indefinite, inherent innocence, or by virtue of the fact that they have not yet overtly sinned, nor can sacraments or religious parents help them. They are born sinners, and that by nature, which is far more serious than the mere committing of transgression. They come into this world sinners, because they are the offspring of Adam. Guilt is imputed to them. Not only do they come into this world guilty by inheritance, but they come into this world depraved or corrupted by inheritance.

How many of you parents have ever spent any time intentionally teaching your children to be rebellious and disobedient? No one, of course. How many of you, since you have not spent any time teaching your children to be rebellious and disobedient, have children who are not rebellious and disobedient? I see no takers in either case. You say, my children were rebellious and disobedient from the time they were little. It must have been something they inherited from their mother while she was carrying them. I did not teach them anything about that, they just came into the world that way. Well, I have news for you, they inherited it from both parents--both the mother and the father. It is the corrupt nature that we inherit. And this is what is referred to as depravity. It is a very important doctrine. It is not a doctrine that is reserved, for theologians, and placed upon the top shelf.

Please, do not be spiritually insensitive or stupid enough to think that at all. It is the foundational doctrine, essential to every single teaching of the Bible, concerning salvation. Why does a man need to be saved? Because he is a sinner! Why must a man be born again? Because he is dead in trespasses and sin. The very foundational doctrines of your Bible, and all soteriological doctrines, focus themselves upon this doctrine of the fallen state of man. This is what is meant by human depravity.

Now, let us move along quickly. I have a lot of ground to cover, and I do want to get all of these messages on 45-minute tapes, if I possibly can. So let us try to move quickly into our subject matter.

#### THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF DEPRAVITY

First of all, I want to define this word depravity. In the preceding message, I spoke on the subject of human depravity negatively. I showed you some of the caricatures that were brought against it, and some of the things it does not mean. I showed you some of the things that I am not stating when I speak of human depravity. I am not suggesting that a man ceases to be a man. He is a man. I am not saying that he is an amoral being. He is a moral being. I am not saying that he does not have a will. He does have a will. Those are not the things I am saying. When we teach this doctrine positively, what are we talking about? Let us define this word, and I am not going to define it from Webster's standpoint. There would be nothing particularly wrong about that, but the time would not permit it. I just want to cut across that, and say, when this word is used in biblical preaching, it is describing a creature who is morally sensitive and morally accountable. And it describes this morally sensitive, and morally accountable creature--now, follow me carefully--as being in determined opposition to the laws of God. Whether he knows them, or whether he knows them not, he is in determined opposition to the principles of the laws of God. In the book of Matthew, chapter 22 and verse 37: *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* I want you to look at that. He says, you are to love God supremely, and you are to love your neighbour as much as yourself, and if we will be honest this is essentially repulsive to everyone of us in the natural state. It is contrary to the way we think. That is what we are talking about, when we talk about depravity. This depravity is something that you will see coming out in every creature. You will see it in little children as they lie without being taught how to lie. You will see it in babies as one

baby takes something away from another baby. Have you ever seen two babies playing together, who both have toys which are essentially alike? One takes his toy and throws it across the room, and reaches over and grabs the other one. You can go get it, bring it back and give it to the other one, and he will take it and throw it away again, and reach over and get the other baby's toy. Why do children act like that? What is in them that causes this misbehavior? It is an attribute called selfishness. It is a natural, inborn trait that is within us, and it is in determined opposition to the principles of God's law. Depravity is a natural state. In essence, depravity is a state that causes a man to substitute himself for, or to place himself in the position of God. He wants to be number one. He wants that place of recognition. He wants that place of command. It exists in this basic order: First of all, in our state of being, secondly, in our attitude, and thirdly, in our actions. I have said often, that a man does not become a sinner by sinning, he does what he does, because he thinks like he thinks, or feels like he feels. And he thinks like he thinks, or feels like he feels, because he is, what he is. Do you understand what I am talking about? In other words, it is the very state of our being that institutes our behavior. When we say human depravity, we are in essence saying, that we are sinful in our very state of being. It is not something that happens sometime, or evolves sometime during our lifetime, because of circumstances outside of us. It is our basic state of being. Satan said to Eve, in the garden of Eden, *"...in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."* I have often heard preachers say, that they did not become like God, they became like the devil. But God said in the very same chapter, *"...man is become as one of us, to know good and evil."* What was it that Satan was tempting Eve to do? and what is it, in essence, that Eve did in the process relating to that temptation? It was this: Eve and Adam placed themselves, voluntarily, determinately, in the position of God, deciding for themselves, determining for themselves, what they wanted to do. It is not an attitude that says, Lord what wilt Thou have me to do? It is an attitude that says, Lord, let me or help me do what I want to do. Frequently, this attitude is described as being a Christian goal. It is not a Christian goal. We are not to think like that. This thing of depravity is the desire of our glory, and our interest, and our gratification, as being the ultimate goal of our life. In the book of Second Timothy, chapter 3, and verse 2, Paul describes this state of depravity. He said: *"For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,"* and he goes on to say, lovers of pleasure, *"...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."* Now think about that! "...lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." It does not make any difference how we look at that, whether we are talking about loving ourselves from the standpoint of our security, loving ourselves from the standpoint of our influence on things around us, loving ourselves from the standpoint of our wealth, loving ourselves from the standpoint of our pleasure, whatever it is--lovers of self more than lovers of God could perhaps be the most accurate and the most extensive description of human depravity in all the Bible. "Lovers of self more than lovers of God."

#### THE EXTENT OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY

Secondly, let us look at the extent of this depraved state. We constantly affirm that this extent is total, but when we say that man is totally depraved, what is it that we mean? This may seem to you like a little hair splitting, and I do not mean for it to be, but it is the best way that I know of to describe this term. I say that it is total in its extent, but it is not total in its degree. In other words, when I say that man is totally depraved, I am not saying that man is as bad as he can be. I do not believe that any man is as bad as he can potentially be. Why not? I believe it is because of the prevenient grace of God. By that, I mean the preventing grace of God, that keeps him from being fully consumed by wickedness. I believe that if God were to take His hand of providence and of restraint off of the human race, that the potential for sin within us, is so great that this world would be thrown into war, turmoil, chaos, and abuse, such as we have never

imagined in all of our life. We read of parents abusing their children, torturing their children, and do we not tend to say, indeed, is it not our nature to say, I do not see how a parent could do that? And I do not! I honestly cannot imagine how a parent could abuse or torture their child, or their baby, especially. How could any human being take a cigarette, or some such thing and burn a baby? It seems to me that they ought to be taken out and have their head lopped off with a dull hoe--about forty licks should do it. I mean it infuriates me! And I say, how could a human being do that? But the point I want to make is this: That except for the grace of God, not only could we all do it, but we would all do such things as that, because the potential of it is in us. Please be sure, I am not saying that all of us have been brought to that state of depravity. No, no! We have not all been brought to that degree of depravity. When I say we are total in extent, I am talking about that state of being, in which every functional and emotional part of us is depraved. I have illustrated it like this, and it is the best illustration that I know. If I were to take a gallon of water and set it here on this platform, and if I were to take an eye-dropper, and squeeze one eye-dropper full of arsenic of lead into that water and stir it up, that water would be totally, totally poison. If someone were to say, 'To what extent is that poison?' I would say, 'It is totally poison.' In other words, I could not say the top half of it is poison, the bottom half of it is poison; I could not say it is one-fourth poison, or one-fifth poison, or nine-tenths poison; it is poison. It is totally poison! Do you see? On the other hand, if I were to come in and I were to then, take the arsenic of lead and I were to dump a quart into that gallon of water, it would be more poisonous, as far as the degree. It would have a greater degree of poison. For instance, you might take that one eye-dropper full, put it into a gallon container, and you might take a couple of tablespoons from that container and it might just make you sick. Now, it would make you sick because it was poison. But if you put a quart into that same container and drink the same amount of the liquid it would surely kill you. Because it is poison to a far greater degree. Yet in either case, it is totally poison. So, when I say that man is totally depraved, I am not saying, he is as bad as he can be, or that he has gone to the greatest degree of wickedness and depravity that he can conceivably go. That is not what I am saying. God describes this state of man in Genesis 6:5 when he says, that the imaginations of his heart, are only evil continually. Every imagination of his heart is evil. Well, now what is evil? He might only be plotting to fool his boss in order to get a raise. Is that wickedness? Yes, that is wickedness. Or, he might be plotting to go next door and cut the throats of all his neighbor's children. Is that evil? Yes, that is evil. Are they evil to the same degree? I think not! The penalties are not the same in the Bible, in God's law. And I think that the degree of evil there is not the same. But both of them are evil, and so God says all of the things that the natural man thinks about, come into that particular category, only evil continually. In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 15 and verse 19, the Lord says, "*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*" He said, this comes out of the heart. That is what dwells in the human heart. That is man's depraved state. You must understand, the Lord is saying here, that man's sinful acts flow out of his heart, not the circumstances around him. Do you understand what I am saying to you? Men have this crazy idea, today, that man's problem comes from the evil circumstances that surround him. They claim that if only he had better educational opportunities he would immediately avail himself of them. He would work as hard as he could to get a good education, so he would not have to grow up to be a thief. He would not have to break car windows and steal radios. Right? I had a radio taken out of a vehicle the other day, and I told my wife, we really should not feel bad it was probably some poor underprivileged young person taking it out for a vocational training project of some kind. You do believe that, do you not? Some knot-head takes it out and takes it down to the pawnshop to sell it and buy beer or dope with it. That is human depravity. Depravity is in all of man's causative factors. That is, his mind is depraved, and his heart is depraved. If his mind and heart are depraved, his activities are going to be de-



praved. His will is going to be depraved. In the book of Romans, chapter 8, and verse 7, the Bible says, *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."* And in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 17 and verse 9, says, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:"* Somebody may say, well that fellow is not saved, but he has a good heart. No, he has not. Just quit fooling yourself. He does not have a good heart. Without the grace of God, without the saving work of God, without the new creation, we do not have good hearts. The natural man's heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. It is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God. It cannot be subject to the law of God, the Bible clearly tells us all of these facts. Both our mind and our heart are twisted out of order with God. Because of this, man's will is in bondage. In the book of John, chapter 6 and verse 44: he said, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."* He does not mean that there might be somebody out there who wants to come to God, who cannot come because it is not permitted. That is not what he is saying at all. There is no such thing as that. Anyone who wants to come to Christ can come. What is it that keeps this man from being able to come? It is the bondage of his heart and thus his will. He is never willing to come. In the Gospel of John chapter 5, the Lord said, *"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."* And of every man of whom it can be said, he cannot come, it can also be said, with absolutely equal accuracy, he will not come. He will not come because his will is in bondage to his depraved nature. In the book of John, chapter 5 and verse 40, the scripture says, *"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."* In John 8:44, he goes farther into this, and he says, *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."* Now, in the book of Philippians, chapter 2 and verse 13, the Bible says, *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* Well, says someone, I thought that men really wanted to do the will of God. I thought they really desired to please God, and they just did not know how. All they needed was some preacher to explain how to do the will of God. Let them know what God wants and, of course, they will set out to do it. Paul says, it is not so. Just forget that baloney! He said if there is a desire to do the will of God, or the pleasure of God, it is God that worked that desire in you. *"It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* He must do that, because our will is in bondage. That is the natural state of human depravity.

The Lord Jesus Christ said, on the night that He instituted the Lord's Supper, the night that He went to Gethsemane, the night that He went to the Judgment Hall of Caiaphas, when Judas had gone out of the room and He was speaking sorrowfully to His disciples, He said, *"Satan cometh and findeth nothing in me."* Which of you could say that tonight? I could not say that. Do you think I could say tonight, 'If Satan were to come and tempt me, I would not worry about it, because I know that there is not anything in me that would relate to Satan. I know there is not anything in me that Satan could relate to. I could not be tempted. I do not have any of the faculties within me that would cause me to yield to temptation, if Satan were to come and lay temptation before me?' Oh, listen, I am not fool enough to say any such thing as that at all. I would say, 'Pray for me.' If I knew that temptation were coming, I would say, 'Pray for me, because I am a weak vessel.' Unlike my Lord, I am susceptible to temptation, and I need the grace of God. I cannot stand alone. I cannot walk without God holding my hand. None of us could say, 'Satan findeth nothing in me,' because of our depraved nature. We are filled with the very thing that Satan relates to best.

Man is morally and spiritually dead. Now, we do not mean by that, that he is annihilated. We do not mean he does not exist. But we do mean that he exists in a state of death. Again, this becomes a little difficult, for there are no degrees of death, but I think it would be accurate to say there are degrees of corruption in death. In other words, if I were a doctor and I were to pronounce a man dead; you would not say,

'How dead is he?' Dead is a pretty absolute term. He is dead. He is totally dead. He is either dead or he is alive. There is no in between. However, even though the man might be totally dead, there can be different conditions of the man within that state of death. For instance, I might say, he is still warm. I might even say, we should try a little bit of artificial resuscitation, perhaps some resuscitation would bring him around, his body is still warm. On the other hand, Mary and Martha said of their brother, Lord he stinketh already, he had been dead now for four days. We would not try artificial resuscitation or any such thing in that case. In fact, we would avoid the body at that point. Let us say you are out hunting and you cross the ditch out there, and you find a body and the body is halfway decomposed, there are no eyes left, many parts of the body have completely deteriorated and are gone. This person is in a greater state of decomposition, so the state in death is different. In other words, he is like the man, the sinful man, who may have gone from promiscuity into adultery, and from adultery into greater promiscuity, and on into orgies, and from there on into homosexuality, and to bestiality, and into self-punishment. I cannot think of the proper word for that at this moment. He has gone so far you would say, how could a human being, do that to himself? But though he might have deteriorated farther within that state of death, he was dead in trespasses and sin, at the very outset. This is what we are saying when we talk about depravity. Though there may be a variation in degrees, the state of depravity is total. He is totally dead. In other words, we are not saying that this man's heart is in bad shape, but his mind is okay, and if we work with his heart, maybe we can straighten things out. Or, his mind is really in bad shape, but his heart is good, and if we really work with his mind, maybe we can restore it. No! No! He is totally dead. His mind is dead, his heart is dead, there is nothing that we can reach into or relate to that is going to revitalize and help this man at all. He is dead in trespasses and sin.

#### THE SCOPE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY

Thirdly, let us quickly consider the scope of this human depravity. Are we talking about just the heathen? Does this exclude people who are raised up in Christian homes? Does this exclude people who would like to do good? Let us say that they have never been saved, but they would like to do good for their neighbor. They want to do a good job at their place of employment. They would like to be the best they can, wherever they are. They like to treat their neighbors and their fellow man right. Does this scope exclude them? In the book of Psalms, chapter 14 and verse 3, the scripture says, *"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."* Romans 3:10: *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."* Paul is describing mankind as a whole, and he brings them all within this scope. In the book of Romans, chapter 3 all the way through verse 18, he is describing and building upon this. In other words, I am saying that through the headship of Adam all men inherit--now, follow me carefully--both the guilt of sin and the nature to commit sin, that is, the nature that causes them to sin. Once again, Romans 5:19: *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."* By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

#### THE SOURCE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY

Fourthly, let us consider the source of this depravity. Where does this come from? And you should

know this is the basic area where psychologists miss the mark. We have people today, whose lives are dedicated to helping other people, who will never really help anybody. Some people push the Peace Corps thing. They say, it is the hardest five years, or two years, or three years or whatever, that you will ever love. They are saying go over there and teach the people in Ethiopia how to dig a well, and you have really done some good, I mean you have really helped some people out. Instead of dying and going to hell thirsty, they will die and go to hell with a good drink of water in their stomach. You have really done a lot of good. But laying the sarcasm aside, where the psychologists and the do-gooders of the world today miss the mark, is that they are searching for--now, follow me carefully, I want to try to say it briefly and accurately--they are searching for external causes of man's depraved acts. What happened in this person's life? What happened in their circumstances? What happened in their background to cause these depraved acts? Now, I do not want you to think that I am saying that mistreatment, that misguidance, that bad guidance, that lack of any kind of spiritual leadership, has no effect on people. I know it does have an effect. I would be silly if I did not realize that a child who is raised in a Christian home would be more likely to walk uprightly than a child who was raised in a home where the father would beat up on the mother, and the children were taught to steal, and to abuse each other and things of that sort. I am not saying that the circumstances around us have no effect upon us. But what I am saying is this: The basic cause of our sinful acts comes from within us, and it does not take the circumstances around us to pollute us. Indeed, we create the circumstances around us. Paul Harvey, some years ago, said the trouble with trying to solve the slum problem is that they are coming at it from the wrong direction. They are imagining that slums make people, and if they clean up the slums, the people would be better off. They need to realize that it is the people who make the slums, and they will have to clean up the people before they can clean up the slums. Well, at least he has gotten a basic part of it right. He may not have gone to the right extent, but he is going in the right direction. Scripture says that these problems of depravity are not infused into us by the effect of circumstances, nor are they superimposed upon us by some other kind of an external effect. They are inherited from Adam and they live within us. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners. Does this mean those that Adam met during his nine-hundred and thirty year lifetime? Just those that Adam had a personal effect upon? No! It means all of Adam's offspring for they inherited his nature. What he was, we are. In the book of Proverbs, chapter 29 and verse 15, *"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."* Solomon, do you mean to say it does not take anything outside the child to misdirect him, his mother does not have to give him the wrong flavor of ice cream, or she does not have to sneeze without covering up her mouth, or do something to cause this child to become a murderer? No! He said, left to himself. Leave him to himself. All that it takes for him to become rotten and ungodly is on the inside of him. Just leave him to himself, and that is what he will become, because that is what he by nature is. Psalms 58 and verse 3 says, *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."* Ephesians 2:3 says, *"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* Look at that! We were by nature the children of wrath. These little children born into this world, these little boys and girls that we hold in our arms and love, are going to need the gospel of Christ. They are going to need Christian raising, because they are born into this world depraved. They are born into this world dead in trespasses and sin. They have to have the saving grace of God, because of what they are. The idea today that if we could isolate them from the evils of the world they would be alright, is all wrong, because it is ignoring what they are. They are by nature the children of wrath. This is the doctrine of depravity. That is what I am talking about. And all scripture that insists upon the necessity of the new birth corroborates this teaching. The Lord Jesus Christ said, except a man be born again, he cannot see the king-

dom of God. And somebody says, well, wait a minute, Lord. If he would just repent, and trust you, would not it be alright? If he would just turn from his own wicked ways and try to do what he ought to do, would not it be alright? No, it would not be alright, for several reasons.

First of all, you would not be taking care of the sin that he has already committed in the past. He would need atonement. But secondly, he cannot turn from his wicked ways. He cannot repent. If he were to try to, he would be like the man out of whom an evil spirit went, and it was "swept and garnished," and then the evil spirit went and took unto himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and when he came back, the last state of that man, our Lord said, was worse than the first. Why? Because all he had was reformation. We cannot reform this dead body into life. Reform a dead body? You say, 'Boy! that guy sure is laying in a slouchy position.' Why do you not teach him how to do better than that? You say, 'Man! that guy has a terrible odor.' I do not mean to be morbid here. I guess that is morbid, to be very scientifically technical. Why do you not teach that dead man to take a bath? Clean up, use a little deodorant, get himself straightened out? You say, Preacher, that is ridiculous. Exactly! That is my point! That is what I am talking about here. When I talk about human depravity, I am talking about the state that the man is in. All scripture that says you must be born again, says this: Man, in his natural state, is such a creature that he cannot please God. He cannot obey God, he cannot trust God, he cannot turn to God. He cannot do anything spiritually good or right, except by the grace of God, because he is dead in trespasses and sin. That is what the doctrine teaches.

#### THE RESULT OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY

Then, quickly, in closing: The result of this depravity. What is man's subsequent state? Because of depravity, what is his state? Well, the Bible said, he is a child of Satan. John 8:44: "*Ye are of your father the devil,*" In Romans 5:10, he says natural man is the enemy of God. In I Corinthians 2:14, God says that he is incapable of spiritual perception. You know that verse, but listen to it carefully: "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" Wait a minute, if he cannot know, if he cannot perceive, if he cannot understand, if he cannot receive the things of God, what hope is there for him? None what-so-ever, except a man be born again. That is the only hope there is for him. That is his state! Notice also, he tells us in the Gospel of John, chapter 3 and verse 19, that he is a lover of darkness. Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. We are told in John 6:44, where we read earlier, that he is incapable of coming to Christ. He is incapable, not because God says you cannot come, but because his own heart and soul render him totally incompatible with Christ and everything that Christ stands for. In the book of Ephesians, chapter 2 and verse 3: the Bible tells us that he is by nature a child of wrath. We were by nature children of wrath. Now, listen folks, all of the doctrines of salvation are built upon this doctrine right here. All of the misunderstandings in almost every area of soteriological philosophy come from the misunderstanding of this doctrine. If you do not get this right, you will not get anything else right. If you do not get this right, you are going to be defining the new birth as some kind of reformation or some kind of a human activity. Once you understand this, then all of the other doctrines of salvation can be properly put in perspective, because all of them lay upon this. If you do not get this right, your gospel will be wrong. Always! It cannot be otherwise. If you do not get this right, at least philosophically, your gospel is going to be wrong. I ask you, as I close tonight, from what state did God lift you? If you answer, I decided to turn over a new leaf, I am going to say that you needed a whole lot more than that. You needed more than that. I am not saying that people who are saved do not, so as to speak, turn over a new leaf at some time and change the way that they live. There is the biblical truth of conversion. But I am saying to you tonight, that

**conversion, when it is something that you just impose upon yourself, is not salvation. Have you been lifted out of that horrible pit? Has there been the time that you, by God's grace, realized that you were lost and undone, that you were dead in trespasses and sin, that you were all together in wickedness, and from the depths of your heart and soul you were made to cry out to God for mercy and compassion? Has He revived your dead heart and saved you? That is what you need!**

## Chapter Four

### WHAT ELECTION IS NOT

The message tonight is going to be entitled, Election, What It Is Not. And may I say this, that many people go to Baptist churches for years and never hear a message on the doctrine of election. That is a shame! Others hear jokes told about election. That is also a shame. There could be some who may not hear preaching on anything but election, and that would be a shame also. But it certainly is a Bible doctrine. I will be bringing three messages on this subject, rather than two, as was the case in the original series. I am going to bring the third message on the doctrine of election, to give a little more comprehensive view than what was given in the first series, which I brought twelve years ago, when I originally delivered the series on this subject.

Tonight let us begin to read in Romans chapter 8 and verse 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. 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. 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. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 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."*

For a text this evening, verse 33: *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."* If, in the process of the previous two messages, I have properly taught the doctrine of human depravity, and if it has been properly understood and apprehended by you, then you already understand that every man in his natural state is hopelessly and helplessly condemned. He deserves hell, and if God does not intervene he will go to hell. There is absolutely no exception what-so-ever. If a people is to be saved, God must purpose it and do it. Of course, the Bible teaches that a people is to be saved. In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 1 and verse 21, we read: *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* I repeat if His people are to be saved then God must purpose their salvation. If someone should say, "I do not really believe in election," I ask them the question, 'Did God save you?' And if they answer, 'Yes,' I say, 'Did God do it on purpose?' That is, did God intend to do it, or did it happen without God intending it? They must always answer, 'Certainly, God intended to do it.' The next logical question then should be, 'Did God intend to do it five minutes before He did it, or did He just happen to do it when He did it?' And, of course, they must answer, 'certainly, He intended to do it five minutes before. How about five hours before? How about five days before? How about five years before? How about five millenniums before? And you will not find a place where you say, No, that is the point where God decided to do it. You will not find that place. It is not there, either in any logical reasoning, or in any biblical revelation. Did God, then, purpose to save all men and fail? Did God purpose to save no one in

particular? Or did God purpose to save some and succeed in that purpose? We will not answer those questions tonight. I simply want to pose them to you and let them remain in your mind, and if there are questions that I have left out, feel free to add them to the ones I have asked. This demands study! Whatever else I have done, I should at least at this point have suggested enough to you, for you to say this is an issue that needs to be studied. Moreover, all who are faithful to God's word must do it. We cannot say, this is something we do not care to think about, or this is something we do not think is really important. Would you dare say I do not think this is an important doctrine. If we are faithful to the word of God, we must study this issue out. We have no right to be neutral in the matter. We have no right to be silent in the matter. It is a prominent doctrine in God's Word. It is not our right to decide what part of God's word we will believe, or what part we will study. Now, dozens of messages will not exhaust this subject. This is a very broad subject and we could spend weeks upon it. I do not intend to do that, but I want to try to touch just the hem of the garment, of this great and important Bible doctrine concerning salvation. When we talk about salvation biblically, we have to include the doctrine of election. Some years ago, I published in *The Baptist Watchman*, a message by Dr. Criswell. On this tape, he said, "This morning, I am going to bring a message on *The Bible Kind Of Salvation*, it is really a message on election." And then he started out, and he preached a fine message on election, as if everybody in the world believed it. That is the way I wish I could preach it. I have too much opposition in the world, but I wish I could preach it from a strictly, positive standpoint. I wish I could do that. But tonight, I must deal with *What Election Is Not*. You might think this is a strange way to approach the issue, but if you understood all of the ridiculous accusations that are brought against this doctrine, and all of the slanderous caricatures that are drawn up to describe it, you would understand why I must first show you what it is not, and then turn to show you what it is. So tonight, I am going to talk about "What election is not."

#### IT IS NOT AN INSIGNIFICANT DOCTRINE

First of all, it is not, I want to repeat, it is not a minor or insignificant Bible doctrine. There are preachers who try to make this doctrine seem as if it were so unimportant that we ought not bother to discuss it. They will try to put it in the category of such items as whether a lady should wear a hat in the church service or not, which subject only appears in one section of the Bible, or whether the sons of God in the 6th chapter of the book of Genesis, were the sons of Seth or whether they were angels, and other things of that sort. I do not want to minimize any Bible issue, but this doctrine cannot be categorized as minor. It is not a small or an insignificant Bible doctrine. Let me show you why I say that. Of just the New Testament references, the word elect appears 13 times in the New Testament. The word elected appears once. The word election appears 6 times. The word elect's (possessive plural) appears 3 times. The word choose appears 2 times, and the word chosen, used in a divine selection context, appears 26 times. This word and its derivatives, or words that are equivalent to it, appear a total of at least a hundred and thirty times in your Bible. That is more frequently than the word church. So obviously, it is not a doctrine that we may ignore as if it did not clearly appear in the Bible. And may I also point out that in the scripture there are hundreds of other words and phrases that teach us sovereign choice in the very same way. For instance, in I Corinthians 1:23 and 24, Paul said, "*But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*" And he uses the word called there in a very definite sense of the sovereign, selective action of God, speaking to a particular people. And if you continue reading in the chapter, you will find where he uses the words chosen and called in the same way as if they were synonyms. The chosen are very definitely spoken of here, synonymously with those who are called. For God hath not chosen many wise, many mighty and so on

down the line. And he uses it in the very same sense. It is not something that honest Bible students can discard as being unimportant. In Matthew chapter 11, and verse 25, the Lord rebuked the people of Chorazin. He said, if the men of Tyre had seen the miracles that you have seen, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Now, the fact is, he said he knew they would have repented, and yet they did not see those miracles. That teaches us that He chose to perform them in one particular place. He said of another city, Woe unto thee Bethsaida, for if the men of Sodom and Gomorrah had seen the miracles that have been done in you, they would have repented long ago. But the fact is, that an omnipotent God, knowing what the hypothetical results would be, did not perform those miracles in Sodom and Gomorrah. Then Our Lord consummates all of that, by saying, I thank thee, Father, for it seemed good unto thee. Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and the prudent and revealed them unto babes. Thou hast hidden from the wise and the prudent. He has hidden them from one group, and has revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for it seemed good in thy sight. We have a Bible that is absolutely filled with this sovereign activity of God. It teaches this doctrine of election. Whether we agree on all of its applications or not, we see it in the Bible. I have no fight with men who may differ with me slightly on the doctrine of election. But I certainly do have an issue with men who feel that they have the right or the option to ignore it. It is a Bible doctrine and we do not have the right to ignore it. We have no option but to search for the truth of it in the scripture. So it is not a small or insignificant Bible doctrine.

#### ELECTION IS NOT FATALISM

Secondly, election is not fatalism. We have people today who suggest that it is. One of the common caricatures is, that it is just fatalism. Some claim that when you talk about election you are saying, God has chosen to save certain ones, and He has chosen not to save other people. Therefore, there is nothing that anybody can do about it, so we had just as well to sit down and suck our thumbs till the day of judgment. Election is as far from fatalism as anything can conceivably be. The philosophy of fatalism is this: that all things are set in concrete, without purpose, without any design, without any justice, and without any reason. That is just the way it is going to be, and no reason or explanation exists. Divine election never comes to us in that context at all. It is rather revealed as being the all-wise purpose and intent of God, who does nothing without a design, or without a purpose, and nothing that is outside of, or contrary to justice. It invariably comes to us in the context of our responsibilities toward right and wrong. So there is a grave difference between fatalism and election. I know that we hear of people who want to try to discount it. One man jokingly says, 'Well, I believe it this way. God voted for me, and the devil voted against me, and I cast the deciding vote.' Well, what a wheel you are! How simplistic it is to think that the devil has the same voting power as God, and that you are the only one that really counts. Listen, that is really self-centered. That is close to blasphemy. And I hope that none of us here, if we have ever thought like that, will continue to think like that for very long.

One person said, 'Well, I suppose you just believe what is to be will be.' Dr. Frank Godsoe used to say, 'Well, that makes a lot more sense than believing it will not.' I rather think he is right. I would say that if God purposed it, it makes more sense to believe it will work out that way, than to believe that it will not work out that way, does it not? We cannot discount this doctrine that way. We must not! It is not fatalism, it is something we must deal with. Election never forbids opportunity. Do you hear me? It never forbids any man opportunity to turn to Christ, nor does it cancel any man's responsibility. Do not look at election like that. That is not what the doctrine of election is. There are people who try to make it look like that. That is not what it is. I want you to know that. It is not fatalism. It is not lack of responsibility. It is not lack of opportunity. It is none of those things.



## ELECTION CAUSES NO ONE'S DAMNATION

Thirdly, election does not cause the damnation of anyone. Brother Wayne Camp, some years ago, brought a couple of messages which dealt well with this subject. I think he brought one message, and subsequently, another one to help some people out who did not quite understand the first one. He then published them in his paper "The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator," and I republished them in The Baptist Watchman. He entitled these messages "Election Claims No Victims For Hell," and it could hardly have been said better. There is nothing in election, and I will also say, there is nothing lacking in election, that is the cause of any man going to hell. In the book of Ephesians, chapter 1 and verse 4, the Bible says, "*According as he hath chosen...*" (the same basic word as election)"... *hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*" It does not say, He hath chosen some of us, that we should be holy, and some of us that we should be wicked, but "*he hath chosen us that we should be holy and without blame...*" So we are never to look at election as being the cause of a man's wickedness, of his damnation, or of his eternal punishment, in any sense. Election is always unto holiness. Election is always unto life. Election is always unto salvation. So, when someone comes along and says to you, 'Well, I just cannot stomach this old doctrine of Election, that talks about God choosing some men to go to heaven, and some men to go to hell,' you can tell them, they do not know the full truth of the subject. They do not know what they should about the doctrine, because that is not what election is at all.

Men reason that if some are chosen unto life, that is equal to the rest being chosen unto condemnation. But that is not a biblical revelation. That is a human conclusion. That is not what the Bible says about it at all. Election is not equivalent to that. In reality, this either denies election or blames God. In other words, if you say, that if God chose some people to life, and did not choose everybody else, then it is God's fault that those whom He did not choose go to hell, you are blaming God for human depravity. You are blaming God for darkness. You are blaming God for sin. You are blaming God for death any time you take that route, and it is not a biblical revelation. What is more serious, is that you are denying the righteousness of God. You are saying if He shows grace to one man that He does not show to all, He is unjust. This objection is a firm rejection of the very principle of grace. I believe that in the Bible, we do not have a revelation of the elect and the non-elect. I understand, that if we say God has chosen some, that there would be a certain type of logic, which would conclude that everybody that is not included in that would be unchosen or they would equal, or would equate to the title of "non-elect." This is human logic, but when we view this from the perspective of our Bible this will not be the case. I think instead of viewing them as non-elect, we should realize that what we have revealed in our Bible is this: All men as they come from the loins of Adam, that is, all natural men, are by nature the children of wrath. It is not election or lack of election that makes them so, they are that by nature. Then, out of those natural men, we have those who are denominated vessels of God, chosen unto mercy by His grace. And we do not blame God, nor do we fault God for those He did not call, or did not choose. That is not our business. That is not our judgment. What the lost have done, they have done to themselves. So election is not the cause of anyone's damnation. No man goes to hell for anything except his own sins, because of his own hard and impenitent heart, because he would not come, because he loved darkness rather than light. At the very least, he is "without excuse." That is why men go to hell. It is utterly ridiculous to try to lay this at the feet of God. And it is equally ridiculous to say that if there were such a thing as election that it would lay man's condemnation at the feet of God. It most certainly does not do that.

## ELECTION IS NOT MERELY NATIONAL CHOICE

Election is not merely a national choice. Some years ago, I was preaching in a city in northern Oklahoma. Of course, I was not preaching on the doctrine of election. I never have done so in a revival meeting that I can remember. But some kind of reference was made to the sovereign choice of God, and a good friend of mine, who was visiting from the Tulsa area, and he was a good friend and I think still is, came over to the pastor's house that night, and he said, 'I heard what you said tonight about election.' And I said, 'Oh, you got that did you?' I do not know what I had said, I had not said anything significant. I do not think he used the word election anyhow, I think maybe it was predestination but anyhow he said, 'You know I do not believe that, do you?' And I said, I had not thought about it, I really had not worried much about it, one way or the other. And these are his words. He said, 'Keener, there is not a cotton-pickin place in the Bible where it talks about election, where it is not talking about the nation of Israel.' Those were his words, 'There is not a cotton-pickin place in the Bible where the word election is used, where it is not talking about the nation of Israel.' I reached over and picked up my Bible, and I read about three places right quickly, and I said is that talking about Israel? And he did not want to talk about it any more. He said we had better talk about something else. He did not argue the point with me. He knew immediately that he was defeated. He had not weighed his words. He was just quoting something somebody else had said to him. He was then refusing to study the issue, and there is no doubt in my mind, he still refuses to study the issue. We do not have that right.

As I started to point out, election is not merely national. In the book of II Thessalonians, chapter 2, I want you to read verse 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:"* I want you to notice those words in that verse: He hath chosen you to salvation. He did not say, He hath chosen you to be a part of the nation of Israel. He did not say, He hath chosen you nationally, but He hath chosen you to salvation. Not only so, but we know that the nation of Israel was not chosen through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, for there were many people who were part of the nation of Israel who were never sanctified by the Spirit, nor did they ever believe the truth: men such as Judas Iscariot, and many others like that in the nation of Israel. So we know that national choice would not apply to II Thessalonians 2:13.

There are four kinds of biblical election. There is national election. God chose the nation of Israel. I am not going to take time to enlarge upon this, you are familiar with many scriptures that teach you that. He chose the nation of Israel. He said I have chosen you above all other people. He said thee only have I loved of all the peoples of the earth. He spoke of the nation of Israel in such terms as that. He chose the nation of Israel. We call that national election.

Not only did He choose the nation of Israel, there is vocational election. God chose particular men to do particular jobs. He said of the apostles, I have chosen you twelve. He did not say I have chosen every believer to be an apostle. 'I have chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil.' I have chosen. He said to His disciples in the gospel of John, chapter 15 and verse 16: *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit."* We call that vocational election. He has chosen us to do particular jobs. God chooses men to preach, before He calls them to preach. I do not know why! I have no idea why God would have chosen and called me. I know of men all over the country, men that I grew up with, who as far as I can tell, would be far better suited than I. Their background was not as sordid, and their heart was not as filthy and as wicked, and as rebellious as mine. I do not know why God chose me, but I know He did. I do not know why God called me to preach, but I know He did. That is what we call vocational election. He does not call any women to preach. He never has called even one. That does not mean that God does not like women. It means He chose to use the men. He does not call all men to preach. It

does not mean that God likes one's looks better than the other's, but He chooses whom He will. That is vocational election.

Then, there is what we call Soteriological election. That means election that has to do with salvation. He chooses men unto salvation. And we read that in II Thessalonians: 2:13. *"...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation..."*

Then of course, there is Christological election. Or we might call it God's selection of Christ to be our atonement, or our reconciliation. He has chosen Christ, the chief cornerstone. No one else is chosen by God for this. No one else is approved of God in that area, but Jesus Christ. We have at least those four kinds of election in the Bible. And the Bible clearly teaches that God did that choosing.

There are many doctrines today, that are concocted by men, trying not to openly deny that God made any choice, but at the same time to indicate that God made no real, destiny determining choice. Such an attempt is the doctrine of election according to foreseen faith, and I will touch upon that in a moment. That is this teaching that God looked out into the future and saw who would come and chose them on the basis of what they would do. Well, why make a choice? No choice needs to be made in a situation like that at all. That is not choice. There is no choice there. He is simply responding to something good within them, or some activity on their part, and there is no real choice by God, in that frame of doctrine. It is a form of doctrine designed to deny election, without openly saying 'I do not believe that Bible doctrine.'

The most frequently used of the terms for election, in your Bible, is not relevant to national election. It concerns soteriological election, and I will be very glad to take a concordance and sit down and count the occurrences with anybody who questions that, I do not care who they are. When we get through, if they will continue the search until we are finished, and take all the words that have to do with divine choice, they will concur that I am right. They will have to admit that soteriological election is mentioned many, many more times in the Bible than the national election of Israel. It is just a matter of who we are going to believe. Will we believe some man, because we happen to be friends with him, or because we happen to be impressed by him in other areas, or will we believe the word of God?

Furthermore, one of these choices of God can no more logically be objected to than the other. Let me show you what I am talking about. A man may say, 'Well, I believe in national election. No question, God chose Israel. But I could never believe in soteriological election, because that is God giving one man an advantage over another. And I could not buy that at all.' Paul said, what advantage has Israel then? Much in every way: because unto them were given the oracles of God. What are the oracles of God? That is the men who spoke for God. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Do you not see how, that in God choosing the nation of Israel and dealing with them in that way, there was a distinct parallel, and that by God's dealing with the men, within the nation of Israel, He was giving them a soteriological advantage? If you throw one away, you had just as well throw the other away. You say, 'Preacher, I do not understand it.' I do not understand it either. I am not God. I am not smart enough to understand it all, and you are not smart enough to understand it all, but that is no excuse for ignoring or denying it. In fact, if we do not have a lot of pride in our heart, which causes us to reject anything we cannot understand, or analyze, we will not have any trouble with it.

#### ELECTION IS NOT ACCORDING TO FORESEEN FAITH

I also want to point out that election is not according to foreseen faith. In I Peter, chapter 1, and verse 2, Peter says, *"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."* He addresses this particular church, to whom he is writing, in this fashion. He said, you are elect. And then he said,

according to the foreknowledge of God. There are men who like to take this word foreknowledge and say that it simply means God looking out into the future. Foreknowledge never means that--not one time in your entire Bible. Foreknowledge means to know beforehand, that is true. It is the Greek word prognosis, but it means to know beforehand, not in the sense of knowing what is going to happen, but what He is going to do. It is never what God foreknew, but whom He foreknew, and it always has to do with foreordination, not foresight. This word prognosis is translated foreordained or foreordination twice in your Bible. It is never translated foreseen, foresaw or foresight. Now, the word foreseen and the word foresaw both appear in your English Bible, but they never come from the word prognosis. It is a totally different word, with a very different meaning. It is a totally different concept. So, when we get the idea that we are going to explain this away by saying, 'God looked out into the future and saw what was going to happen,' all we are doing is just getting a fancy way of denying the word of God. And I must say that this theory, and many other such theories, are only designed for that purpose.

There are many men who will simply say, I believe in election according to foreknowledge. And if you say, 'would you like to talk about that a little?' or, 'would you like to explain that to me a little better?' They would say, No, I do not want to talk to you about it. I do not want to argue with you about it. They do not want to discuss it. Do you know why? It is because, in most cases, they know that if they discussed that with anybody who is even vaguely knowledgeable of their Bible, their argument is going to fall apart at the seams. It will not stand up until the water gets hot. In the first place, it does not get God "off the hook." If they consider God, in the scheme of sovereign election, to be "on the hook," that just does not get Him off. It does not do anything at all for them except to mildly tranquilize.

### ELECTION IS NOT SALVATION

Let me move farther and say, that election is not salvation. This is where the hard-shell really gets in trouble. Of course, he is in trouble from the start. But he reasons that if God chooses a man, that the man is saved. It is all done. Now, while it is true that if God decrees the salvation of a man, the salvation of that man is going to come about. God is going to save him. If He is not going to execute His purpose, He is not God. If God ever determined to save one person and did not save that person, then He is not the God of this Bible. The Bible describes God, as one who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. (Eph. 1:11) He does His pleasure in the heavens above and the earth beneath. The Bible is filled with descriptions of that sort of God. So the man that God chooses to save, He is going to save. But that God is going to save him does not mean he is saved. He has chosen him unto salvation, but also that he is to be saved through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. In other words, the Spirit of God must work in this man's heart, so as to cause him to believe, and not just to believe some pleasant thought about God, but to believe the gospel truth of God's word. In the book of Romans, chapter 10 and verse 13, the Bible says, "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" This is a wonderful, wonderful verse of scripture. The next verse, however, says, "*How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?*" What is he saying? He is saying, that the purpose of God demands these means, that is belief, which demands hearing, which demands preaching, which demands sending, and the belief will never take place except these things that precede it take place. The salvation of the chosen man will never take place unless all of those means are in place. Again, in II Thessalonians, chapter 2 and verse 13, we have the same truth: "*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:*" Some years ago, in a missions conference, I made some sort of a

statement like this to missionaries and pastors, 'If we do not go, they perish.' And a preacher brother came by later and said, 'You sure shook my confidence in you.' I said, 'How is that?' He said, 'I thought you believed in sovereign election.' I said, 'I most certainly do.' 'How then,' said he, 'can you say that any of God's elect might conceivably perish?' I said, 'I did not say anything like that. I said, if we do not go, they perish.' Now, you say, 'Well, that seems like a contradiction.' I know it does, but it is not a contradiction. Why do I say that? God has chosen you unto salvation, but God has not chosen you unto salvation by chance, by accident, by osmosis, or by the book of God being laid on top of your head. He has not chosen you unto salvation by accident. He has chosen you unto salvation by belief of the truth. Therefore, the means that God has ordained, are as absolutely necessary as the end is certain. One is just as necessary and as sure as the other. So you do not preclude or minimize one by declaring the other, and we do not have the right to neglect either one. Election is not salvation, it is God's purpose to save. It is His decree to save. But all of the means and the methods that God has decreed must be carried out in order for that portion of His decree to be carried out. Let me illustrate. The Apostle Paul appeared to the men on the ship, where he was a prisoner, before it was shipwrecked and after he had been in absence many days. Here is what he said. The God whom I serve, His angel has appeared unto me, and He has given to me this revelation: I have given you all the men on this ship, none of them are going to be lost. They are all going to live. The ship is going to be lost, but none of the men are going to die. We find Paul the very next day informing the soldiers of a necessary condition. When the sailors are about to cut the lifeboats down and leave the ship, Paul says to the soldiers on the ship, except these abide, that is, except these sailors remain or abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Was Paul going back on what he said the previous day, that no man's life will be lost? No, he was simply giving them the means by which their lives were going to be saved. So the soldiers took their swords, they cut off the lifeboats, let them fall into the water, so the sailors could not get away. Now, the sailors, who are skilled at handling the ship, do something the soldiers could not have done. They run it into this little cove, onto the rocks, and the ship breaks up into pieces. Then, they all take boards, or pieces of the ship, to use for buoyancy and they get to the shore. All of them are saved alive. Now, Paul was not contradicting in one case what he had said in the other. He was explaining how it was going to come about. In like manner, election is not salvation. Election is God's purpose to save. But all of the means by which it is to come about, and which God has revealed with equal clarity, must be brought to pass.

Are you chosen? Has God chosen to save you? You say, 'Preacher, how would I find out about that?' I would say to you, you do not need to worry about that. It is not put in the Bible for us to worry about. It is put in the Bible for a single reason, as far as I can tell. It is so that we will know how to praise God, and God alone, for our salvation, instead of crediting ourselves with some part of it. We know that God, by His grace, saved us. That is why this doctrine is put in the Bible in the first place. You do not learn of your election by looking in the Book to see if your name is written there from before the foundation of the world. How do you learn of it? In the book of John, chapter 6 and in verse 37, our Lord said, "*All that the Father giveth me...*" That is election. "*...shall come to me;*" That is your responsibility. That is what happens as a result of these means being carried out. "*...shall come to me...*" Are you disposed to turn to Jesus Christ in repentance of your sin, and faith toward Him? If you have done that, or if you do it, you do not have to worry about whether you are elected or not. I can assure you, by authority of God's word, that you are. You would never come otherwise. Are you disposed to worry more about your election and fret more about whether God was right to elect or not to elect, than you are to turn to Christ? Then I say to you, friend, you had better be concerned about it. But what you had better do about it, is to turn from your sin, and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. For He has promised, "*He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.*"

## Chapter Five

### ERRONEOUS AND INCOMPLETE VIEWS OF ELECTION

Open your Bibles to Romans, chapter 9. Begin to read in verse 1, and we will read through verse 24. I am continuing the series of messages on the subject of The Doctrines Of Salvation By Grace. I am going to be speaking to you this evening on a subject that I did not have in the series, when I did it previously. I feel that I probably dealt with it a little too briefly; therefore, I am going to enlarge upon it. My message tonight is going to be entitled, 'Some Erroneous And Incomplete Views Of Election.' Sometimes, in order to explain fully what a Bible doctrine is, it is necessary for us to clarify some of the things that it is not, especially when it is a doctrine that many people misunderstand, forcing us to clarify some of those erroneous views.

Let's begin to read with verse 1, of Romans chapter 9: *"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger." It is very clearly pointed out here that God made this statement before the children were born, so that we might know that His election of grace was not predicated upon any good that they had done, or would do, but totally upon His sovereign, electing grace. The elder shall serve the younger. "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 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. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" I want you to notice that. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? In other words, shall the creature, or the creation, say to the creator, why did you create me like this? That is not the creature's prerogative. It is the prerogative of the creator, to do it as He wishes. That is what Paul is saying to us. "Hath not the potter power..." That means the authority, it conveys both the right and the ability. "... over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"*

My text, this evening, is verse 24. Let us read it again. *"Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews*

*only, but also of the Gentiles?"* I pointed out to you earlier, how that in First Corinthians chapter 1, verse 23 and throughout the remaining portion of the chapter, the Lord makes calling and choosing something that invariably, unquestionably and inseparably go together. I am not saying they are synonymous, but he simply teaches here, that those who are *the called* are also *the chosen*, and those who are *the chosen* are *the called*. There can be no question about that, if you believe your Bible.

I want to say in the beginning of the message, that it is a tragic thing, that many people are more sensitive to their obligation to believe the Bible, than they are to the Bible. I want you to hang onto that for a minute, and listen to what I am saying. They are more sensitive to their obligation to believe the Bible, than they are to the Bible. In other words, they would certainly confess immediately that they are obligated to believe the Bible. They would claim that they believe the Bible, but when they open their Bible and find something they do not like, they simply avoid it. We do not have the right to do that. Our fidelity should be to the word of God, and not just to a traditional claim that we believe it is the Word of God. Not all people who err concerning election are this way. There are decent people, there are honest people, who have been taught error, who have simply not been exposed to the truth, and in all of their honesty, they really know nothing about the doctrine at all. It has been my experience with dozens if not hundreds of those people, that when they are exposed to this truth, they embrace it. They love it. They do not resent it. They do not fight with it.

Because of this problem, I want to briefly explain and refute four common errors concerning the doctrine of election. There are people who know they are supposed to believe the Bible, and they claim to believe the Bible, but they do not like the doctrine of election, and they fully intend to explain it away if they can. They hold and cultivate these erroneous views by which they have satisfied themselves. The four that I shall touch upon tonight, will not encompass all of the error that exists, but they will point in the direction of the majority of it. Notice four things:

#### **THE ERROR THAT ELECTION IS MERELY OF GROUPS AND NOT OF INDIVIDUALS**

It appears that there are people who honestly believe this. I think I mentioned earlier in the series, or maybe in another lesson, that one preacher had said to me,--"There is not a 'cotton-pickin' reference made in the Bible to election, where it is not talking about Israel." In other words, he says, when we talk about election, we are simply talking about groups, we are not talking about individuals. They believe that personal election is unjust, unfair, and therefore, only groups are chosen. They believe that these groups are Israel, or the church, or the whosoever-wills. Once again, they may not always call them that, but basically those three things would encompass the commonly claimed groups. I certainly agree, that those who are elect will come to Christ, and when the Lord says, whosoever will, let him come, those are the ones that will come. I do not have any fight with that at all, but they reduce the doctrine to be this: 'God has just chosen that this vague group called the "whosoever-wills" is to be saved and it really is not, in any way, determinative as to any individual's salvation.'

Another group categorization error, is this: 'God chose Israel as a nation, but He does not choose people as individuals.' Some say, 'God chose His church, and His church is what is referred to as the elect.' In their estimation, or in their conclusion, the benefits, or the result of election come from the fortune, or the wisdom of getting into the right group. In other words, God has chosen a group, if you have enough sense, if you have enough wisdom, if you have enough honesty, if you have enough self-concern to get into one of those groups that God has chosen, then God has chosen you, and to them, that answers to the doctrine of election. Again, I know that is a little bit over simplifying it, but to totally analyze it would take as long as this whole message should take. It, at least gives you a bird's-eye view of the matter.

What is the reply to this idea that election is merely of groups and not of persons? Well, it is this: Scripture absolutely insists on individual election, and not just group election. The argument that they put forth may sound logical until you begin to read your Bible subjectively and carefully, but when you do, the Bible will insist that election is of individuals.

I would say first of all, that men are revealed to be personal objects of mercy and hardening. In the scriptures that I read tonight in Romans chapter 9 and verse 18, the Bible very clearly sets this truth before us: *"Therefore hath he mercy on whom ..."* You see it is a personal pronoun *"...on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* It is a very definite statement by God of personal objects. Not only that, but men are personal vessels of mercy and wrath. In Romans chapter 9, verses 21 through 23: *"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"* I want you to notice, the verses that preface that. He has said to us, 'Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made us thus?' It does not say that, does it? *"Why hast thou made me thus?"* It is a first person, singular pronoun. Do you see what I am talking about? It is clearly individual! You cannot get away from that if you believe your Bible. He says in verse 22: *"What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:..."* I do not find any place in my Bible, where the Bible speaks of the non-Israelites, as such, being destroyed. They are not revealed to be the objects of eternal destruction, simply due to not being Israelites. I do not find any place, where the Bible talks about those who are not in the church being destroyed. I do not find any place in my Bible, where God talks about the 'whosoever-will nots' as a group. Certainly, they who will not come are to be destroyed. But the thing that the Bible always brings out, is that those objects of the wrath of God are individuals. They are unbelievers, they are abominable, they are liars, they are fearful. These are individual sins not group sins, and God's judgment is passed upon them as individuals, not as a group. These are acts of individuals, resulting from attributes of individuals. It is clearly set forth in scripture as an individual matter.

From a different angle, we find that Paul says that there was a remnant within Israel. In other words, he is not talking about Israel as a group, all being just a chosen group, but he says, there was a remnant within Israel that was the recipient of the mercy, and the electing grace of God. Romans chapter 11 and verse 5: *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."* Do you see? This is so clearly individuals within Israel, and some of them are referred to as the election who obtained the grace, and others as those who are blinded. It cannot be anything other than individuals who make up the differentiating groups here.

Not only so, but individual election of the Jew and the Gentile is mentioned in the scripture. In Romans chapter 9, and verse 24: *"Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"* We have a group here who is the elect. They are partly out of the Jews, and they are partly out of the Gentiles. And so the group theory does not work at all. First Corinthians, chapter 1, and verse 23: *"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men..."* Do you see the personal nature of it? *"not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things..."* Still talking about men. *"... God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;"* These are individuals, out of the Jews and out of the



Greeks, who are called, and where the calling is the very thing that makes the eternal difference. So the idea that it is merely group election and not personal, simply will not be allowed by your Bible. If you are looking for an excuse to minimize election, and not to talk about it, this makes as good an excuse as the next thing. It will be alright as long as you do not seriously read your Bible. But if you read your Bible and you feel an obligation to it, not just a claim that you believe it, but if you feel a real obligation to your Bible, that just will not work. You will have to back up and re-think this issue.

#### THE ERROR THAT ELECTION IS ONLY OF MEANS

The second error we will consider, is that election is only of means, and not of men. Let me show you what I am talking about. In Ephesians chapter 1, and verse 4, the scripture says: *"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:"* There are men who say, 'Do you not see, Paul is writing here to the church at Ephesus. He says to this church at Ephesus: According as he hath chosen us in him. Therefore, what he is talking about, when he speaks of choosing, is simply that God has chosen that those who are in Christ shall be saved. Therefore, if you get saved, if you get into Christ, you will be saved. If you do not get into Christ, you will not be saved. It is simply a matter of God choosing the means of man's salvation, and not His choosing us unto salvation.' They, in like manner, wrongly interpret II Thessalonians chapter 2, and verse 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:"* They say, 'Now, you see God is not choosing individuals, He is only choosing the means by which individuals are to be saved, and that is sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' The thing that is wrong with this interpretation, is that they are taking only half of the truth in both of those passages. God does, very clearly, set forth the means and result of salvation in both of those passages, but He also sets forth the persons. 'He hath chosen you.' 'We are bound always to give thanks for you.' These are personal pronouns. They are not pronouns which refer to means. They are personal pronouns. Let me go a little bit farther, lest I spend more time on this error than it deserves, and point out that if God is eternal, and if God is omniscient, this theory is not worth the time it takes to state it, for this simple reason. If God knows everything, and if He in eternity, knowing everything, chose this means by which men were to be saved, knowing exactly who would and would not be saved by that means, it is precisely equal to choosing, unto salvation, those individuals whom He knows will be saved. So these deep thinkers just do not get God off the hook. It is not a reasonable answer. It is only an excuse at best, a smoke screen at worst, and it is a totally erroneous view of election.

#### THE THEORY OF ELECTION IN TIME

Thirdly, there is the view that election is in time, and not in eternity. I spoke with a man some time ago, who I thought believed the doctrine of election. I was amazed to hear him say, 'I believe in election in time.' And I said, 'What do you mean by election in time?' He said, 'Well, I believe that men are chosen unto salvation when they believe. I believe that is when they are chosen.' Now, there are several scriptures which might allow that. In other words, you could go to some scriptures, and if you did not have any others, you could say, 'Well, we do not know when the elect were chosen.' For instance, John 6:37 says, *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* We know there is a giving of the Father. We know there is a choosing of the Father. And if we had nothing but John 6:37, we might well say, 'Okay, God chose them, and gave them, when they came.' Of course, this will not work at all in the area of logical cause and effect. The problem that we have here is this: The only logical reason that these men have for this is to preclude the sovereign nature of God's grace in choosing individuals. I asked

the brother this: Do you believe that when God saved you, He intended to save you?' And he said, 'Yes.' I said, 'You believe that He purposed your salvation at that time?' I said, 'Do you think that 5 seconds before He saved you, He purposed to save you?' He sat there a minute, and he said, 'Yes.' I said, 'Do you think 5 minutes before He saved you, that He intended to save you?' Of course, by now I could see that he was thinking about it, something was working in his heart. The Holy Spirit was working, the word was working in his memory, and he said, 'Yes.' I said, 'Now, where did He draw the line between that and eternity? Where do we stop? Do we stop at 5 hours? Do we stop at 5 days? Do we stop at 5 weeks? 5 months? 5 years? and conclude that this is as long as God intended to save you? Where do you stop? And he saw that there was a problem with election in time. Of course, this doctrine had been taught to him, with the purpose of denying the sovereign nature of election. The goal has always been to, without directly denying scripture, explain away election, or to hold a view of election that did not, in reality, have God making the difference in any man's destiny. In the book of Exodus, chapter 11, God said, Moses, I am going to do this, and this, and this, so that they may know that The Lord does make a difference. You would be amazed at the professing Christians today, that hate and reject a God Who makes a difference. But our God said, He is a God Who makes a difference. God doth make the difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians. And in every other place, it is God who makes the difference.

Now, what is the biblical reply to this error? I want to answer you in six brief ways.

First of all, election belongs to decree and therefore, is necessarily eternal. When I say election belongs to decree, I simply mean to say that election does not belong to the actions of God. It does not belong to the attributes of God. It belongs to the decree of God. It is something that God has decreed to do, or has purposed to do. You are not saved simply because you are elected. The means, or the things that have to be done in order for a person to be saved, must still come to pass. You must repent. You must believe. If you are to believe, you must hear. If you are to hear, a preacher must preach. If a preacher is to preach, he must be sent. All of these things have to come into being. These are things that come to pass in time, and your salvation comes to pass in time, but election does not belong to those actions, it belongs to the decree of God. It is something that God has purposed. And as something that God has purposed, it is necessarily eternal. If we view God as being immutable, we have to realize that everything that God purposes today, He purposed yesterday, or He has changed. Everything that He purposed yesterday, He purposed in eternity, or He has changed. The very nature of God demands that His decree is eternal.

Secondly, some of the elect are spoken of as not yet saved. In Matthew chapter 1, and verse 21, the angel said to Joseph, "*...thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people...*" They are His people, and you can find no biblical way, in which they can be called His people, except in the sense of eternal election. The salvation of those people is yet future. They are His people, but not yet saved! In the book of John, chapter 10 and verse 16: "*And other sheep I have...*" You mean these are your sheep? Yes, He says, "*...other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring...*" Notice how He speaks of them: They are my sheep. I have other sheep but they are not yet brought. I must bring them. They must yet come unto me. They must yet be drawn unto me. They must be brought unto me. "*...other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall...*" (in the future) "*...hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*" And so we find here, the elect clearly spoken of as not yet saved, so that utterly destroys the idea of being elected at the point of salvation. It has to be before the point of salvation, because they were His sheep, and yet they were not saved.

Thirdly, belief is spoken of in the Bible as the result and not the cause of election. The reason for the "election in time" conclusion is to make election an act of God, that is responsive to man's repentance and faith. They are saying, when a man comes to Christ, when he repents and believes, God then, in response,

chooses him, and that is what election is. If they could be objectively honest, they would have to go on and say, this really makes election nothing at all, and not to be worried about it. But in the book of Acts, chapter 13 and verse 48, the Bible says: "*And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life...*" That is what election is, ordination unto eternal life. "*...as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*" Now, this is a qualification that shows us cause and effect, cause and its results. I saw, some years ago, where a preacher, an independent Baptist preacher, said, 'What that really means is as many as believe are ordained unto life.' And that is what the doctrine of election in time, or election at the point of salvation is all about. It is simply to turn this around and say, 'No, the Bible has it wrong, men are elected when they believe and they are elected because they believe. Therefore, God makes no personal, destinating decision. But the Bible brings it from exactly the opposite direction. The result is belief and the cause is election, or ordination unto life, not vice versa.

Fourthly, the immutability of God forbids election or any other decree, in time. I have already covered that under a different heading. Nevertheless, I remind you that the idea that God elects, in time, denies the doctrine of divine immutability. It says, that if God saved someone today, He had a purpose today, which He did not have yesterday. In other words, if He elects them,--and that is purpose, that is decree,--if He elects them at the time they are saved, then who ever is elected at that point, or decreed unto salvation, ordained unto life at that point, was not, according to this theory, ordained unto salvation in eternity. And it is totally contrary to the biblical doctrine of immutability.

Fifthly, the omniscience of God forbids decree to be based on activities in time. In other words, all activities of men are in time. If God is omniscient, that is, if God knows all things, and He yet bases His decrees upon what men do, then He would have done that, knowing from eternity what they were going to do. It would, therefore be done according to the scheme of the propagators of election according to foreseen faith and repentance. That in itself fights with the idea of election in time.

Sixth and finally, the nature of man leaves salvation either to God, or to mere accident. The Bible teaches us, there is none good, no not one. There is none that seeketh after God. Our Lord said, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:" Why? Because of man's fallen condition, because of his natural enmity toward God. Therefore, either God immutably purposes to save man, and in that purpose, effectually draws man to Himself, in His mercy, and grace, or man, by some personal virtue comes to God. Biblically, what is the deciding factor? It has to be one of three things: Either God does it, or man has some kind of a virtue in himself, which is above or better than that in other men, or it is brought about by simple caprice, which really advocates fatalism. That is to say that circumstances, without any design, dictate or initiate some deciding human activity. It cannot be anything outside of those three. All of these will absolutely forbid the idea that election is in time, and not in eternity. There is ten times more that could be said about this. I simply do not have time to deal with all of it tonight, if I am going to cover the material.

#### ELECTION IS NOT ACCORDING TO FORESEEN FAITH

This is the fourth, and probably the most common and popular of all of errors concerning election. No claim is more popular among those who set out to explain election, without admitting a divine, sovereign, electing activity. It is the teaching, that election is based upon foreseen faith. As in the case of almost all error, these people base their idea upon a verse or two of scripture. In this case, I Peter chapter 1, and verse 2 is the most popular verse: "*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.*" I want to show you the heart of their error. They are looking at this word foreknowledge, and

they are saying that it simply means foresight. Of course, it does mean to know beforehand, but it means a great deal more than that. This same word is also translated foreordination, meaning to set in order. It means to approve, to love, or to purpose, to embrace, or to cause to happen, by instituting the cause before hand. Of course, they are not defining it like that at all. This common mistake is based, first of all, upon a wrong definition, and then upon a subsequent misinterpretation. They look at this word foreknowledge, and they say, 'Well, that means God looking out into the future, and seeing what is going to happen.' As I have often heard it depicted, "God looked down through the annals of time, and saw this poor sinner coming with a broken heart, and wrote my name in the Book of Life." That is commonly the teaching that is set forth in exposition of the above verse. This word foreknowledge, is translated from the Greek word prognosis. In its basic sense, foreknow, is from the Greek word prognosko. Prognosis is the very same word that is used as a medical term today. When you hear a doctor speak of prognosis, he is not talking about diagnosis. He is not talking about seeing what is wrong, or what is right. He is talking about one of two things: either what he purposes to do, or what he feels is going to happen. This word means exactly the same thing. The word foresaw, and the word foresee are in your Bibles. They are never translated from the word prognosis, or anything really close to it. The word foresee comes from the word proeido, and the word foresaw from prooraio. The words foreknowledge and foreknow are never talking about foresight, or foreseeing, in the sense of mere precognition, or beholding and learning. A few of the glaring errors in this theory are as follows: Of course, I could not, in the few minutes that I have left, speak of them all. But I want to take a little time to alert you to some of the most common errors.

Number one, it is based upon an impossible human activity. What they are actually saying is this: The reason God chose me, is that He looked down into the future and He saw me coming, without Him effectually causing me to come. That is invariably what they mean. In other words, they are explaining away the idea that God makes the difference. They are saying, 'God did nothing for or to me, that was not basically done for or to all men, but rather made this choice, because He saw what I would do of my own free will. Therefore, it was really my decision that made the difference in my eternal destiny.' He cannot stand the idea, of man's eternal destiny being in the hands of God. That is the only logical reason for the statement. He says, God looked out into the future, and saw me coming. No, He did not cause me to come. He did not change my will. He did not do anything for me that is different than what He did for any other man. He simply looked out into the future, and He saw me, of my own volition, my own decision, my own inherent ability to accept or reject the word of God, coming to Christ.

But you see, that is not possible. For the Bible says, "*No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*" I know there are those who say, Well, the Bible says, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me, but that is not an answer. I do not have time to get into that but that is absolutely not an answer, and I really do not think anybody is ignorant enough to think that is an answer to this argument, against the doctrine of election according to foreseen faith. The idea that man will, or indeed could come to God, of himself, without God doing something, determinative and supernatural in his heart, without God indeed making him a new creature through His regenerating power, is totally contrary to the nature of man. And it is totally contrary to the revelation of God.

Secondly, it destroys the very principle of God choosing. If, for instance, I were to say to you folks, 'I am going to make a choice.' 'I am going to choose certain ones, of you people, to receive twenty-five dollars apiece. The way I am going to do that, is this: All of you who arrive for services next Sunday morning, no later than 9:30, will receive this money. Now, I have not made a choice. You must make the choice by arriving by that time. Do you follow what I am talking about? I did not make any choice at all. I simply laid down a law, or a principle, a qualification, and you chose to meet the qualification. If you meet the

qualification, I am then duty bound to respond by giving what I promised you, and I in reality made no choice at all. I only chose a means. I really made no individual choice of who received the money. So, when we say that God looked out into the future and saw what man was going to do, and because man came in repentance and faith, God chose him, in all honesty you are saying, God did not make a choice at all. He simply responded to man's choice. He ratified man's choice. Man made the choice and God simply accepted it, or God submitted Himself to the choice that man made.

Thirdly, it violates all divine attributes. To me, this is the most devastating argument against this erroneous doctrine of election according to foreseen faith. It absolutely violates all of the major attributes of God. My answer to the man who says, 'God looks out into the future,' is simply this, God cannot look out into the future. I am not saying that God does not know the future, or that God does not see the future, because there is no question in my mind that God absolutely sees and knows all of the future. But, you see, this is not what they are saying. This theory says: Number one, God looks out. What does that mean, "God looks out into the future"? You see, if I look into the future, if I were to have a means of looking into the future, I would have to look out from where I am, because I am confined in time and location. Do you follow me? I am bound up in a created state of being referred to as time. I do not even know how to think outside of time. If I were to say to you, this is to be done, and you say, 'What time?' Your question is logical. If I said, 'No time at all.' You would say, 'You are crazy.' If I said, 'Any time.' You would probably say, 'You do not really mean that.' For instance, if I were to tell a brother I wanted him to do something, and he said, 'When would you like that to be done?' and I said 'Just any time,' that would not make much sense. Is a hundred years from now as good as today? Of course not! I am not going to be around a hundred years from now. You see, everything we do, everything we think, everything we reason with, is involved with time. We cannot think, we cannot reason outside of time. Therefore, if I look at the future, I have to look out of myself, because I am in time, and that portion of time that I am in is what we call the present. That is where we are now, but not so with God. God is not in time, and so God does not look into the future. God is as much in the past as He is in the present, and God is as much in the future as He is in the present. He does not look into the future. He cannot look out, for He is not in, He is infinite. He is everywhere. He is omnipresent. That means He is everywhere all the time, past, present, and future. And so the very idea is utterly foolish.

Not only that, but it also violates the attribute of omniscience. That is, the attribute of God by which He always knows all things. If you then tie that attribute to the attribute of immutability, that is that God does not change, you really clinch the nail. Every one of us, if we are worth our salt, change. We change through growth, and by increased knowledge. We hope we are a little wiser today than we were yesterday. I have a little more experience, since I have been farther down the trail. I hope I have improved a little. I hope I have increased in knowledge. Not so with God. God does not increase in knowledge. He does not diminish in knowledge. For He is perfection. He knows all things, and He has known all things from eternity. But this doctrine has God looking out of the present, or the past, into the future. It does not make any difference if they speak of the day before He created man, the day after He created man, or 93 million years before He created Him. It describes God as looking out into the future, and learning something by observing what man is going to do, and purposing His action upon that. He learns by observation. The theory is totally contrary to God's omniscience.

It is totally contrary to the immutability of God, because we have a man in a state where God has not purposed his eternal presence in heaven at one moment, yet He looks out there and He sees what that man is going to do, and then He purposes his eternal joy and comfort in heaven. Strange is it not? It does not make any more sense than the Arminians' theory that God saves men and then lets them get lost again, and then

He saves again, and they get lost again. I believe it was Bro. Steve, who told me this story some years ago. You know, people make fun of the so-called Calvinists because they have their flower, the tulip. He said the Arminians also have their flower. It is the daisy; 'he loves me, he loves me not, he loves me, he loves me not.' Of course, it does not make any sense at all. They theorize that God does not eternally love, but God at sometime begins to love, because He learns something good about the person. This assumes that now God has a feeling toward that person which He did not have before. Then that feeling changes when they fall and they are vessels of wrath, it changes again and they are vessels of mercy. Please! I know that may be a little bit of a caricature, but I do not think that it is in any way inaccurate as far as what they really think. The only alternative is that God loves those in hell just like He does those in heaven.

Let me go on and say, that all of this foolishness is to get God off the hook. I mean, every one of these false theories of election is to get God 'off the hook.' These people reason that if God sovereignly chooses individuals out of condemned mankind, if He chooses certain people as objects of His free, sovereign salvation, that He is, by default, to blame for the damnation of all those who were not chosen, and who perish. They reason that if election is true, God is the one who is at fault. Now, I do not agree with that, because I understand the doctrine of human depravity, and I understand that if God never saved anybody, God would yet be totally glorious. If God condemned every man that was ever born into the world, God would be just. He has no reason to save them, except for His own free mercy and grace. We all deserve condemnation. If God chose out of that human race one man and saved one man, and let all the rest go to hell, God would be just. If God saved ten million men out of those and let all the rest go to hell, God would still be just. But the Bible teaches that He chose and He will save a multitude that no man can number. As far as I am concerned, God was never on the hook for the lost condition, or the wickedness, or the damnation of the wicked. God was never on the hook. But if He were, as these people hypothetically conclude, this just would not get Him off. You may keep talking until the person forgets what you were talking about and they may think you have given an explanation, but it is not an explanation. Let me show you what I am talking about. If God were a man this would be a pretty good explanation. But since He is God, it does not do anything.

Let me illustrate it like this: Let's say I am standing upon a mountain top, and I look out there and see a railroad track coursing around the mountain. Down the railroad track from this direction comes a long train, running along at 50 miles an hour, and from the other direction comes another train, running along at 50 miles an hour. They are out of each other's view because they are coming around the mountain. In this situation I foresee something. I foresee a terrible train wreck. It is going to happen. I do not have any doubt, we are going to have this terrible, terrible train wreck. It is going to happen! But I am on the mountain, the trains are down below, I am not driving them. I cannot talk to the engineers. I cannot stop them. I cannot send a flash of lightning. I cannot do anything. There is nothing I can do to stop them. Here I am on the mountain, a helpless observer, and when they crash I cannot blame myself for it, because I was not omniscient. I was not omnipotent. I could not do anything about it. But let us take that illustration and get God out of man's silly mold and see Him as God. God viewed all of this before He ever created it. He created the trains. He made the track. He knew what was going to happen. Now, how are you going to get Him off the hook? You see if God is on the hook, this simply does not get Him off. It is a weak and wicked attempt to make man a co-laborer in his own salvation.

Finally, there is no real middle ground between a god, who decrees in time, and in response to human activity, and no god at all. There is just not much middle ground. Have you, like Nebuchadnezzar, been brought down before Him? Have you been brought to this place where you must say what Nebuchadnezzar says in Daniel chapter 4, verses 33 through 35? Listen to it: *"The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of*

*heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me,..."* You see that is what men need. *"...and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 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? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."* Nebuchadnezzar confesses that God does exactly what He wants to do in the heaven above, and in the earth beneath. Have you been brought to that place? Do you really believe He is God of heaven and earth?

## Chapter Six

### ELECTION VIEWED POSITIVELY

Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 1 through 14. Turn also, to II Thessalonians, chapter 2. There are many other passages that I could turn to, and indeed will be reading many scriptures as I go on in the message tonight. But those are two passages that I want you to have at hand. We will begin this evening by reading Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 1 through 14; and then for a text I want us to go over to the book of II Thessalonians, chapter 2, verses 13 and 14.

In Ephesians, chapter 1 and verse 1: *"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:"* Notice now, that he is addressing this to saints, to those who are faithful, those who are saved, in other words. *"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 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, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."*

My text this evening is II Thessalonians, chapter 2, and I will just read verses 13 and 14. *"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: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

In the last two messages, I dealt with the doctrine of election. In the first message, I dealt with it negatively, showing you some things that election is not. Frequently, the haters of pure grace, whether it is in the area of eternal security, or whether it is in the area of divine election, will give a caricature of the doctrine. For instance, you have often heard the caricature of eternal security go something like this: I do not believe that you can just go down to the front and shake hands with the preacher, and go on out and live like the devil all the rest of your life and go to heaven. That is supposed to be what we are teaching, or that is what they regard us to be teaching, when we teach absolute, ETERNAL SECURITY. Of course, we are not teaching that. No Bible teacher believes that. That is a caricature. The same thing is done with the doctrine of election. I tried, in the last message, to show you some of the things election is not, just to clear away some of the caricatures.

In last week's message, I laid before you some of the erroneous, or incomplete views of election. By incomplete, I mean, there are those who say, 'Well, sure I believe in election. I believe God chose the nation of Israel.' That is true. That is not an erroneous statement. God did choose the nation of Israel. But if that is



all that they believe about election, that is an incomplete view of it. There are others who say, 'Well, I believe that God voted for me, and the devil voted against me, and I cast the deciding vote.' That is close to blasphemy. But that, of course, is certainly an erroneous view of election. There are those who say, 'Well, I believe that God looked out into the future, and He saw who was going to be saved, and He chose them.' That is an erroneous view of election. There are those who say, 'Well, I believe that when I believed in Christ, God chose me at that moment, unto eternal life.' That is an erroneous view of election. So, I tried to show you some erroneous and incomplete views.

In the message preceding that, I tried to show you negatively, that election is not just a minor doctrine in your Bible, which somebody stumbled over and decided to make a mountain out of a mole hill. It is mentioned over a hundred and thirty times in your Bible. It is not fatalism, by which God sets in order, or nothing sets in order, certain things that are going to happen, and there is no reason for it, no purpose for it. It is not that at all. It is not unto damnation. I showed you that no man goes to hell because he was chosen for hell. No man goes to hell because he was not chosen for heaven. Election claims no victims for hell. It is not merely national as I said a moment ago. It is not according to foreseen faith, and it is not salvation. There are some who erroneously think that when we teach unconditional election, we are teaching unconditional salvation. No! Election is not salvation! Salvation has all kinds of conditions involved in it, but election does not. At least, it has no revealed conditions. I could not say, of anything, here is a condition that the Bible puts on election.' No one can show you any such scripture. Now, if you should say, 'Are there conditions that you can show me, that the Bible puts on salvation?' I would say, 'Certainly.' *"Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."* That is a condition on salvation. I am not getting into that tonight. I am just trying to say that I dealt in those messages with some of those incomplete and erroneous views.

This week I am going to try to view this doctrine positively, as if these erroneous views did not exist, and simply give you a biblical view of the doctrine of election. I published a message in *The Baptist Watchman* a couple of years ago, on the doctrine of election, by Dr. W. A. Criswell, pastor of the First Baptist Church, of Dallas Texas. I hope no one construed my publication of that message, as an indication of sympathy for his associations. I have none, but the message was good. In introducing it, he said, 'The title of my message this morning is *The Bible Kind Of Salvation*. It is really a message on election.' I thought he was going to try to explain election away, as so many do, but he did not. He just brought a good, biblical message, preaching election absolutely and positively, as if no one in the world doubted it. I said to myself, as I listened to that tape, 'I wish I could preach election like that.' It is such a thrill, it is such a wonderful, heartwarming, God glorifying doctrine, when rightly understood. I wish that I could preach the doctrine without even thinking of all of the caricatures and railings that are brought against it, and all of the enemies that it has. I have not been able to do that. May God give me the grace to do so in this message. I want to try to bring you a message on 'The Doctrine Of Election Positively.'

#### ELECTION IS THE CHOICE OF GOD TO SAVE

Number one, may I point out that it is the choice of God to save. Election is God's choice to save. We understand that we have election in the Bible in a Christological sense. He chose Christ as the Chief Cornerstone, as our Redeemer, as the Lamb of God, and so on. There is also national election: He chose the nation of Israel to deal with in a very particular way. There is vocational election: He chose certain men to be apostles. He chose other seventy. He has chosen men to do particular jobs. He chose Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. No one else was to do that. He chose Moses to do it. Why Moses? No why to it. He does not explain why. He chose him for that purpose. He does not need to explain why. That is voca-

tional election.

But largely, and let me emphasize this, when you find the doctrine of election dealt with in the Bible, most of the time it is talking about God's choice of men unto salvation. Whether you like that or not, it is just what the Bible has to say. As this message addresses it, I want you to see that election is God's purpose to save a certain people, according to His pleasure, and for His glory. You say, 'Preacher, explain that.' I cannot explain that. I just read it to you from the Bible. It says we are chosen in Him according to His own will which He hath purposed in Himself. He does not go beyond that. I cannot explain why God purposed it that way. I do not need to, nor am I supposed to explain it. I am not supposed to expect that I could, I am not God. It simply says, God did it that way. It tells us also, that He did it to His own glory. May I point out to you, that essentially everywhere you find the doctrine of election taught in the Bible, you are going to find it surrounded with such phrases as this: To His own glory, to the praise of His glory, that the glory might be in Him, and not in us. That is basically the revelation that we have of God's purpose of it. But He purposed it within Himself, according to His own pleasure and to His own glory. To make it any less than this, attacks the glorious person of God. Let me show you what I am talking about. I used, as an illustration, the silly, little, shallow-minded story a moment ago, where the 'thoughtless wonder' comes along and says, 'I believe election like this: God voted for me, the devil voted against me, and I cast the deciding vote.' Some people think that is funny, but it is close to blasphemy. What the person is saying is this: 'God had a will, but Satan had a will which canceled out God's will, and now everything is neutral, and the only thing that counts, or determines destiny, is my will.' That is exactly what they are saying. Is that glorifying to God? Certainly, it is not glorifying to God. It is ridiculous! It is illogical! It is putting Satan on the same plain with God. It is putting man on a plain which is above God. It is absolutely out of order. It attacks the person of God.

The denial of sovereign election attacks the immutability of God. That is, the doctrine that God does not change. The person who will not accept election, says that God's grace is not of eternal intent. If, for instance, we would just take today the doctrine of eternal security, and you understand that behind the doctrine of eternal security, has to stand the purpose of God, to preserve His own, to keep them. Does He keep everybody? No, He keeps His sheep. He keeps those He has given to Christ, and who come to Christ, and of course, they are the same. Everybody will not be saved. So obviously, God does not keep them all. But He has a purpose to keep His children. Well, let me ask you something. Did that purpose of God begin in eternity, or did it begin in time? Think of it. Did that purpose of God begin in eternity, or did it begin in time? To say that it was not part of an eternal plan, is to say that God is not immutable, that He has a purpose, or a plan, or an intention now, that He did not have at that time.

It attacks the omniscience of God. It supposes salvation without God's eternal knowledge of it. One man said, 'I just do not believe God purposes to know everything.' That may sound awfully ridiculous, but frankly, I do not think it is any more ridiculous than the man who says, 'God looked out into the future, and saw what was going to happen, and when He learned what was going to happen, He made His choice of me.' I do not think there is very much difference. In fact, the former theory is far more consistent than the last. I have just about as much sympathy for one as the other. One of them makes about as much sense as the other. One of them has about as much continuity of thought as the other, because both of them equally attack the omniscience, that is the eternal, total knowledge of God. When you attack election, you do that. You cannot get around it. When you attack the doctrine of election, you attack all of the attributes of God, including love. I want to tell you something, a good lesson in theology, a good lesson in knowing who God is, a good lesson in knowing what God is, would solve a lot of problems in the area of soteriological thought. If people got acquainted with God, this would not be nearly as difficult to teach.

The denial of sovereign election attacks the doctrine of the omnipotence of God. In other words, there

are those who say, 'Well, I believe God really purposed to save everybody.' If He did, He sure has been a failure, because more people have been lost, than those who have been saved. Do you see? So it attacks divine omnipotence. You have to come to grips with either giving the glory to God, or taking it away from Him, and there is no middle ground. You have to be on one side or the other. To deny election supposes either no purpose on the part of God, or an indefinite purpose, which in essence is still no purpose, or an unfulfilled purpose. Does God do all of His pleasure? Does He work all things after the counsel of His own will, or does He not? Does He do that which He has determined, or does He not? Scripture says, God chose to save certain people. In Matthew 1:21: *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* No more definite statement is made in all of the Bible than, *"he shall save his people from their sins."* Who are His people? Israel? Obviously not, for He did not save Israel from their sins. Israel died in their sins. They are still dying in their sins, and they shall die in their sin until the time when He comes back, and the nation of Israel is restored, and brought to faith. II Timothy 2:10: *"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."* This passage should be a real difficulty for the person who believes in election in time, the person who says, I believe that when you came to Christ, that is when God chose you.' Paul says, these are the elect. I am enduring this for their sake. They are the elect. I am identifying them by that name. But they are not saved, and I endure all things for their sake, that they may also obtain salvation. In other words, they have not yet obtained it. So, you have a real hard time, if you do not see this election as being an eternal issue. Ephesians 1:4: *"According as he hath chosen us in him before..."* He did not say, he hath chosen that those who are in Him are saved. That is what some might interpret that as saying. It does not even come close to saying that. It says exactly what it seems like it is saying. *"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:..."* He hath chosen us,...that we,—see the personal pronouns here lay this truth before us so clearly. II Thessalonians 2:13, once again: *"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:"* He hath chosen you to salvation. Acts chapter 13 and verse 48: *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* Cause and effect is supposed in that verse, though it is not stated. The cause is, they were ordained unto eternal life. The effect, or the result was, they, by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, were saved. This is very clearly set before us in that scripture. I could go on and read hundreds of other scriptures, but those ought to suffice to show us that the scripture teaches Soteriological Election. Now, hear my statement: The scripture teaches that God chose men unto salvation.

#### ELECTION IS AN ETERNAL CHOICE

Secondly, it is an eternal choice. I have already touched negatively upon the idea that election takes place in time. Election is an eternal choice of God. This must be absolutely, unquestionably true, if God is immutable. In other words, if God has made a choice today, anywhere in the world, that He has not made in eternity, then God changed, somehow, in that choice. You say, well He chose Moses in time. Well, as far as revelation to Moses is concerned, as far as Israel is concerned, as far as revelation of Moses' identity to me, He chose Moses in time. But I want to tell you something, God's decree of Moses was an eternal one. He tells Jeremiah the same thing of himself, Isaiah, the same thing, the same is true of each of us. It is an eternal choice, if He is immutable. It is an eternal choice, if He is omniscient. By that I mean, if He knows all things, and if you take His other attributes, such as omnipresence, and tie with that, it has to mean that He knows all things all the time. If someone were to say, 'Tell me what you are going to do tomorrow.' I could list

about a half a dozen things that I already know of, that I have to do tomorrow. Of course, I do not expect those things to fill the whole day, so I expect to put in some other tasks, as time goes along, that need to be done. But you know, I might not do any of those things tomorrow. One of you brethren might have a heart attack and have to go to the hospital. I might spend the day in the hospital tomorrow with you. Something else might happen that would take priority over my present plans. You see, I do not know what is going to happen out in the future, so I cannot tell you exactly what I am going to do tomorrow. I do not even know my own mind for tomorrow. I am not omniscient. And certainly, I am not omnipresently, omniscient. God is! Do you not see the difference? So, those things which God has planned, when we look at the attributes of God, have to go together. It is necessarily an eternal plan and choice, if God is omnipotent. What does that mean? It means that He has all power, all ability. It means that God can do all His pleasure. And so from the foundation of the world, if God knew everything, if God is omnipresent, if He is omniscient, and if He is omnipotent, then God did yesterday, is doing today, and will do tomorrow, exactly what He has always intended to do. Scripture compels us to this conclusion, absolutely. Again in the book of Ephesians, chapter 1 and verse 4: *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,"* See the eternal nature. The choice was before time. Time began at the foundation of the world. Time is not a normal attribute of God. Time is something that God has created for man. It began at the beginning of the world. His choice was before the foundation of the world. II Thessalonians 2:13: *'God hath chosen you unto salvation.'* When? *'From the beginning.'* *"...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."* In Revelation 13:8, He says, *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* I want you to notice here, that we have a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and names written in the book of life of that Lamb. Is there a connection between the slaying of the Lamb, and the writing of the names in the book of life? Everybody would say, absolutely. It is those who were washed in the blood of the Lamb, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, whose names are written there. No question about it. I think everybody would agree on that. Notice how he lays before us here, the fact that this is done, at least in the sense of decree, and that is the only sense as far as I am able to tell in which it was done then. But it was done before the foundation of the world. Of course, he speaks of those, whose names are not written. This necessarily supposes that some names are written. In other words, he is not really talking about those whose names are not written here, except in the sense of judgment. But he is saying that the preferable thing is that their names were written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If that does not satisfy you, consider Revelation 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,"* If you want to say Revelation 13:8 just speaks of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and it does not speak of the names written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world. I must say, I beg your pardon, read another chapter. He says here, *"...not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world."* So there are some names that were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. You say, *'Well, I do not think any names were written in the book of life, I think the names were written when we were saved.'* Well, then, why does Scripture say anything about the ones that were not written? That does not make any sense at all. Unless some names were written in the Lamb's book of life, before the foundation of the world, it would not make any sense to mention, the absence of others. The fact that it is mentioned, implies very clearly, that there were some names written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world. I hate to disillusion you about any of our songs, but there are no new names written down in glory. They were written before the foundation of the world. I cannot explain that, but I know it is true. They were written before the foundation of the world.

Let me go farther and say, that most reasoning along this line makes God like Darius. Do you remember how Darius got into trouble? These men came and said, 'Now, Darius, we want you to make a decree.' And Darius made a decree. Suddenly they turned this decree around on him. He made a decree that nobody would pray to anybody but him, for the next thirty days. Daniel gets in trouble. And now, here is Darius, and he is spending all day long trying to deliver Daniel out of the hands of these men. Actually, Darius is trying to deliver Daniel from his own decree. He is shackled by what he has done. He has been tripped up in his own law. Some years ago, a preacher had asked me to come and speak in his college, and I had gone to speak. He had this special session, a small class, to which he later invited me. I think he had a design to help me out a little, at least it seemed so. He went around the table, and had all the men to answer a certain question, and He prefaced the question like this: We know that none of us can limit God. Amen, Amen, Amen, everybody agreed. No one can limit God. But we also agree that God does limit Himself. Of course, all of them said, Amen, Amen. They had all been programmed to believe that. I was not going to say anything, because it was not my class or subject. I was just going to be quiet, but he was not willing to let me be quiet. He got around to me and he said, Bro. Keener, do you agree with that? And I said, well, what do you mean? Do you mean to say that there are things that God would like to do, but He cannot do them, because it would be wrong for Him to do them? He looked at me a moment and he said, yes, that is what I mean. I said, no, I do not agree with that. I believe that if God desired to do anything that would be wrong for Him to do, then God would not be impeccable. That would be sin on the part of God. I mentioned, this morning, that if somebody should say, "I have never committed homosexuality, but I have wanted to," the very fact that you have wanted to, shows that you are a pervert. Do you understand what I am saying? Our Lord said, Satan cometh and findeth nothing in me. God has no unfulfilled desires. When we try to explain this doctrine of eternal choice away, we place God in the same place where Darius was, and we have a God who is not at peace with himself, who does not know one day to the next what he is going to do, who does not know and does not control circumstances. Well, I do not have time to deal with all that, but that does not describe my God.

#### ELECTION IS A SOVEREIGN CHOICE

Thirdly, election is a sovereign choice. What do I mean by the word sovereign? Well, the word sovereign is used concerning royalty, kingship, a king who has absolute rule, an absolute monarch. He has the right to pass the death penalty, at his own will. He passes the death penalty when he wants to. If he wants to turn somebody out of prison who is a criminal, he does so. If he wants to raise taxes, he does so. If he wants to lower taxes, he does so. If he wants to take the property of a certain person, he does so. He is the monarch. This term sovereign actually means independent. And it describes independence from any necessity of accountability. You say, Well, does not God have to account to His own law. No! No! He does not! If He did, then the law would be God. That may sound a little ridiculous on the surface, but let me say this: God's law is a manifestation of God's will for mankind. It has to do with the perfection of God, but these are the laws of God for men. God is not under them. For instance, the law says "Thou shalt not kill." But God has a right to kill any time He wishes. In other words, He is sovereign. He is independent. He is sovereign over all things. He makes sovereign choice among men. Notice the book of John, chapter 5, and verse 21. This is a verse that is very seldom used, in this area of doctrinal teaching, so you will do well to keep it in your mind. *"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them;"* (That means He gives them life.) *"even so the Son quickeneth"* (Gives life to) *"whom he will"* (Whoever He pleases). That is not talking about raising dead bodies out of the ground. It is talking about spiritual life, in this context. He giveth life to whomsoever He will. It is a sovereign selection on the part of Jesus. It is independent. It is all powerful. He gives eternal life.

You cannot get much more plain than that. *"To whom he will,"* it's all authority. It is without obligation. Who can say to Jesus, if you give eternal life to who ever you will, if you raise up who ever you will, why is everybody not saved? Which of you tonight would be atheistic enough, which of you tonight would be anti-God enough, to shake your fist in the face of Jesus Christ and say, shame on you, if you can give life to who ever you want to, why did you not give life to everybody? No, He is absolutely without obligation. It is a sovereign choice. If election is according to any foreseen deed, it cannot be by grace. Romans chapter 9, and verse 10 says, *"And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil,"* (Now, he says God revealed this before they were born for a reason. What is that reason, Paul?) *"that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;") It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* Now, some men try to turn that around and say, the reason God hated Esau, was because of his conduct. After all, say they, this was written in one of the Minor Prophets, centuries after Esau and Jacob lived, and the reason that God hated Esau was because of the wicked character that Esau was. Well, just take that another step and you would have to say the reason that God loved Jacob then, would be because of the wonderful, admirable character that Jacob was. And that makes about as much sense as falling out of a well, or teaching a fish to fly. It does not make any sense at all, does it? It just will not work. But you have to go a little farther than that, and notice that in the context he says, God made this pronouncement to Rebecca before the children were born, before they had done anything good or evil, so that we might know that God's purpose stood according to election. It stood according to the sovereign purpose of God and not according to their deeds. God looked out into the future and saw what somebody was going to do, and ratified it? That is a dream, not a Bible revelation.

Let us go a step farther and point out that if foreseen faith and repentance are the basis of election, it is not of grace. I do not say that faith is works. I know that faith is a gift of God. I do not say that repentance is works. Repentance is a gift of God and I understand that. Most of the people who talk about God looking out into the future and seeing that they were going to repent and believe, do not understand that. But regardless of that, if that were the basis, God would be making no choice at all. Let us say God was "looking out," and here is a man who was going to repent and believe. (We know he was because he did.) Therefore, God wrote his name in the book of life. He did this sometime back there when He "looked out" of Himself into the future and foresaw this future event. In this picture we have a very serious question about this man. WHY was he going to repent and believe? Why? What was going to cause him to repent and believe, when somebody else was not? Was there something inside of him that made him inherently different from others? What is the basis of the fact that he was going to repent and believe? What was the cause of this thing which God "foresaw"? Actually that definition of the term foreknowledge is so terribly wrong, that I hesitate to use it, but it is so frequently accepted that way that I have to refer to it. What is going to cause this man's repentance and faith? I answer you, if salvation is by grace, God is going to cause it. God is going to cause it. Study, and the whole idea just falls apart from a thousand different directions. You either believe God in this matter, or you do not believe God. It is that simple. There must be a basis of cause for this man to repent and believe. What is going to cause it? It is for this reason that the term unconditional has been attached to this word election. It simply says that there are no revealed conditions in the Bible, that explain to us why God chose me and not someone else. I do not know. I do not know because the Bible does not say. I do not have to be able to analyze it for it to be true. I understand that the term "unconditional" has some pluses, and it has some minuses. But the conclusion is basically right. Again, I cite Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 5: *"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children..."* (Now, predestination and election are not precisely the same, but in every case, each supposes the other.) *"...predestinated us unto the adoption of*

*children by Jesus Christ to himself," (Now, notice:) "according to the good pleasure of his will." What does that mean, "according to the good pleasure of his will?" Well, if you ask the question why God did it, the Holy Spirit is giving us the answer. It is because He wanted to and that is as far as it goes. But, someone says, I want an explanation! Well, you do not have a right to have an explanation unless God sees fit to give it to you. You are not God. I am not God. God does not have to explain to you and me, why He does what He does. He lifts up nations, He puts down nations. He kills and He keeps alive. Why? It is not for me to ask. I do not have that right. When we insist on answers God does not give us, we will come up with the wrong ones. That is the sense in which I say, it is unconditional. One preacher said to me, 'I do not believe that God just capriciously chose certain people to salvation.' Well, I do not either. I do not believe God ever capriciously did anything. I believe that He has foreordained according to plans, and purposes, and reasons that are so far beyond us, that if they were explained to us, we could not understand them. But let it simply suffice to say that this choice is a sovereign choice.*

#### A DEFINITE PEOPLE ARE CHOSEN

Fourthly, a definite people are chosen in Christ. John, chapter 6, verses 37 through 39: *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;"* How do men come? Individually, or corporately? And you understand that they always come individually. So, *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him"* (HIM is a personal pronoun, so we know that I am not wrong in saying that we come individually.) *"him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."* (What is the will of God? What is the purpose of God in sending You then, Lord?) *"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."*

I believe that the greatest verse in all the Bible, on eternal security, is right there in John, chapter 6, verse 39. *"...of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."* Somebody says, 'Well, I do not believe Jesus loses them, but I believe they get out.' Well, wait a minute, He said I am going to raise them up at the last day. He is talking about the resurrection of the living. He says, 'I am going to raise them up. It is God's will. That is what I am here to do.' And so, beloved, if He does not fail to do the father's will, He will raise up, all the Father gave and all who come. But who is it that He raises up? Very clearly, those the Father has given Him, a particular people, a definite people. God has given Christ a people. In John chapter 17, verses 1 and 2: *"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh,"* (Now notice: not the cooperation of the flesh, but his power over the flesh. How does He give life to the sinner? His power over the flesh.) *"hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life"* (To whom?) *"to as many as thou hast given him."* I do not know how words can get any plainer than that. God has given Christ a people, not all people.

Someone says, 'Well, I believe that God gave everybody to Christ.' Well, you had better go back and read that verse of scripture again, because He said, all the Father giveth me shall come unto me. Do you believe everybody comes to Christ? If Christ knew what He was talking about, and everybody does not come to Christ, then it should be fairly obvious that He did not give all to Christ. Not only that, but God's purpose in sending His Son is to save them which He has given unto Him.

Notice again: *"This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing."* That is the purpose for which He sent Him. This is the Father's will. Again, you might say, 'Preacher, I do not understand that.' I do not either. I just know God teaches it. You say, 'Well, Preacher, I do not like it.' Well, I do. I do. To me, it is the glorious doctrine of grace! If you do not like it, that is your

problem, and your argument is not with me, it is with God. It is not with me, it is with God, because it is God who said it. It is God who did it that way. If I do not like the way God did something, then I am in real trouble, not with you, but with God. Verses 37 and 39, of John 6, are the answer to the hatred of this doctrine. And it is not new. Do you not get the idea that the first generation that has ever hated a doctrine of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ is today.

Notice John, chapter 6, verse 41: *"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?"* You see, the Lord Jesus Christ is placing Himself in this whole context, in this place of transcendency. The Bible declares that He is separate from sinners. By that it means He is different, that He is not the same, that He is not like them. And that is what He is stating here, that I am not like them. I came down from Heaven, I am from God. I am of God. I came to do the will of God. I am different from men. That is what He is saying here. And they were offended by that. They said, 'Listen, I do not like this idea of Him being different from us.'

I want to tell you something today, the Arminian does not like the idea of God being different from man. The basic problem with them is humanism. Humanism and Arminianism, both are basically the same thing. It is the philosophy that nothing must be done by God, that takes from man his right to determine his own life and his own destiny. Absolute sovereignty is hated by the natural man. Regardless of this, the Bible teaches that God has a definite people.

#### ELECTION HAS ITS PURPOSE FULFILLED THROUGH MEANS

In closing, let me say, election has its purpose effected through means. There is a common misunderstanding, and a common caricature, against this doctrine that goes like this: (And I am sad to say, this is held by some men who believe in election.) "If God has chosen certain people unto salvation, that is all there is to it. God has chosen them, they are going to be saved. You do not need to be concerned about it. You do not need to worry about it. You do not need to fret about it. You do not need to get all bent out of shape about giving, or going, or preaching, or praying. You do not need to worry much about those things, because God has chosen and God will save." Ironically, the Arminian and the Hyper-Calvinist are in a strange, but real, agreement on this point. The Arminian says, "If that is the way it is, then God is just going to save who He is going to save, and there is not any reason to go, and therefore, I do not believe it. Since God has told us to go, and since God said whosoever will may come, I just do not believe in Sovereign Election." The true Hyper-Calvinist, on the other hand says, "Since God has chosen, and since God does all things according to His purpose, He is simply going to save whom He chooses. We do not need to worry about it. We do not have to give. We do not have to pray. We do not have to go. We do not have to worry about getting the gospel to the lost."

These both are equally and sinfully wrong. The Bible teaches us in II Thessalonians, chapter 2 and verse 13, and in John, chapter 6 and verse 40, that God uses means. *"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..."* (There is no period there.) *"through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:..."* (Nobody is going to be saved without sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.) *"...how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* And the answer that Paul supposes here is that it is impossible. It is not going to happen. Then in John, chapter 10 and verse 16: *"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring,..."* 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."* The elect must believe! They do not see the Son today physically, but they must see Him. They



must see Jesus through the gospel. We must preach the gospel. Means are absolutely required.

Who then are these elect? You cannot investigate the issue in this manner. God did not give the doctrine of election so you could know to whom you should preach. He told us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. God did not give the doctrine of election so that we might know to whom we should witness. He did not give the doctrine of election so we might know where we would succeed, when we went out preaching. He gave the doctrine of election so we would know that salvation is of the Lord. That is why He has given it. So that we who are saved might know who was behind it. You say, 'I would surely like to know if I am chosen.' I want to tell you this: If you have truly believed, if you have truly come to Christ, then you do not have to ever worry about it anymore. If you are sure of your repentance and faith you have also made your calling and election sure. You were very definitely chosen. *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* You cannot get any more definite than that. That is it. You are in. You know that you are saved, and if you are saved, you were chosen unto salvation.

You say, 'But how do I know about other people?' Well, you do not know about other people. We are to go into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature. And as one preacher said recently, there is a great, great consolation in knowing that we are fishing in a stocked pond. Amen! Is that not wonderful? How do you know that, Preacher? Because He said, 'Other sheep have I, which are not of the fold, them also I must bring.' As long as God leaves us upon this earth, He has some people out there that He wants brought. I do not know how many: one a month? one a day? Oh, in some places many in a day, and in some places, not many in a month. One a year? Listen, what if only one in a lifetime? If I spent my entire ministry preaching and only one soul was saved, or if I spent my entire lifetime preaching and nobody was saved, and I influenced somebody in such a way that they went and spoke to another soul, that would not be too much of an investment for a soul. How many? I do not know. And this contest element in the world today, of seeing how many baptisms can be claimed, and how much can be found to crow about, and all of that stuff, is garbage before God. We know this: God has a people whom He has chosen in eternity and He has one means by which those people are to be brought, and that is by the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is the means that we are to effect. We are to go forth preaching the gospel, and praying that God will bless the word, by speaking to men's hearts. The saving, God must do. And He does it as it pleases Him.

Let me say this in closing: If you can say, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep,' then you need to know this: that not only when He was on the cross, were you on His mind, but before there was ever a world, to grow a tree from which to make a cross, you were on His mind. You have always been there. He has always loved you. He has always intended to save you. Is that not a wonderful thought? Our salvation today, is not because we have stepped out and done something that has made the difference. It is God Who doth make the difference. It is God who is my salvation. He thought it, He bought it, and He wrought it. I praise God for the doctrine of salvation because it was given so that I might know that God deserves all the praise for my salvation.

## Chapter Seven

### THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT PRESENTED NEGATIVELY

What I am doing tonight is telling you what the doctrine of atonement is not. I will show you, as I go on, why that is necessary. In the book of Romans, chapter 8, we will begin to read with verse 28, but before we do, let me tell you that the heart of all of your Bible is The Doctrine Of The Atonement. In the book of Hebrews, chapter 10, we hear the Lord Jesus Christ saying, *"Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."* And when you look at the will of God that He comes to fulfill, you will see that it is the work of atonement. The Bible's message is Jesus Christ, the High Priest, presenting Himself as the Lamb of God, and doing the work of atonement. All of the revealed purpose of God to save sinners, preceding this doctrine, points to this doctrine of atonement. All of the work of calling and preserving, which follows this doctrine of atonement, points back to the work of atonement. So, atonement is indeed the central theme, and the great theme of your Bible. Understand, of course, that I am not going to cover this subject in one message, nor in the two that I will bring on it, in this series. I will be bringing another message on this subject of atonement, but I certainly will not be covering it, it is too vast a subject. I will just be pointing you in the right direction, and as most of you know, not only for the purpose of informing this congregation, for some of you are well aware of the truths of this doctrine, but also for the purpose of making tapes that will go out to other people, hoping to be helpful to them, concerning the doctrine of the Lord's atoning work.

Read with me now from the book of Romans chapter 8, beginning with verse 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. 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. 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. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 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."*

My subject is The Doctrine Of Atonement and specifically, tonight, What It Is Not. For my text, I will be calling attention to verse 32, because it lays the issue of atonement before us in a very provocative manner. I want you to go back and re-read verse 32, and consider as deeply as you can, what it has to say. *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."* I want you to note in this text, the word all. It is a word upon which many people would like to stand alone, as if it were the only word, or the only statement, or the only implication in the verse. But you should also see that with this "delivering up" goes absolute and unquestionable freedom from condemnation. Built upon the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is delivered up for this all, whoever they are--this same all are also freely given all things. And this group referred to here as all, is also freed from condemnation.

Note Paul's assurance in verse 34: *"Who is he that condemneth?"* Of course, the supposed answer is, there is no condemnation, for it is Christ who died. So, as we look at this, we understand that it demands serious study of all who care what the Bible says on the subject. That same people, is referred to as God's elect in verse 33: *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."* How did God justify? He justified by giving His Son. His Son justified by shedding His blood. So then, we see here that these are also inseparable from the love of God. This "all," for whom He gave His Son, and to whom He shall freely give all things, and who cannot be condemned because Christ died, are inseparable from the love of God in Romans chapter 8, verses 35 through 39. These facts ought to humble us for the study of the issue of atonement. Please, do not come to this study thinking that it is a light matter, which you can discharge with the reading, or the memorizing, or the quoting of a few verses. You will not do justice to this subject or be faithful to God, by trying to take one side or another of the issue, and trying to prove that side to be right. Let us rather be humbled before God and try to approach it as the Bible presents it to us.

This evening, I want to present to you five things that are important to understanding the doctrine of atonement, in our consideration of What It Is Not.

The first thing I want to do, is to charge you to take care, take very particular care, not to misdefine doctrinal terms. Many people win arguments, and the sad part is, they fool themselves by misdefining doctrinal terms. I hope to confess all of the truths surrounding this issue. I do not hope to tell you everything about the issue of atonement, because I do not know everything about it. I am not that smart. I do not know that much about the Bible. There is a great deal of mystery shrouding the doctrine of atonement as far as my poor, spiritual eyesight is concerned. I do not know it all. So, I do not mean to say that I hope to cover everything that is in the doctrine of atonement, but I do hope to confess all of the truth, as well as I know it, as far as what I know, concerning this doctrine. Wrong definition of many things will win arguments, but it will not gain truth. Let me show you what I am talking about. Let us say that I wanted to prove that someone in this congregation is stupid. That would not be a very big goal. It would not be a very worthy goal. I do not mean it would not be a very big undertaking. I am not implying that it would be an easy thing to do, but let us assume that I had the goal of proving that someone here is stupid. So, in the process of laying the ground work to prove that, I get you to accept as a definition of stupidity, the opposite of omniscience. In other words, I say to you, now, stupidity is the opposite of omniscience. Therefore, we understand that whosoever is not omniscience is stupid. Of course, that is not true. That is a wrong definition of the word stupid, altogether. But, if I can get you to accept that wrong definition, it will not be any trouble at all from that point to prove that the individual is stupid, because he does not know everything. He could do the same thing with me. Do you understand what I am talking about? In other words, if I can get you to accept a definition of a doctrine that is inaccurate, then I can win a relevant argument concerning that doctrine, but I would not get at the truth that way. So, we want to be very careful that we do not give a definition of a doctrine, such as atonement or anything else, that is a wrong definition, and then try to advance ourselves on that wrong definition, or lay it out as a truth. All we are going to do by this is to cloud the issue. We will misinform the people we are trying to teach, and we will also misinform ourselves. We will wind up more confused at the end of the discussion than we were at the beginning. Such caricatures as the one that I just used, by drawing that false picture of the definition of stupidity, necessitate my taking some time to tell you what I do not mean when I discuss the doctrine of atonement, or when I state that the atonement of God is particular, or that it is definite, or that it is personal. You understand that there are categorically two views of atonement. There are many, many views of atonement, but there are basically two views as far as categorization is concerned. The one view is the view of general atonement. That view is essentially, that in the atonement the Lord Jesus Christ made everyone savable, but no person's salvation is

really settled. I am oversimplifying, but I hope you will see what I am talking about. The other view is, that in the atonement, there was definite reconciliation to God of a particular people, and that those people shall ultimately be saved from their sins. However, when we say, that in atonement there was a definite reconciliation to God of a particular people, there are some things that you should be sure that we are not saying. There are things that would be charged against us, which are not what we are saying.

#### **I DO NOT SAY THERE IS NO BENEFIT FOR VESSELS OF WRATH**

First of all, I am not saying that there are no benefits in the atonement for the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction. I have heard men say that there is no benefit in the death of Christ for those who are lost. I know in a sense where they are coming from, but I actually believe that they state themselves wrongly, and misrepresent the doctrine. I believe that there are common privileges though they may be indirect, and though they may not be soteriological. I think they are not soteriological benefits, but there are definite benefits and privileges, that are profitable to all of Adam's race, indeed for all of Adam's dominion. The whole of divine forbearance, by that I mean the patience of God lies in the work of atonement. In I Timothy, chapter 4 and verse 10, the scripture says: *"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."* Think about that for a moment. *"The Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."* Whatever else that verse means, it has to mean that God has a salvation for men who believe that is greater, or more than, or better than, or is special, compared to those who do not believe. But, it also has to mean that there is something there for those who do not believe, otherwise the *'specially of those that believe,'* would have no meaning at all. I do not intend to discuss all that is in that verse, but simply to say that the whole of divine forbearance, or the patience of God, so far as I can tell from my Bible, lies in the work of atonement. Let me show you what I am talking about. In the Garden of Eden, God said to Adam and Eve, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' And we know that death passed upon Adam, and not only did death pass upon Adam, but death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned--now follow me--death passed upon all men at that moment, for all men sinned at that moment. You may not understand all of that, but we were all in Adam, and we all sinned at that moment, and yet we are alive today. Adam and Eve did not die completely, and physically that day. But why is it they did not die? Why was this not carried out? Do we find anything in the context to imply that God did something that forestalled the finality of that judgment? Of course, the answer is yes, we do. The Lord also made for them, or unto them coats of skins. It is a figure of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only did Adam and Eve continue to live because of those coats of skins, but Adam and Eve had children, and those men in their sins continued to live. Sinners today are allowed to live upon this earth. The wages of sin is death. How much sin? 'Sin.' When a man sins one time, the wages of it is death. While it is perfectly true that every man is born a sinner, as the offspring of Adam is born under the sentence of death, it is equally true that the instant that man has committed, in any way, any kind of sin, he is under the sentence of death. But how many men die for their sin instantly? Do they not go on and sin more, and more, and again, and again? And yet God allows them to live upon this earth. I believe, and as far as I can tell, bound up in this doctrine of atonement are all of those issues of divine forbearance. It is because of what Christ was to do upon the cross, that men were allowed to continue to live. God destroyed man from the face of the earth, but He saved Noah and his sons alive. Why? I believe it is all in the cross of Calvary. He allowed them to live and to continue to produce and to multiply upon the earth though they were all sinners. He is a sinner from his youth up, the scripture declares, and yet God allows him to live. Why? I believe it is bound up in this work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Although I do not profess to understand all of that, or to be able to put it all together, I frankly confess to you, that I believe that were

it not for the coming death of Christ upon the cross, at that time, that no man would have been allowed to live. Indeed, no man could have been allowed to live, because the righteous judgment, and justice, and statement of God is, *in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*. And so we find divine forbearance as an example of common benefit to man. Thus, I conclude that there are at least indirect, and I think it is accurate to say direct benefits, for the vessels of wrath. The only question in my mind is, does this benevolence properly fall under the heading of atonement. It seems to me that there is benevolence in atonement, for those who shall never be saved, by the death of Christ. So, when I say that the atonement is definite, or when I say that the atonement is particular, in the work of redemption, I am not saying that there are no benefits, of any kind, for the vessels of wrath. I am simply saying there is no reconciliatory benefit for them.

#### THE ISSUE IS NOT WHO SHALL BE SAVED BY THE ATONEMENT

Moreover, we are not discussing who shall be saved by the atonement. This is one of the most vicious, inconsistent, and ridiculous caricatures, as far as logic is concerned, that is brought against the doctrine of personal redemption. I really need not say personal redemption, because all who believe in redemption, in reality believe that it is personal. I do not know of any evangelical Bible teacher who does not. I know that there are universalists who do not, but basically all evangelicals believe that redemption is personal whether they realize it or not. But we are not discussing who shall be saved by the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. For instance, if I were a general atonement man, by that I mean, if I believed that when Jesus Christ died upon the cross, He died as much for one as for another, I would still speak of Him as a personal Savior. One preacher stated it this way. "He did as much for men in hell as He did for me." Now, I do not believe that. And I do not apologize for not believing that. I do not make less of the atonement because I do not believe that. He makes less of the atonement because he does believe that. So, I do not apologize, but the point is this: if I believed that, I still would believe, and he believes, that all believers, and only believers, will be saved by the death of Christ. Let me say that again, so you hear what I am saying. We are not discussing who shall be saved by the atonement, because both those who believe in a general atonement and those who believe in a particular redemption, believe that all believers, and no one but believers will be saved by the atonement. In other words, people who believe in what is referred to as a limited atonement, or a definite atonement, or a particular redemption, believe that every person who truly believes in Jesus Christ will be saved. They believe just as surely that no one who does not believe in Jesus Christ will be saved. Every man who takes the other side of the issue believes the very same thing in that issue. So that is not what we are discussing.

May I say, though, that if you believe in hell, there is a clear and unmistakable sense in which you believe in a limited atonement. Many men, if they were told that they believed in a limited atonement, would fight you from now until doomsday, swearing that they believe no such thing. But when we come to the true definition of what atonement is, you will understand that atonement means being reconciled to God by the death of Jesus Christ. And men who believe that there is a hell, and that there are men in hell, do not actually believe that those men in hell are reconciled to Jesus Christ. They may seem to say it, but they do not really believe that those men in hell are redeemed. They do not believe that those men in hell have their sins washed away by the blood of Christ. Therefore, they believe that the atonement or the reconciliation is, in some sense, limited. No, we are not discussing who it is that shall be saved by Christ's death. We all agree on 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.*" Neither side of that issue doubts John 3:16 one bit. It is dishonest, it is foolishness, and it is intellectual weakness to argue that one side or the other is denying that

issue. We believe, both sides believe that. Revelation, chapter 22 and verse 17 says: *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* Both sides of this issue believe that whosoever will may take of the water of life freely. So, that is not what we are talking about. It is immature to claim that these scriptures disprove or prove either side of this issue. So then, please do not let someone lead you into an erroneous discussion of this issue, by giving you a wrong title, or by claiming that those who believe in a particular redemption do not believe that there are any benefits for the unsaved, nor by the false claim that they believe there are people who would be believers, or would try to be Christians, but will not be saved because of lack of atonement. No serious Bible student believes that, and no competent Bible teacher claims it.

### THE ISSUE IS NOT SUFFICIENCY

Thirdly, we are not discussing the hypothetical sufficiency of the blood of Christ. That may sound like a little bit of a high term at first. But this is one of the things that is very frequently used in people's minds as a wrong definition of atonement. Very often, I find that when men start to tell you what they believe about the atonement, they are not talking about the atonement at all. What do I mean by that? I mean they are not talking about who is reconciled to Christ. They are not talking about whose sins are washed away. They are not talking about who is redeemed. They are not talking about who can sing, 'He Ransomed Me.' That is not what they are discussing at all. They are rather discussing who could be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ if they would come. Do you see? So they have moved away from the subject of atonement altogether. The men who hold to a definite atonement have stated one thing, the other group has moved over and introduced something else entirely. One is arguing in defense of one position, another is arguing in denial of another position. They are claiming that they disagree, while they are not even discussing the same issue. They are not discussing the same area of doctrine. So, we are not discussing the hypothetical sufficiency of the blood of Christ. Now, I know that there are those, and good men, who will say, and accurately if you let them define for you what they are stating, that the value of the blood of Christ was precisely what the effect of the shedding of the blood was. And if you say, what do you mean by that? They will say to you, I mean that none of the blood of Christ was shed in vain. Now, would you like to fight against that? That is rather difficult to fight against. I do not disagree with their position there. I asked a man recently, when we were discussing this issue, and we basically agreed, as far as I know totally agree, but I asked him if he meant that the blood of Christ could not have saved more people than it saved? And he said, oh, no, I did not mean that at all. If it were the task assigned to Christ, He could save everybody. And so, we were in total agreement on that. I believe that were the task assigned to Christ, that His blood could empty hell today. I believe that if it were the task assigned to Christ, that He could give men who have been in hell a thousand years another chance, and they could hear the gospel and believe and be saved, and be taken out of hell, if that were the task assigned. But we all agree that was not the task that was assigned to Christ. The task that was assigned to Christ, has to do with men who are not in hell. It has to do with men who are going to be believers. So, we are not talking about the hypothetical sufficiency; that is, what could it do if.

We are not talking about who could be saved by the blood of Christ if they were to believe, who could be saved by the blood of Christ if they came to Christ, nor are we saying that God exhausted His saving power on the elect. And that had He chosen to save another individual, that the blood of Christ would not have been sufficient to save that individual. There are some who like to bring that type of a caricature against us. They say, "Now what you are teaching is that God just chose so many people, and that the blood of Jesus Christ just reconciled so many people, and if God would have chosen another person, the blood of Jesus Christ would not have been sufficient, and if He would have chosen one person less, the remainder of the

blood of Christ would have been wasted." No, I am not talking about anything like that. So far as I know, no one who really thinks, is claiming that. We are not saying that God has exhausted His saving power, nor are we saying that Jesus' blood would not have been valuable enough to save more, if more came to Him in faith. So far as I can tell, concerning the hypothetical value of the blood of Christ, I would have to say it like this: We are saved by the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We are righteous before God, because of Christ, who is made unto us righteousness, among other things. This righteousness is dependent upon His holiness. He is righteous because He is holy. He is not righteous because He struggled against sins that He longed to commit. He is impeccable, He is sinless in all of His attributes and in all of His desires. That is what He is. He is holy, and because He is holy, righteousness in all of His conduct, and all of His desires is an outflowing attribute and reality of what Christ is, and we are reconciled to God, because in the death of Christ, His righteousness is imputed to us. Now, if His righteousness is imputed to us, and if His righteousness is dependent upon, or equals His holiness, then I ask you, what is the measure of that? How do you measure, how do you define, how do you give a dimension to the holiness of Jesus Christ? If you know anything of the Bible, you would have to say, that cannot be done. It is infinite. His holiness is infinite. There is no end to His holiness. There is no depth, there is no height, there is no width to His holiness. It is infinite. And so, were it the task assigned to Christ, He not only could save everybody in the world today, He could save everybody that has been in the world in the past, and everybody that is in hell today, and the devil himself. There is no question that He could do that, if it were the purpose of God. So we are not discussing the hypothetical value of His blood.

We are discussing--now hear me--we are discussing what God intended to do by the giving of His Son. Did He intend to do less than He did, more than He did, something different from what He did? Did His Son purpose something different from what the Father purposed? Does the Holy Spirit administer something different from what the Father and the Son purposed? We would all answer, 'No.' Therefore, be sure, I am not discussing the hypothetical sufficiency of the blood of Christ. I am discussing the actual work of the atonement. When I come to this doctrine a couple of weeks from tonight, I shall be discussing what is actually accomplished by the atonement.

#### THE ISSUE IS NOT LIMITED OPPORTUNITY OR RESPONSIBILITY

Fourthly, and finally, we are not discussing limited opportunity or responsibility. To me, this is one of the most dishonest and one of the most asinine arguments ever made against the doctrine of personal redemption. Someone will argue, "If Christ did not die for that person, then that person could not be saved, and if that person could not be saved, obviously that person could not be held responsible for his lost condition." If you take that argument and extend it in a few directions, you will absolutely throw away every doctrine of responsibility which evangelical Christians believe. All men are responsible. Acts, chapter 17 and verse 30 tells us, *'God, now commandeth all men every where to repent...'* All men have sufficient opportunity. You may say, 'wait a minute Preacher, you really made a mistake there. You went way beyond what the scripture states.' I am talking about opportunity as far as responsibility is concerned. Beyond that, there may not be any such thing as opportunity. But I am talking about opportunity in the sense of responsibility, and I am certainly not out on a limb. Romans, chapter 1 and verse 18 says, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:"* I am talking about opportunity so far as responsibility is concerned. They are without excuse. Lack of atonement is not to

blame for any man's damnation. If you know of a man who went to hell today, and you asked me, 'Did Christ redeem that man from hell?' Obviously, I would have to say, no. If Christ redeemed him from hell, he would not be in hell. You do not have to be a great theologian to figure that out. Christ did not redeem him from hell. Then, is he in hell because Christ did not redeem him? No, he is not. That is not why he is in hell. He is in hell because of his own hard and impenitent heart, and nothing more or less than that. In other words, lack of atonement is not to blame for any man's damnation.

Nothing in the proper concept of atonement can violate what the scripture says in John, chapter 6 and verse 37, the last part of the verse. We love every part of that verse, every part is equally true. "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;...*" And we understand that man's coming unto the Lord Jesus Christ is a result of the fact that the Father in His eternal purpose, has given that man to the Son, but He also says, he will come unto me. "*...and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*" So, we could not possibly conceive of a man coming unto Christ, and being cast out because there was no atonement for him. We are not talking about that. That is utterly impossible, it could not be. John, chapter 5 and verse 24 says: "*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.*" And so, we are not talking about a person who would hear the words of Jesus Christ, through the printed page, through the gospel preacher, or directly as He walked upon this earth, and believe that and perish because there was no atonement for him. It is inconceivable. There is no such thing possible. John, chapter 3 and verse 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.*" Are we saying that there might be someone who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, but would perish because there was no blood shed for him? Obviously not, that would be simplistic. That would be utterly stupid. It would be contrary to the scripture. Nothing in the proper concept of atonement can violate those verses of scripture. I ask you this question, and answer carefully in your own mind. To those who may hear this on tape, please listen. If you disagree with me, still I ask you, please listen to this question. Is Christ not biblically presented as a willing and sufficient Saviour to all men? I answer you, as far as I can tell from my Bible, Jesus Christ is indeed presented to the world as an able, a willing, and a sufficient Saviour to all men, who could conceivably desire Him. I find no exception to that. The song writer seemed to agree with that when he said, 'Come, ye sinners, poor and needy, Weak and wounded, sick and sore; Jesus ready stands to save you, Full of pity, love and power.' Jesus ready stands to save you. Sinner, whoever you are, the Bible presents to you a Jesus Christ who stands ready and willing to save you. There is no such thing as a man who would seek salvation, who would want God, who would want forgiveness, who would look for forgiveness, who would seek absolution, who would seek to have his sins taken away by Jesus Christ, who would ever be answered in such a fashion as this: 'No, you cannot be saved, because His blood was not shed for you.' He is a sufficient and willing Saviour, and is presented in scripture as a sufficient and willing Saviour for all men. So let us not build, or modify this doctrine by misuse of proof-texts. Let us not try to go to our Bible and find a verse that will prove our argument or our position to be right. That is not the way we should study our Bibles. Let us not try to change someone else's mind by a few proof-texts, but let us go to the Bible and see what the Bible says.

Whatever else we do--listen carefully--let us not make the death of Christ do anything less than to take away sins. Do you hear me? There are those who believe themselves to be Bible teachers, and Bible preachers, who when they get through explaining what atonement is, they will in effect have said, that the death of Jesus Christ redeemed no man from his sins. In effect, it redeemed no one from hell, ransomed no one from the wrath of God, but only made redemption possible for him, if he himself would finish the work, and make it effective. Let us not be guilty of making the atonement appear to be of no effect, by claiming



something like that. I ask you this question, and please listen. Are men who are in hell today washed from their sins? And you answer, 'No.' Now, I ask you, are you washed from your sins by the blood of Christ? You answer, yes. Who washed you? You answer, Jesus Christ washed me from my sins in His own blood. Then, did Christ do something for you that He did not do for them? You have to deal with that. If you are an honest student of scripture, you have to deal with that! I ask you tonight, are you reconciled by the blood of Jesus Christ? The Bible says that those who are saved are reconciled to God by the blood of Christ. Are you reconciled to God by the blood of Christ? And you say, 'Yes.' And I say, are men in hell reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus Christ? And I expect that you would answer, 'Obviously, they are not reconciled to God by anything, for they are not reconciled to God at all.' Then, would you say that the blood of Jesus Christ did nothing for you that it did not do for them? Do you see the serious issue that lies before us? Would you say that men in hell are redeemed? You sing, 'I am Redeemed by love divine; Glory, Glory, Christ is mine.' Would you sing of those men in hell, 'They are redeemed by love divine; Glory, Glory, Christ is theirs?' I do not think so. Then would you say there is no personal difference in the atonement, there is nothing definite in the atonement, there is nothing personal in the atonement? Would you say of those men in hell, they are ransomed, they are a purchased possession? I think not. But you claim that you are ransomed, that you are a purchased possession, that He has redeemed you from the curse of the law, being made a curse for you. Do you see how it necessitates that we very carefully study this doctrine of atonement to see what it is, lest we in our teaching, declare the death of Christ to be of no effect. Because that is exactly what can be done if we generalize it too much.

Now, listen carefully, and I am coming to a close. Will scripture allow us to say that the death of Christ only made our redemption possible? Or, does scripture demand that we confess that the blood of Christ redeemed us? Will scripture allow us to say that the death of Christ or the shedding of the blood of Christ only made the ransom of His people possible? Or, does the Bible indicate that the blood of Jesus Christ ransomed us? Do you not see what I am talking about? Will the scripture allow us to say that the blood of Christ was only a solution that was placed out there for us to use, at whatsoever time we might decide to wash ourselves from our sins, or does the Bible declare that He washed us in His own blood? You know the answer. And so does it not demand that we come to this subject a little more humbly, than to throw around accusations against other men, and make wild statements, which we justify with one or two proof-texts, or with the careless use of the word ALL? Does it not demand of us that we come to this doctrine very, very reverently, very humbly, very carefully, and say, Lord, I do not know except you teach me. My reasoning will not bring me through this. My rationalization will not give me proper answers. I must have a revelation from God, if I am to know the truth, and if I am to declare the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ to be what it really is.

Most importantly, and I close with this thought: Are you personally washed? Are you washed from your sins in His blood? All of the right theories are worthless if you perish. You may sit here tonight, and you may be in the classes here at Bethel Baptist Church, and you may understand all of these truths theoretically, and you might be able to argue it so well, that you could put to flight the most aggressive theologian in the other school of thought. Perhaps you could show exactly what the blood of Jesus Christ does for poor sinners in general, but what has it done for you? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow? Have you been made a new creation in Christ Jesus? Have your sins been taken away by His blood, or are you yet in your sins? Charles Spurgeon said, "Let no man say he is saved from his sins while he is yet reveling in his sins." We have professing Christian people who go around today, living in, and enjoying, and talking about things they ought not. Paul says, it is a shame for us to even speak of those things. And yet men revel in those things, they commemorate them in

**their lives, they go back and they talk about, and they laugh about, and they even brag about the sins that are in their past, and rejoice and enjoy talking about those things. Please be very subjective about this question. Are you washed from your sins, or are you yet in them?**

## Chapter Eight

### THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT PRESENTED POSITIVELY

Romans, chapter 8 and verses 28 through 34: *"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. 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. 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. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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."*

Many people see verse 32 as being a strong statement for a universal atonement. They are quite sure that the words "delivered him up for us all" speak of an atonement for every person in the world. But Paul, under inspiration of the Holy Ghost, goes on in the following verse and says, *"...how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?..."* Does that also apply to everybody in the world? And then, they must ask themselves about verses 33-34 *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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."* Are all people beyond having anything laid to their charge, on the basis of Christ's death? Are all people God's elect? Are all people justified? Are all people beyond condemnation? Does Christ intercede for all men? Surely, we can see the complexity of this issue. If you really care what the Bible has to say about it, you will be driven to a careful study of this matter.

The particular redemption people are accused of dwarfing the atonement, or of making the atonement something smaller than their accusers feel like it would be if it were indefinite, that is to say, if it were for everybody, or as much for one as for another. By particular redemption people, I mean those people who believe in a definite and cleansing work of atonement upon the cross of Calvary. They believe that the Lord Jesus Christ went there to redeem certain people, that He did redeem those particular people, that they, on the basis of that redemption, shall all be called and justified, and that these are, precisely and exclusively, the people who shall believe in the only begotten Son. When accused of "Limiting the atonement," Charles Spurgeon said that we who hold to particular redemption are not the ones who limit the atonement. He said, 'Let them call it what they will, but I would rather have a limited atonement that saves a certain number of people, a multitude of people that no one can number, than to have a general atonement that actually saves no one.' His argument is quite accurate. For the general atonement would teach that nobody is actually saved by the atonement, but rather that everybody is made savable, if only they will appropriate that which has been made available to them by the death of Christ. I do not think that is an unfair representation. I hope it is not. I do not want to be unfair in representing anyone along that line.

When a "general atonement" man tells you what he believes about the atonement, it usually will include little or no definition. Unless he really gets precise and gives it the definition that I gave it a moment ago, you can say to him, I do not have any problem with that. For instance, if someone says, I believe anybody that wants to be saved can be saved by the death of Christ. I will say, certainly I believe that. I have no problem with that. If they say, the death of Christ will save any man that comes to Him, I will say, surely I agree with that. If he says, I believe the death of Christ is for whosoever will, I will say, I agree with that. I

have no problem with that. He has not crossed swords with me at all. But the problem is that none of this has defined atonement. He has not, even remotely, dealt with the doctrine of atonement. He has only dealt with the hypothetical value of the blood of Christ, or more accurately with the responsibility of man. He has not addressed the doctrine of reconciliation. He has not actually gotten to the issue. What is the issue?

Tonight I am speaking on the doctrine of atonement, presented positively. In the last message, I dealt with what it was not. I tried to establish what I was not stating in the doctrine of atonement. Tonight, I want to present the doctrine positively. I want to try to show you what the doctrine of atonement is. What is the blood atonement of Jesus Christ?

### **SOME QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE ASKED**

First of all, I want to preface it by saying, there are some questions surrounding, or concerning the atonement that need to be faced.

**First:** Did God have a definite purpose in sending His Son to the cross, and was that purpose fulfilled? Now, do not pass that off lightly. That is a very important question, and it takes some thought. Did He have a particular purpose in sending His Son to the cross, and was that purpose fulfilled?

**Secondly:** Was this sending His Son to the cross to save men, or was it simply to make them savable? Ask yourself the question: did He send Jesus Christ to the cross to save men, or just to make them savable? If that purpose were simply to make all men savable, then we might theorize that His purpose was fulfilled, even if no one were actually saved. But was that all He had in mind? Can we settle for that? Again, I quote Charles Spurgeon, when he spoke of the general atonement man, he said, 'he builds a very broad bridge. But the trouble with his bridge is, it does not go all the way from hell to heaven. It does not take a man from death and put him into life. His bridge is broad, but it does not go all the way across. Would to God he let it be narrower and reach to the other side.' So that is an unavoidable question.

**Thirdly:** We should ask ourselves, did Jesus Christ reconcile me to God when He died on the cross? Did He reconcile you to God? Does the Bible say He did? Does your heart feel that He did? Do you credit that to Him? Do you praise Him for reconciling you to God, when He died upon the cross? I think most of you would say, certainly. Then I ask you the question, did He reconcile Cain? Did He reconcile Pharaoh? Did He reconcile Judas? You say, Preacher, I am not exactly sure. Well, let us go a little farther then. Whereas you are relatively sure Cain is not in heaven, is the difference between you and Cain? Is the difference between you and Pharaoh? Is the difference between you and Judas? What determined your eternal destiny? You know what theirs is, and I trust you know what yours is. Is the difference made by God, or is it made by you? These are questions that we must ask ourselves, if we investigate this issue honestly.

**Fourthly:** Ask yourself this. Will the answers which I have given to the above questions fit the scripture? Will the scripture allow the answers that I have given? In other words, if you say, "I do not believe that Jesus Christ actually washed any individual from their sins, particularly or personally; I believe He made all men washable. I believe that He did as much for one as for the other." Then I ask, will the scripture allow that answer? I think most of you will begin to see that it simply will not. The issue is more complex than that, and it demands a careful study. We need to go a little farther and ask, not only will it fit the scripture, but will it fit God? You say, 'What do you mean by that?' I am asking, will your answers align with the teaching of an omniscient, omnipotent and an eternal God? Can it qualify as the work of a God who knows all things, at all times, and a God who can always do what He wants to do? The Bible refers to God as being like that. Will your answers admit to that kind of God? I have given you these questions by way of suggestion, hopefully they will make you think.

## DEFINING BIBLE WORDS WHICH EQUAL ATONEMENT

Let us turn secondly to the definition of Bible words which equal atonement. Let me say this: the theme of your Bible is atonement. In the book of Hebrews, chapter 10, our Lord Jesus Christ in speaking of His work of atonement said, "*(in the volume of the book it is written of me,)*" The first part of that chapter having said, "*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*" But they are a foreshadowing of that which is to come. He goes on and tells us there, "*In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.*" In the volume of the book it is written of me. What is written? "*I come to do thy will, O God.*" What is that will of God for which He came into the world? It is by the offering of Himself to take away our sins. Lo, in the volume of the book it is written. That is the theme of your Bible. Atonement is the theme of your Bible. And yet, do you realize that the word atonement only appears one time in the entirety of your New Testament? It appears several times in the Old Testament, but only once in the New Testament. Now, is it strange that this word appears only one time, if it is the theme of your Bible? Well, not necessarily, because there are other words which mean the same thing as atonement, which are used more frequently, and we will do well to consider those words. Many times, in our English language, we have a word which may describe something, it may be the title of something, and yet it is not always the word we use to describe that. We use other words, and referring to those other words is one of the best ways in the world to understand the meaning of the word we are using, or the meaning of teaching surrounding it. So, let us look at some other words in the Bible, which mean the same thing as atonement.

The first one we should consider is the word reconciliation. The word reconciliation in your Bible comes from exactly the same Greek word as the word atonement. The word atonement appears, in your New Testament, only in the fifth chapter of the book of Romans, and verse 11. In the verses immediately surrounding it, we have the word reconciled appearing twice, and it comes from exactly the same Greek word as the word atonement, not just the same root word, but exactly the same word. Let me show you what I am talking about by reading Romans, chapter 5 and verses 10 and 11: "*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,...*" Now, look at that. He says we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Is everybody reconciled to God by the death of His Son? And you must answer, 'No, there are many who are not reconciled to God by anything.' "*...we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life, And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*" As we consider the word reconciled, and the word reconciliation that goes with it, be informed, the word reconciliation is exactly the same word as the word atonement in this verse. So, we must understand that these words are synonyms. Now, I ask you, with that in mind, is reconciliation universal? Is there anybody in hell? Are the people in hell, who John describes in the book of Revelation as blaspheming God and cursing God, reconciled to God? Are the men who are in hell tonight reconciled to God? You see, this is a question with which serious and honest Bible students have to deal.

Let us look at another word, the word redemption. It is not the same Greek word, but it carries exactly the same intent with it as the word atonement. Redemption is a little different aspect of atonement, and the words are not necessarily synonyms, but it is exactly the same doctrine, or the same Bible teaching. That is to say, everyone who is reconciled is redeemed, everyone who is redeemed is reconciled. No one who knows anything about their Bible would question that. Even men who disagree with me vehemently, as to this overall issue, would not question that. All the redeemed are reconciled, all the reconciled are redeemed. That would be unquestionable, I think. In your Bibles, in the book of Revelation, chapter 5 and verse 9, the scripture says: "*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;...*" We sing, I am redeemed by love divine, Glory, Glory, Christ is mine, Christ is mine. We sing, Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Can men in hell sing, 'Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb?' Can anyone who can truly sing 'Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb,' anticipate ever being in hell? Can they ever be in hell? I think you will answer, 'No.' And so you see something of the problem with universal atonement right there.

There is another word which should not be neglected. It is the word remission. In the book of Romans, chapter 3 and verse 25: *"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;..."* Hebrews 10:18: *"Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."* If you have a working knowledge of your Bible, you will immediately understand that he is talking about our sins being remitted by the work of Christ upon the cross of Calvary. Is this universal? I ask you now to think about this. Are you redeemed? And if you say yes, I ask how were you redeemed? The thought that should first come to your heart and mind is, I am redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. But are all redeemed? Can you say that of everybody that shall ever come into the world, they are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb? Do you see what I am saying to you? Are your sins remitted? Are your sins taken away? How are your sins remitted? And you say, they are remitted by the blood of the Lamb. For without the shedding of blood there is no remission. I ask you are all sins remitted? Are those men who are in hell tonight, men who have had their sins remitted, men who have had their sins washed away, men who have been reconciled to God, men who have been redeemed, and yet have somehow defaulted? Will such words as remitted, redeemed and reconciled allow that interpretation? Do you see where I am coming from? Do you see where it leads us? If we fear God, we have to ask ourselves those questions.

Another word is the word ransomed. You notice I am using words that have to do with the effect of the death of Christ on the cross, the result of the death of Christ on the cross. I am trying to keep it simple, and I trust you will follow me here. In the book of Matthew, chapter 20, and verse 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."* He gave His life a ransom. What is a ransom designed to do? It is to buy back one who is in bondage. Notice the word back. The word ransom does not imply simply buying something, but buying back something. I am simply asking you the question tonight: Are you ransomed? Does your faith assure you: "Yes, I am ransomed by the blood of Christ. I have been purchased by the blood of Christ out of the marketplace of the world. I have been given life. My debt has been paid. I have been ransomed. I am free." Does your heart say that to you? Does your Bible allow you to say that of men who have not believed, of men who shall not believe, if I may be more specific in pointing to inconsistency, of men who have already died and gone to hell as unbelievers? Can you say of them, that they are ransomed? Revelation, chapter 1 and verse 5: *"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,..."* No phrase is more precious to the Christian, no phrase is more precious to the believer than that term, has washed us from our sins in His own blood.

The song writer said, You ask me why I am happy, so I will just tell you why, Because my sins are gone. What a precious thing it is, to know that our sins are gone. But why are our sins gone? Our sins are gone because He has washed us from our sins in His own blood. Can that same thing be said about unbelievers? Now, I realize that there are unbelievers who will one day be believers, and yes, that could be said about them, but can it be said about those who shall never become believers? Can it be said about those who shall die in their sins, those who do die in their sins, those who have died in their sins? Can it be said, biblically, about them?

I do not mean to try to win an argument, I mean to study God's word. Can it be said, biblically, that all men are washed from their sins? If not, will the meaning of such words reconciliation and atonement allow a general application. Do you not see what I am saying to you?

#### WHAT OF THOSE VERSES WHICH SEEM TO TEACH GENERAL ATONEMENT

Let us move a step farther and ask ourselves, what of the scripture verses that seem to clearly teach universal atonement? The man who teaches universal atonement, or who believes in a general atonement, does not get his opinion from a Sears and Roebuck Catalog. In all fairness, he gets it from the Bible. Now, he gets it by a wrong interpretation of the Bible, in my opinion. But he does get it from the Bible, and we are not wise, nor are we careful if we do not take time to see why he believes what he believes, if he says it comes from the Bible. We should have the Berean spirit, search the scriptures and see if those things be so. For instance, honest men take the word ALL, as in II Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 14 and following: 'He died for all.' 'We judge that if He died for all, He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but should live for Him.' Honest men take verses like that and they say, you see, these verses tell us that He died for all. Certainly they do, but if you interpret that word all in that sense, you are being inconsistent with both scripture and your own everyday usage of the English language. Just list your scriptures, write them down, and I speak not only to those sitting in this congregation, but to those who may hear this tape, or read this in print, list those scriptures, write them down, and then carefully read them in their context, with that definition of the word all, and you are going to come out with, not universal opportunity, but universal salvation. You are not going to have anybody ever going to hell. It is not going to be possible for anybody to go to hell, because according to that, if you use those scriptures that way, it is going to go far beyond simply making man savable. It will declare them saved and safe forever. The scriptures around these "ALLS" will go far beyond simply making the man savable. If that is what they mean, those scriptures would be stating that all men are saved.

That very thing was brought out, where we read this evening in Romans 8:32. Let us go back and look at that again. Romans 8:32 is one of the clearest passages in all of scripture, along that line. *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,..."* If the general atonement man takes that word all and says, you see God gave Him for everybody, indiscriminately and in the very same way, then what do we do with the question that follows that, and says: *"how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"* What kind of 'all things' do we take as being a promise there? Would it include eternal life? And everybody would say, certainly, it includes eternal life. Then, my friend, if the all there includes all people, then the all things there includes eternal life for all people. Do you see what I am saying to you? He goes on in the following verse: *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"* The context has not changed. *"It is God that justifieth."* And if you have taken that word all and made it a universal thing, then you have to have all being justified. You cannot get away from it. *"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died."* If you have that word all meaning all men with no restrictive sense, then in verse 34 you have to have the death of Christ barring the condemnation of all men. Why is it they cannot be condemned? Because Christ died. Look at that! *"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."* And so, it is the death of Christ here that forbids condemnation. If you say there was nothing personal, there was nothing particular, there was nothing discriminate in the atonement, then you will wind up ultimately with all men justified. If you take this word all and you apply it that way, study it in your context, you will invariable come out, if you are consistent, being a universalist, claiming the salvation of all men and the condemnation of none. It cannot be otherwise. It must come out that way, if you will follow it through.

Let us go yet farther. The word world is often used, but it does not really help the general atonement argument. I suppose the most common argument against particular redemption is the misuse of 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."* I believe that. I do not need to qualify that with anything. I believe that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish. Let me ask you something. What causes the believer to be a believer? Is that just some kind of a shot out of a cannon? Is that luck, is that caprice, or is it God? If it is God, we have no problem at all. You say, 'But the word world means all mankind.' Whoever told you that? It means no such thing! I want to tell you this, that whoever told you that, either did not know, or they were simply lying out of convenience. The word world means an order or an arrangement, the Greek word cosmos, from which the word world, in the scripture comes, means order. Now, if you take that word world and you say, 'That means all mankind, you have a terrible problem. For instance, John 1:29: *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."* How is a man going to get into hell without sin? If that is what it means there is no sin. It is all gone! If the word world means all men without exclusion, without exception, without any kind of differentiation, then John 1:29 empties hell. Do you see where it puts you? There He is, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, there is no sin any more. That is what it would come out to mean. That, of course, does not make any sense at all.

First John, chapter 2 and verse 2, is one of the favorite passages for the universal atonement argument: *"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* The word propitiation there is equivalent to the word mercy seat or the word mercy, either of those two words. Both of them come from the very same word as the word propitiation. The word propitiation means a covering. Listen, where there is propitiation there is no guilt. Study it out! You cannot have propitiation and guilt together! The Bible will not allow it. So they are misunderstanding what John means when he says for the whole world. He is not talking about for every individual in the world. In my opinion, he speaks there of Jew and Gentile, Jew and Greek, Barbarian, all kinds of people. In other words, the Jews thought of Christ as being their Messiah, their Savior, the propitiation for their sins. And John says to them, 'No, not for our sins only but for the sins of the whole world, the sins of every believer, the sins of whosoever will, the sins of all who come.' And you can describe it in all of those ways and be totally accurate. But do not try to make it a universal application, because if you do, you will do one of two things: Now, hear me! You will either have everybody being saved, or you will have no body being actually saved by the blood of Christ. You will have one of the two. They will be saved by the blood of Christ plus something else, or everybody will be saved.

If you say, 'Well, I still think that this word world means all mankind and you are just not going to change my mind on that, then please go with me to the Gospel of John, chapter 17. I mentioned John 17:2 this evening showing something of the will of the flesh. And so we will review John chapter 17 and verse 2. He says there, *"As thou hast given him"* (speaking of himself, speaking to the Father concerning himself, *has given the Son*, or) *"hath given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."* Then, notice verse 9, in this same prayer: *"I pray for them:"* (Pray for who? the disciples that the Father has given Him. Now notice this!) *"I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."* You say, 'Well, He is talking about those who are saved.' Wait a minute! You will find Him saying, in the very same context, other sheep have I, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring. And so, the whole of His intercession is not restricted to people who have been saved at this point. The point that I want to make is this: If you say that the world is all mankind, and that this is who Jesus was sent by the Father to save, then you have the Lord Jesus Christ saying to the Father, I am not praying for all those who you sent me into the world to save. That does not make a fragment of sense, does it? For if He did not



pray for them they would not be saved, regardless of the work of oblation; that is, the offering of His blood. For the work of the priest went farther than the offering of a sacrifice, it also involved intercession. Therefore, those for whom He prays--listen to me now!--those for whom He prays, are exactly and exclusively those who He redeems. Who he prays for, is who He ransomed. Who He prays for, is who He washed. That ransom, that redemption, that washing, is the very basis of the intercessory prayers that He prays. It is utterly ridiculous to see Him redeeming one, and praying for somebody else, because the two things have to go together.

I will touch upon that a little more completely in just a moment. But before I do, let me say that the word every is essentially like the word all. There are those who like to use the word every in the same sense, as a word that implies universal atonement, and it is like the word all, the context must interpret it. Let me show you what I am talking about in Hebrews, chapter 2 and verse 9: *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."* Now, I spent considerable time in the exposition of that verse some time ago, and I will not take time tonight, I could not take time, but I simply have to say that it is very much like the word all. Look at it: *"every man,"* all men, in the very same sense, or all, this means essentially the same thing, the context must interpret it. If you will go on with that context, you will find that those for whom He tasted death are those who were redeemed, or called, or converted, or kept, all of those things go with it. And so do not be too quick to embrace some kind of a doctrine because it seems charitable, and because it seems good, because it may blaspheme God. Be careful with the embracing of your doctrines.

In Romans, chapter 8 and verse 32, which we read just a moment ago, we have the same thing: *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,..."* This means essentially the same thing as him who suffered, or tasted death for every man. As I pointed out, if you consider them in their context, you have one of two things. If you give it that interpretation, you either have everybody being saved by the blood of Jesus Christ--you have to have that--or you have a washing that does not wash, you have a cleansing that does not cleanse, you have a redemption that does not redeem. It just will not work. Let us move on to our last point. I have to hurry because I want to get this all on one side of a tape.

#### VIEWING THE WORK OF CHRIST AS OUR PRIEST

Fourthly, I want you to see that we must view the work of Christ as the work of a priest. You will never understand the work of atonement until you understand the work of a priest. That was the business of a priest. The word atonement is mentioned more times in your Bible in connection with the work of a priest, than all other areas put together. You will not understand atonement unless you see it as the work of a priest. There is no other way which you can more perfectly see I Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 1 through 3: *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."* As you look at this, notice those words 'according to the scriptures.' 'Paul, what scriptures are you talking about?' Someone would say, Matthew, chapter 20, where He says He gave Himself a ransom for many? No, Matthew, chapter 20 did not exist when Paul wrote this. Matthew, chapter 20 was not yet in publication at this time. This is one of the earliest epistles written. When Paul makes reference to the scriptures, he will, almost without exception, be making reference to the Old Testament scriptures, *"how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."* To what scriptures should we go to learn what Paul is talking about? We should go back to the offerings of the Levitical Priest, on the day of atonement, when

he made an offering for sins. Any student of the Bible would concur with that. If we want to be accurate in studying what Paul is talking about, we have to go back to the Old Testament offering for sins, by the priest. Now, the scriptures reveal a priestly work. I mentioned earlier, Hebrews, chapter 10, verses 1 through 4: *"For the law having a shadow of good things to come,"* (The law, he is talking about the Levitical law, the practice of this offering for sin by the priest) *"having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they"* (They? Of whom is this pronoun speaking? Those priests.) *"offered year by year continually make the comers there unto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."* So, he says here in the tenth chapter of the book of Hebrews, that when we talk about this death of Christ, according to the scriptures, that beyond any shadow of doubt, he is speaking of that pattern of the priestly work. As we continue here in the book of Hebrews, notice that he talks about coming to do the will of God. Hebrews chapter 10, verses 7 through 14, and I want you to open your Bibles there and look at that. Hebrews chapter 10 is one of the most informative chapters in all of the Bible, if you are interested in the theme of the Bible. If you want to know what your Bible teaches, you cannot find a better place to get a synopsis of it than the tenth chapter of Hebrews. Look at the 7th verse: *"Then said I,"* (Christ, Himself is speaking) *"Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."* Not quite everybody is reconciled, He still has enemies who are to be made his footstool. *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*--For them who are set aside unto holiness. Now, notice the issue before us. He said, *"I come to do thy will, O God."* (What is that will? What is the will of God? John chapter 6, verses 37 through 39 lays that before us very clearly.) *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."* (I come to do thy will, O God.) *"In the volume of the book it is written of me,"* (Remember?) *"I come to do thy will, O God."* (What is that will?) *"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."* Simply make them savable? No, no. He said, not only must I not lose them, I must raise them up again at the last day. I do not know how to escape this unpopular conclusion, unless I throw my Bible away, or tranquilize myself with some kind of a doctrinal blinder, that rules out half of the Bible. But He said, this is the will of God. Let me ask you this: What was that will? *'Of all the Father has given me, I should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day.'* Did Jesus Christ accomplish that will? Did He fail, or did He accomplish that will of God? The Bible teaches us that the Father gave a definite people to His Son. I do not apologize for saying that to you, because the Bible says that to me, and it says it to you. And if you will not receive that, you will not receive the word of God, for it says that very, very clearly. Matthew 1:21: *"...thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* Jesus Christ came to give eternal life to them. He did reconcile them all to God. Now, they do not all realize that reconciliation yet. Some have not been called. They shall be. But He reconciled them to God. He did save them all.

This particular work excluded no one. Do you hear me? There are people who try to argue that if what I

am saying is true, there are poor sinners out there, who cannot be saved no matter what they do. Please spare me the foolishness. Sin excludes us from God, and there is not one thing that will ever keep any sinner out of heaven but their own hard and impenitent heart. And if you only look at the foreknowledge of God as being prescience, and we know that is not accurate, but if you only look at it that way, you would still have only a necessity of an atonement for those who would believe? Does God not know who is going to believe? Of course, that is not any explanation, it is just a theoretic argument. But I am saying that the particularistic nature of this work is not what excludes men from heaven, it is their sin. No man is excluded from heaven because an atonement was not made for him. That is not the reason he is excluded. He is excluded because he will not have the Son, who came to give life. And this is their condemnation, that they loved darkness rather than light. Light came into the world (Who is the light? Jesus Christ.) and they loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. It is not the fault of the light, or the dimness of the light, or the location of the light, nor do we need to claim the light shone with all its power, to defend it from accusations of neglect. It is the love of darkness that condemns men. Do not become a humanist and try to turn that garbage around and pile it on God. It is ridiculous, it does not make any sense at all.

Jesus Christ did the work He came to do. Hebrews 7:25 speaks of this priestly work, when it says: *"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."* 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."* Romans 8:33: *"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."* Verse 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."* Romans 5:10: *"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."* In the book of Genesis, chapter 3 and verse 16, we find that prophecy of the seed of the woman that would bruise the serpent's head. And He fulfilled His promise of atonement, this work of atonement, this successful work. Whether you sit in this congregation, or whether you hear this on a tape, or read it in print, do not be guilty of acclaiming the work of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ to be something that is indefinite, or unsuccessful. And if it is indefinite, it is unsuccessful. Do not say that about the work of the atonement. It reaches back to Genesis 3:16, and it tells us there that the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent, this grasps the everlasting covenant of grace. It comes down through Noah, whom God saved for seed. It comes down through Abraham, it comes through Judah, it comes through David, and it is consummated in the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we are chosen, in whom we are justified, and in whom we are preserved. Do not make light of the atonement, by claiming that God intended for it to do something which it does not do. Do not say it is worthless unless a wicked sinner, by his own "free will" applies it.

## Chapter Nine

### THE DOCTRINE OF CALLING WHAT THE DOCTRINE IS NOT

This evening, I am bringing the 9th message in a series that I am calling: Grace Not Calvinism. The reason, as most of you know, that I have entitled the series this way, is because it is the repeating of a series by that title, which I preached some years ago. I did it at that time in a series of eight messages, and this time I am going to bring twelve messages in all. I am re-doing the series because I would like to make it more extensive, and a little clearer, but I still want to insist upon the idea that those who derogatorily call these doctrines 'Calvinism' are in error. These are not doctrines that should be identified with the name of a man, and certainly not the name of a Protestant Reformer. They are doctrines, when rightly held and taught, that are contained in our Bible. We should not apologize for any of that. Tonight, the message deals with 'The Doctrine of Effectual Calling.' I use that term because it is widely used among many men. I want to speak to you tonight on 'What The Doctrine Is Not.' Many times, you will hear someone talking derogatorily of a doctrine because they misunderstand what it teaches. In many instances there are people who will tell you that Baptists do not believe in holiness. They believe that when we teach salvation by pure grace that we are denying the necessity of and the reality of the pursuit of holiness. They will say that we do not believe in Christian perseverance. I will be preaching the last two messages in this series on Divine Preservation and Christian Perseverance. I am republishing, in *The Baptist Watchman*, this month, a tract entitled *Divine Preservation and Christian Perseverance*. I certainly do believe in those doctrines, but men often claim that we do not believe them, because they misunderstand what we believe, and they misunderstand the entire doctrine of eternal security. Because this truth is so frequently misunderstood, my first message, concerning the Bible doctrine of calling, will deal with 'What It Is Not.'

I want us to read in our Bibles, I Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 19 through 31. *"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* We have a world today that wants to apologize for preaching. You will hear some of our high-rolling 'sports witnesses,' who are preparing to 'witness' saying, 'Now, I am not going to preach to you.' I always want to say to anybody like that, if you are not going to preach, sit down and shut-up! It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. I am not impressed by anybody that purposes to have them saved any other way, because that is God's way. I am not saying all of that preaching is to come from the pulpit, you understand. But, *"...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called..."* Now, this word called identifies the doctrine which we are dealing with tonight. This is the doctrine of effectual calling, it deals with a call of God that does something. A call of God that makes a difference. If you will study this scripture, you will find something very clearly taught. It is calling which makes a difference between those Jews to whom this preaching is a stumblingblock, and those to whom it is the power of God; to those Greeks to whom this preaching was foolishness, and those to whom it was the power of God. It is very clearly calling, in this context, that makes the difference. *"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that*

*not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise;...*"

Notice here how those whom He has chosen are synonymous with those whom He has called. Choosing and calling are not the same thing, but the chosen and the called are the same people. Do you hear what I am saying: choosing and calling are not the same thing, but the chosen and the called are the same people. If you have trouble with that, if that grieves you, if that makes you uncomfortable, if that makes cold chills go up your backbone in the wrong direction, your problem is not with me, it is with God and you need to do something about it. He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. Please do not try to change this context, and say, 'well, in this passage, God is talking about vocational calling or vocational choosing. He is talking about men being called to do certain jobs, and not about their salvation, He is talking about their vocations.' No, He is not! This context is salvation, and it continues to be salvation all the rest of the way through the chapter. You follow it. It is simple enough. As you go on, He says, "*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are;*" Why has He done this? "*That no flesh should glory in his presence.*" Do you want to know if the context has changed from salvation to something else? Look at this verse: "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*" The context here is altogether salvation.

Many times caricatures demand that a doctrine be defined very carefully. By caricature, I mean when something is accentuated in such a manner that you know what is being talked about, and yet they blow it all out of proportion. I remember particularly the caricature that was commonly drawn of Richard Nixon, President of the United States, and he had a huge nose. You could look at that picture, and you knew that it was a caricature, you knew that was supposed to be Richard Nixon, and yet everybody knew that Richard Nixon did not actually have a nose that long, with a knob on the end of it. That is what is meant by a caricature. It is a false representation, but it carries with it enough of the characteristics of the subject that you know what it is talking about. Today, there are word caricatures of various doctrines. For instance, the caricature of the doctrine of divine preservation or eternal security is this: 'You Baptists teach, that a person can just come down to the front, and shake hands with the preacher and go on out and live any way he wants to, and go to heaven.' That is not, by any stretch of the imagination, an honest or accurate description of the doctrine of eternal security. I have never met a Baptist that teaches that. Have you? In fact, there is no such thing as a Baptist that teaches that. If anybody teaches that, he is an idiot not a Baptist. He does not know what he is talking about. That is a caricature. The common caricature of this doctrine of effectual calling is God dragging some sinner 'down the isle' to salvation, kicking and screaming in protest. Well, I do not believe or teach that. I have never seen that happen. I do not represent that. On the other hand, I believe that God saves. I believe that salvation is of the Lord. I believe that when a man comes to Christ his action is of the Lord. His willingness is to be attributed to God, and God is to receive the glory. That is what this doctrine is all about. It did not start with Calvin. It is Bible, it is not Calvinism, though it may be in some theological circles rightly called that, but I believe we had better leave it identified simply as Bible Doctrine.

This evening, in order to be sure that I am not coming up with a newfangled Keenerized version or view of this doctrine, I want us to read articles 9 and 12 of our Confession of Faith. This little book is our 'Church Member's Handbook' and the reason that it is called that is because it has, among other things, our Confession of Faith. It has the Confession of Faith, the Constitution and Bylaws of our church, and our

**Church Covenant. But in our Confession of Faith, which is basically The New Hampshire Confession, which of course, is a takeoff of The Philadelphia Confession, which is a takeoff of The London Confession, all of them combined is what Baptists have believed on this subject, all down through the years. They are essentially the same, just brought up to date in a little more contemporary language, and these two articles of faith state this: Article #9 says: "OF GRACE (That is, what do we believe of grace?) IN THE NEW CREATION.--We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature" (Notice that) "is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure" (now, notice that) "so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life." You know that there are Baptist preachers today, who think I am a heretic, when I say that the new birth is the cause of repentance and faith, as opposed to repentance and faith being the cause of the new birth. But the fact is they do not know up from down about what Baptists have always taught. Baptists have always believed that it was the new birth that caused repentance and faith, and not vice versa. I am not telling you that you are born again, and you begin to believe and to repent later. That is not what I am saying at all, it is instantaneous. But concerning cause and effect, the fruits of the new birth are repentance and faith. Look then, if you would, at article #12. What we believe 'OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH' "We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God." What is this work of the quickening Spirit of God called in your Bible? Over, and over, and over, and over again, it is referred to as CALLING. The Bible refers to situations where God called and men did not answer. He said I have stretched out my hand and ye have not regarded. He had His messengers to go and invite them to the supper and they would not come. There are places like that in your Bible, but there are other places which very clearly indicate that A CALL is the cause, and regeneration (with faith and repentance resulting) is the effect. It is called in theological terms of men who study this, THE EFFECTUAL CALL.**

**Tonight we are going to begin to deal with that doctrine. I want to talk to you tonight about, 'What The Doctrine Is Not.'**

#### **EFFECTUAL CALLING IS NOT AN UNIMPORTANT DOCTRINE**

**First: It is not hairsplitting, but rather a fundamental Bible doctrine. I do not know of anything that is more nauseating to me, than the milk-toast preaching and study of the word of God today, by which men want to circle around the little superfluities and extraneous issues that are very infrequently found in the Bible. Though they certainly have their place, there are men who will do nothing but deal with those things. If you say anything about such doctrines as Calling and Election, even though Peter said, "make your calling and election sure," they say, "Ah, you guys do nothing but sit and pick that one string on the fiddle. You only want to talk about election and all that sort of thing instead of getting down to the practical doctrines of the Bible." You ought to be able to train a pet coon to be smarter than that. These are not hairsplitting issues. They are fundamental issues of the Bible. Let me show you why I say that. The words called and calling appear 77 times in your Bible, just from the book of Romans through the book of Revelation. That does not sound like a little hairsplitting thing to me. In some of those cases it is just talking about calling in a very shallow sense, but in at least 57 of those 77 occurrences, it refers to an effectual work upon man's heart--Now hear me!--that causes that man to come to Christ. But to them that are called, it is**

the power of God. And there is nothing else in that scripture, nor is there the hint of anything else except that calling which is a differentiating factor. Over, and over, in your New Testament this term will be used in such a way as that: It will show an effectual work of God upon man's heart that results in a man coming to Christ, or man doing something for God in service that necessarily supposes his having come to Christ. Do you hear what I am saying to you? It is not a hairsplitting doctrine and we do not have the option of backing off and leaving it alone. The vast majority of these 57 occurrences of the words called or calling is very obviously soteriological. By that I mean they deal with salvation. Be aware, I am counting only such verses as Romans 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."* Would we want to tear that out of our Bible? I do not think so. That is a verse that everybody knows and it is talking about salvation. Consider such passages as Galatians 1:15, where the Apostle Paul speaks there of God's call to him: *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,..."* I do not think any of us would want to argue about whether that is a soteriological calling or not. We know that in both cases it unquestionably is. It must be that in the scripture, if the scriptures have any sort of accuracy at all. Thus, we have no license to neglect this doctrine; not myself in preaching it, and not you in listening to it. Perhaps you are here tonight, and you have not heard such a doctrine as this before. You may be tempted to say, I do not think I care to hear this. This is quite different from what I thought I was to believe, or what I thought I believed. You do not have any choice, you are bound to hear it. It is God's word. You had better hear it.

#### EFFECTUAL CALLING DOES NOT NEGATE HUMAN VOLITION

Secondly: It is not a doctrine which negates human volition. Frequently, because of continual caricatures, this doctrine is accused of being one that takes away any voluntarily action on the part of man. Now this doctrine does not do any such thing. This doctrine has been called, by people who wanted to, I suppose you would say, alliterate a little more, the doctrine of irresistible grace. If you were to study the T U L I P formation in the so-called Calvinistic theme, which certainly is not of divine origin, you would find that the "I" in tulip stands for a doctrine called irresistible grace. This is very offensive to some. Some years ago, I said to a dear preacher friend of mine, while I was preaching a meeting for him out in Texas, 'The doctrine of election is so plain in the Bible, I could never deny it, but I certainly will never believe in irresistible grace.' I was going to say something else, and he sort of interrupted me and said, 'Well, Brother, I sure could not resist it.' I did not have enough knowledge of the subject to know what he was saying for awhile. But after awhile, I realized that there are many people who would just rail upon that doctrine, if you called it irresistible grace. I have heard people say such things as this: I believe the night that God saved me, 'if I had not turned to Him, He would have killed me,' or 'I believe if I had not been saved that night, I never would have been saved,' or 'that night I just could not help but turn to God.' In some way, most people, when describing their calling, describe it that way. And I thought, was that not my experience? Surely it was!

Strangely enough, if we say of a human being, their love is irresistible, their personality is just irresistible, nobody is offended by that. That is a great commendation. But because of our practical atheism and because of our hard and impenitent heart, when a man speaks of God as being irresistible, man in his ignorant desire to be his own god is deeply offended. But for the sake of understanding, instead of the term irresistible grace, because men misunderstand and caricature it, I will use the term calling. And I will say to you, that when we call it effectual calling, or if it is called irresistible grace, which ever the case, it has never been taught and it is not taught, and it is not implied that it negates human volition. That is a caricature.

That is, in essence, a lie of the devil. The doctrine does not imply that, nor have the propagators of this doctrine ever taught that. That is not accurate. You just simply cannot find that in their writings. The classic caricature is that this means the man is saved without wanting to be saved, or without any function of the will. No, it does not mean any such thing as that at all. As the Philadelphia Confession Of Faith says, concerning this, God works upon their heart, in such a way that they most freely and willingly come. That is what it says. According to the word of God, that is very accurate. For He says in John chapter 6 and verse 37: *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;"* He does not imply that they are brought without will, but the word come implies that they come by volition, that they voluntarily move to him. That is what come means. I think I pointed this out perhaps two weeks ago in a lesson, but I am well aware that John 6:44 says: *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him,"* and I am aware of the fact that the word draw is the same word as the word drew, when it says they drew Paul out of the city, and stoned him. I am also well aware that that same word may be properly translated dragged, as a horse draws a cart. I know that, but still, this is not to imply that the Lord is talking about a man being brought or being drawn against his will at all, because the Bible says down in the 65th verse of the same chapter: *"... Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."* He is talking about what he had said up in verse 44. And so he is talking about something there that works upon the man's volition, not something that brings him against his volition. I think the most simple verse in all the Bible that describes this is Philippians chapter 2 and verse 13. Listen to it: *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* Does that imply that it is just an act of our human will that may go one way or the other? No, Paul said, 'it is God that works in you to will.' But does it imply that we do something without our will? No, we will, and thus we act. Do you see what I am saying to you?

This, however, is not really the issue. Men will use this caricature, and they will say, you are teaching that a man is saved without willing or desiring to come to Christ. No, we are not teaching that. This is not really the issue, in fact we all agree that they come willingly. The scripture teaches that all and only those who come willingly will be saved. I am well aware of Revelation 22:17, a precious, precious verse of scripture. *"And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* That does not need to be qualified. It means exactly what it says. It is not limited. It does not fight with John 6:37: *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;"* or 6:44 *"...No man can come to me except..."*, these verses are not at odds with each other. They are not teaching two different and adverse things, but simply teaching what causes a man to come.

The question really is this: Is the desire to come to Christ, this will which causes a man to come to Christ, the will of a natural man, or is it the regenerate man's will? Can a man in his natural state, as he is born, as he comes forth from the womb, can that man come to God, in the saving sense, or must he have a regenerating call? Was the life which Jesus Christ gave to Lazarus, when He said Lazarus come forth, given so that Lazarus could hear and obey, or because he heard and obeyed? Can a man dead in trespasses and sin come to Christ of his own will and by his own decision, or must he have the quickening of God before he can will to come? And this doctrine is teaching that he must have the quickening call of God before he can will to come. Not only so, but it teaches that God is able to effectually call whom He will. (John 5:21) It teaches that God is able to quicken whom He chooses. That is what the doctrine is all about. If that is offensive to you, then be offended by all means, but that is what the doctrine is. Nowhere does the doctrine teach that men come unwillingly. It teaches that God works in their heart, regenerates them, and they are then most willing to come. Did Lazarus have life by coming forth from the grave, or did he come forth from the grave because he was given life? You ought to be able to figure that out without me answering it. I do not think I will trouble myself by answering that question. I think you know, I think you need rather to spend your time applying it.



## EFFECTUAL CALLING DOES NOT DENY THAT THE ELECT RESIST

Thirdly: This doctrine does not deny that the elect resist God's grace. I have heard people say, something like this: 'I will tell you something. I am saved, and if your doctrine of election is true, then I am certainly elect, but I resisted the will of God, or I resisted the call of God, so there.' Well, what about that? That does not prove anything, because this doctrine of effectual calling does not teach that man does not resist the call of God, or that man does not resist the will of God. In the first place a person would have to be an absolute nincompoop to imply that, for Stephen said, you do always resist the Holy Ghost. Not only so, but we find that those who were obviously elect, such as Paul, did resist the Holy Ghost. He was apparently one of those personally charged of this by Stephen. Paul was obviously chosen, he said he was, he was obviously called, because he said he was, and therefore, I think all of us would conclude that he was a fair example, would you not? Would you not say Paul makes a fair example, since he was chosen according to his own statement, and he was called according to his own statement? But the Bible clearly teaches that he resisted. In Acts chapter 9 and verse 5, the Lord Jesus Christ said to him: "*...it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*" Of course, the term kicking against the pricks is a metaphorical term, that deals with resisting the spiritual goads of the Holy Ghost. Actually, our Lord is using, as a metaphor, the case of an ox kicking against the ox goads. Of course, in such action the ox succeeds only in afflicting himself. Christ Jesus is saying, 'Paul, God has been doing a work in you, and it is hard for you to resist it.' But he did not say, you are not resisting it. The implication was not that he was not resisting it, but it was clearly that he had been resisting it.

This is not teaching that men do not resist the grace of God in their natural state. There is no doubt in my mind, that all men do resist the grace of God in their natural state. But what the doctrine teaches is that the unwilling man, by God's grace, becomes willing, when God purposes to break his heart and make him willing. God is able to make him willing in the day of His power. It means God can break any resistance when and as He wishes. Do you believe that God can break and convert anybody He wants to? That is really the issue. I know that presents a lot of other issues that really might lock your jaws, and I am not going to deal with them tonight, because that is not the subject and I do not have time. If you are interested, some of these have already been dealt with, and the tapes are available. If you cannot afford them we will give them to you, but they are available to you, and you can listen to them. But tonight, I want you to see that this is what I am talking about.

What is it that made him willing? Did he decide to be willing? Did he just decide, 'I think that my will is probably in the wrong direction, I had better will in a different direction?' You say, that sounds ridiculous. It is ridiculous! We know what it was that made Paul willing, when he said, 'Lord, what will thou have me to do.' This is the very epitome of being yielded to the will of God, or of a man being willing to do what God wants him to do. Well, what made him willing? It was the power of God.

Now, God may not smite us all down, as he did Paul, to the ground, and blind us. But He victoriously deals with all of us by some means and in some manner. God was calling Paul in Acts chapter nine, and he came because God made him willing. There is a song that I used to sing some years ago. Brother Larry Adkisson has sung it here two or three times since I quit singing it. I did not quit singing it for any particular reason except I think I lost the words. It is called the Hornet Song. The closing of the song says, He does not compel us to go against our will, but he sure makes us willing to go. And you know, you would be amazed at the people who sing that song and never get the message. He sure makes us willing to go. But can He make us willing, if we are not willing to be willing? Ah, you say, that is silly. It sure is! It gets right down to stupidity. Is He God? That is the issue. Is He God, or are we God? Is He ruling the universe, or are we

ruling the universe? It is amazing to me, how that people can run around talking about when Jesus is going to come back, and when God is going to be victorious over all the world, and God can do all of this and all of that, but they imply that today God is absolutely arrested in His power, and Satan holds Him at sway, as does man, and frustrates the purposes of God. The claim seems to be that God cannot do anything within a man, if that man is not willing to let Him. Please, please, please, confess in your heart that He is God. He is the God who can. He created you. He knew what you were going to be, even in your fallen state, when He created you. He did not lose control in His creation. Let us get those foolish things out of our minds, and let the word of God speak to us. You know, I have seen a lot of people come to Christ during my ministry. I have seen people openly and publicly come forward and say, I want to turn to Christ, I am coming to Christ. I wish I had seen a thousand times more, but I have seen a good many. But of all of those that I have seen, I have never yet had a man come forward, and say, I do not want to be saved today, but God called me and I must come. I never have had that to happen. Can you imagine that happening? I cannot! It is totally out of character with everything that I have ever seen in men coming. When men come to Christ, they want to come. They want that more than anything else in the world. I will tell you something else, I do not want to talk them into coming, until God makes them ready to come willingly, because I have found out until they have a heart that wants to come they will not stay, because they are not saved. When God does a work in their heart they come most willingly and freely. So this is not denying that they resist. They do resist, but He is God and, through His grace, He breaks down that resistance and causes them to willingly and freely come.

#### **THIS DOCTRINE IS NOT AN OPTIONAL ISSUE**

Fourthly: This is not an optional issue. I am going to teach the other side of this issue next week. I am going to speak on 'what this doctrine is.' Tonight I have just dealt with what it is not. I had to say some things about what it is, but basically I dealt with what it is not. And in that context, I need to say, it is not an optional issue. You may assume the right to study this issue, or not to study it, or to teach it, or not to teach it, but you do not have that right. Do you hear me? You do not have the right to that choice. I do not care who you are, you do not have the right to that choice. With such Bible frequency as this, it is nothing but wickedness in any man's conduct to say, I am not going to get involved in the study and teaching of that doctrine. It is God's word. You have no more right to neglect that portion of it than you do the study, or the teaching, or the preaching of the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the second coming of Christ, or anything else. We simply have no right to an option in the matter. Some years ago, this was many years ago, when we were meeting over in the other building, way back in the early sixties, probably in 1960 or 1961 right soon after I had begun to pastor here and I was preaching on the doctrine of eternal security, and a young man, whose father was the pastor of a Christian Missionary Alliance Church up North, came into the services and listened one night. He came to me after the services were over and said, my father said that this would probably be a good church to attend. Since there was no Christian Missionary Alliance Church in this city, an Independent Baptist Church would be a good church. But he said, I think that I had better talk to him, because he does not believe what you preached tonight. I said, well, I beg to differ with you young man, but I believe that most of the Christian Missionary Alliance people do believe in eternal security. I did not tell him all of the things we disagreed with them about, but I said most of them do believe in eternal security. He said, my daddy does not, I am going to write and ask him. He wrote and asked him, and he got a letter back and he said I want you to read the letter. I read the letter. You would be amazed at what it said. Here is what the letter said; it has been almost thirty years ago, so I could not give it to you verbatim, but he basically said: what that preacher is preaching is taught in the

Bible, but he should not be teaching it, because it will cause loose living among the people of God. Now, here is a preacher, not even two hundred years old yet, who is wiser than God. Well, I know some who are not fifty, who are apparently wiser than God. They seem to feel that they have the right of option, to study these issues or not to study them. I do not have that option. I used to try to neglect it years ago, but God beat me over that thing until I just could not handle it any more, so I began to study what He said, and to preach what I learned. If you fear God, if you reverence His word, you had better learn. And when you have been taught, you had better teach according to what God has to say. There are too many men who know the truth today, and neglect it. Listen, there are men who know this truth, and they are too spineless to say one word in the world about it. That is why I have to say quite a bit more than they think I should about it. They are too spineless to say anything about it, because they say, we have a deep desire for peace, and these are divisive issues. Peace with who? Who is it that they desire peace with? If I desire peace with men, to the point that I have no concern about peace with God, or if I am so spiritually blind that I can neglect the doctrines of God and imagine that I have peace with God, I am in very deep trouble. I want to tell you something folks: The divine providence of Romans 8:28 is exclusively for the called. Did you know that? Today, almost everybody thinks they know what Romans 8:28 says. It is reported to be the favorite verse of more Christians than any other verse in the Bible. You can ask the average Christian to quote Romans 8:28, and ninety percent of them will misquote it for you, just like they will misquote Second Peter 3:9. Do you know how they will quote it? They will quote it like this: 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose,' and that is not what it says. That is not what it says at all. It says: "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called...*" Notice the article, the definite article, THE called. It is there in the English and it is there in the Greek, which is always the case. You will not have any trouble with this Book, if you believe it, it will be all right. This is a group referred to as 'them who are the called.' The Bible does not teach that all things work together for good to everyone. Do you think that all things worked together for good to Judas Iscariot, who is in hell today? Do you? Do you think all things work together for good to Pharaoh? No, but all the things that Pharaoh did, and all the things around him worked together for good to Moses and to God's people. And it is to those who are the called according to His purpose that this promise avails, and to no one else. All things work together for good to them who are the called, who love the Lord. Why do they love the Lord? They are the called according to His purpose.

I ask you tonight, are you among them? Are you among the called? How can you know? You say, if I am not called of God, I should be of all men most miserable. That is certainly true! You would be in miserable condition! If I am not among those that He refers to in First Corinthians chapter 1, as being called or chosen, how miserable is my state! But can I know, and if I can know, how can I know? The Bible gives us a very clear answer to those questions. 'All the father hath given me shall come unto me.' But who comes unto Him, those who are savingly drawn, or effectually called. Again scripture says, 'Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' But who will take of it, those who are savingly drawn, or effectually called. Is there something in one man, as opposed to another, which makes him thirst for this water of life, while others do not. Is the differentiating factor mere caprice, or is it fate? No! A thousand times no! It is nothing of that sort. It is God! It is God who calls us by His marvelous grace.

If you want to come to Christ this evening, if you genuinely want to come to Christ, there is no reason for you to doubt that you are chosen and called by God, because nothing else could ever make you want to come. Nothing else can make you thirst for the water of life. Now, if you just want to stay out of hell, I do not have anything to offer you. If that is all you want, there is nothing in the Bible for you but a promise of eternal judgment. I do not know of anybody that would not rather go to heaven than hell, if they believe

there are such places. Beloved, let me tell you something, folks do not get to heaven just by wanting to go to heaven. They get to heaven by being drawn to Christ and by coming to Christ. No one who comes to Christ can go to hell, and no one who does not, willingly and freely, come to Christ can go to heaven. Moreover, no one can, or will, genuinely desire to come to Christ unless he is called, DRAWN of God. That is how you can know whether or not you are among the called. Do you want Him? Do you want Him more than you want your religion? I have known of a lot of people who seemed to want Christ to some extent, even to the point that the tears flowed down their cheeks. But they reasoned thus: if I were to turn from my religion, my mother would be heartbroken, or my family would disown me, and on they go with their excuses of darkness. Well, do you want those things more than you want Christ? Then I have no heavenly promise for you. But if you want Christ enough that you are willing to come to Him, whatever the consequences may be, then come to Him. Come without reservation. Come without hesitation. Come now! That is the only way you can truly come. That is the only way any poor sinner comes to Christ. Come to Christ, and I can promise you tonight, you are among the called. If your heart now says, yes, "Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God I come!" I most willingly and freely come, I gladly come, I want to come, I want very much to come. Then, I can say to you, God has called you, and you can be absolutely sure that you `whom He called, He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified.' What love, what mercy and what grace, that I should have been, `with loving kindness' drawn to Christ. Hallelujah for the cross! Praise God for His PURE GRACE!

## Chapter Ten

### EFFECTUAL CALLING WHAT THE DOCTRINE IS

Turn please, to First Corinthians chapter 1, and verse 19. This is the same passage that we read in dealing with effectual calling negatively. I will be using other scriptures, of course, in the process of the message, but I am dealing with a particular subject tonight that I think certainly warrants the re-reading of this scripture. This is the subject of calling, or of the effectual call from a positive standpoint. If you remember, last week I spoke on it from a negative standpoint. Tonight, I want to view the subject in a positive way. That does not mean that last week I denied it, or brought the negative side of it, but I spoke on the subject of "What Effectual Calling Is Not." In other words, I tried to lay to rest some of the caricatures that make it sound like something it is not, or that dress it up in a despicable garment, for men to misunderstand, and ridicule.

In your Bibles, I Corinthians 1:19: *"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called,..."* I want you to notice that. *"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."* He is simply saying, that the message of the gospel is offensive to the Jews; it is a stumbling block, and it is shallow to the Greeks; that is, that it is foolishness. But God calls out of both Jews and Greeks a people, and that call makes the gospel something different to them. It makes it the power of God and the wisdom of God. Verse 25: *"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:..."*

May I pause for a moment to call your attention to the fact that when scripture speaks, in these verses, of God choosing particular things, or people, out of the world, it is not talking about a vocational choice, as some erroneously think and teach. I did so for some years, but I now realize that I was taking it totally out of context. The entirety of the context here is salvation. Paul is talking about salvation in verses 21 through 25. He is talking about salvation in verses 29 through 31, and he is talking about salvation everywhere in between, when He speaks of God choosing the weak things of the world. Now, notice verse 29: *"That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus,"* In other words, it is God's work that puts you in Christ. *"...who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."*

I have stated already, in the process of bringing other messages along this line, that there is a sincere and bona fide general call to all men; that is, that there is a sincere invitation to any man who desires to take of the water of life. *"And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* That does not need to be qualified. That does not need to be modified. That does not need to be explained. It means exactly what it says, and it says exactly what it seems to say. Anybody who wants to, may partake of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no problem with that at all. The question really is, what makes a man want to? To the Jews, this gospel invitation is a stumbling block. To the Greeks, this gospel invitation is foolishness. What then, makes a man want to take of the water of life? I submit to you tonight, that it is this EFFECTUAL CALL, this grace of God, that extends, the offering of God's grace to a man, and moreover, actually causes him to receive it. The proposition of this doctrine is this. Listen carefully now! The thing that I am saying to you tonight, in the teaching of this doctrine is this: There is a particular, peculiar call, which offers something to men, and which also motivates and secures their acceptance of it. I want to say that again. I am saying to you tonight, that there is a particular and a peculiar call which offers something to certain men, and also motivates and secures their acceptance of it. That CALL causes them to accept the offer. This doctrine is referred to as effectual calling. It has been referred to as the inward call. It has also been referred to as irresistible grace. That term is very poorly understood today, and therefore, I do not use it under normal circumstances, nor do I particularly recommend the use of it. We are to communicate truth to people, and in order to communicate, we have to use, as much as is possible, terms which those people understand rightly. If I, out of pride or arrogance, use a term that you do not understand, I am not going to communicate with you, I am going to confuse you. Actually the term irresistible grace was not a bad term, as it was originally intended to be understood. If we talk about a man having irresistible qualities in him, or a young lady having irresistible beauty, they are not insulted by it. Nor do we mean it, in any way, as a derogatory description. And men would think of that person as being greater because of the irresistibility of their beauty, their love, their personality, and so on. But when the grace of God is referred to as being irresistible, many men are offended. So, in order to help those who are weak, we give it another name, and refer to it as effectual calling, or the inward call of God. I present this to you now, this doctrine--hear me carefully--as the force that is implemented in regeneration.

This is illustrated by the case of Lazarus. When Jesus Christ said, 'Lazarus, come forth,' Lazarus came forth. But what caused him to desire to come forth? You might ask, did he come voluntarily? I have no doubt about it. I am sure Lazarus wanted to come forth, when he came forth. Was there an exercise of his will? Of course, but it was the will of a quickened Lazarus not a dead Lazarus. What caused him to want to come forth? Indeed, what caused him to know that the Lord had said Lazarus come forth? What caused him to hear the words? The answer is that the Lord Jesus Christ gave life to those dead ears. He gave life to that dead brain. He gave life to that dead heart. He gave life to that dead body. That is how Lazarus was able to respond. Not only did he will, but he also did of the Lord's good pleasure. I submit to you tonight, that there is a quickening call of the Holy Spirit that gives to the dead heart life. This call causes the dead heart to hear the gospel, to understand and appreciate the gospel, to desire to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to most willingly and freely accept Him.

Now, let me say this: If you have problems with this doctrine, if any who hear the tape have problems with this doctrine, I am not mad at you. Do not think that I am mad at you, or that I want to position myself as your enemy, because I have fought on this last battlefield of pride myself. I fought for a long time, and I lost. And because I lost, by God's grace, I won. So, I am not mad at anybody. I not only believe that I learned this by the grace of God, but I believe that if anybody else ever understands it, it also will be by the grace of God. Therefore, I have no reason, nor right, to be angry with any body who does not understand. This text, that we have before us tonight, and which I will read again in a moment, is a most embarrassing text to those who teach that there is no call except the universal call. I speak of that common teaching, that God comes to every man in exactly the same way, that He reveals Himself to every man in exactly the same way, and to the same extent. That is the sentiment of a lot of people. It is not the teaching of the Bible. My text in verses 23 and 24 of the first chapter of First Corinthians reads this way: "*But we preach Christ*

*crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;...*" Now, I pointed out that here the Jews and the Greeks represent all peoples. So these people are all people who would reject, or who have no care for the gospel that Paul preaches. *"But unto them which are called"*--out of both of these categories, out of the Jews and out of the Greeks, to them this message becomes something else. It becomes the power of God and the wisdom of God. Now I want us to consider four things tonight, and I will try not to stay on this subject longer than is proper.

#### A REVIEW OF THIS DOCTRINE PRESENTED NEGATIVELY

First of all, I want to take a moment to review the doctrine negatively for the benefit of those who may not have been here last Sunday night, or for the benefit of those who may have forgotten some of the things that were said. I think it is proper even in the positive approach to consider this.

Number 1: This effectual call does not equal salvation without the exercise of will. If we were to call the doctrine irresistible grace, that doctrine was never, by anyone, the teaching of salvation without the exercise of volition. It does not negate the truth that when a man comes to Christ, he wants to come to Christ.

Number 2: It is not a claim that saved people do not resist God's grace before they are saved. That is one of the caricatures that is brought against it. It is after this manner: 'You folks say that there are those people out there who just do not resist the grace of God.' No! No! We are not saying that at all. No one who knows this doctrine has ever said that. I expect that almost every man who has been saved, before he was saved, resisted the grace of God. Did the Lord Jesus Christ not say to the Apostle Paul, 'it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks?' The term here 'kicking against the pricks,' is nothing in the world but a reference to Paul's resistance to the grace of God. God was convicting him and working in his heart. So obviously, Paul had resisted to this point, but he resisted no more. It is not a statement that men who are to be saved do not resist the grace of God, nor is it a claim that men never resist the grace of God unto damnation. There are people who shall never be saved, who have very great manifestations of the grace of God brought to them, men who have heard great preachers preach, have been brought under strong conviction, and yet have died and gone to hell. Men have sat in the services where the word of God was being preached and have trembled. Remember, your Bible says, 'As Paul reasoned of things that were to come, the judgment of God, the righteousness of God, Felix trembled.' Do you not expect that it was, in some measure and sense, the working of the grace of God, that gave Felix a great enough extent of understanding and fear that he trembled? There is no doubt in my mind that he did, and that this man died and went to hell. But I say to you tonight, that he did not defeat the purpose of God, when he did so. God was not defeated. Felix did not wrestle God down, leave God exhausted, walk away and win the battle. No, he did exactly what I am talking about. He resisted a call, of some sort, unto his own damnation. I am not saying men do not do that.

Number 3: This is not a doctrine that is optional, as far as your learning or your teaching of it. Some people would say, I do not think I want to hear anymore about this. Well, you really do not have a choice as far as God is concerned. Now, as far as I am concerned you do, and as far as you are concerned you must decide. You have a right to get up and walk out the door and say, I am not going to listen to that babbler any longer. But you see, the problem with that is this: this is a Bible doctrine. It is something that is presented to you in God's Word. Because it is presented in the Bible, I am obliged to teach it, and you are obliged to learn it. We do not really have a rightful option in that matter. So those are things that I want you to understand negatively.

#### SOME BIBLICAL USAGES OF THE TERM CALLING

Secondly: I want to move to some biblical usages of this term. The important thing is not what kind of

title I would put on this term, or what kind of title you may like better. I may say, I prefer this title or that. And I may choose certain titles for the doctrine which I think are better conveyances of the truth of the doctrine. Other men may choose others. The real point is this: How does the scripture present this doctrine to us? That is the issue. Therefore, I want you to read some scriptures with me. You can write these references down if you do not want to take time to turn to all of them tonight. I am going to give you several scriptures. They basically are going to be in the book of Romans, in I Corinthians and in the book of Galatians. Now, we could go on through scripture, and find many, many more references in the New Testament. There are just so many of them! As I told you last week, there are at least fifty-seven references in the portion of the New Testament, beginning with Romans and going through the book of Revelation. Really, we could exclude those in the book of Revelation without changing the number very much, as far as the soteriological reference is concerned. But these are references that deal with God calling a man, and that call being the reason that the man is what he is, or is where he is. There are at least fifty-seven of them. Now, here are some of those, just to give you an example of it.

Romans chapter 1 and verse 6: *"Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ..."* Read that in its context! As you look at it, you will absolutely have to confess, that does not mean the same thing as someone who was merely invited, and who did not come. The context demands that we see it as being a call that made a difference, as far as these people being believers as opposed to being unbelievers. The context is very clear.

Romans 1:7: *"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."*--called to be saints. And again, in the context, if you will read the context, you will realize that the implication there is that the reason that they are saints, is that they are called. The calling itself is attributed there to their sainthood.

Romans 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."* I pointed out to you that most people quoting this verse of scripture will misquote it, because they will leave out the article the before the word called. They will say 'to them which are called.' The reason they leave that word out is that they do not understand that the word called here means more than just someone who is invited to be saved, or invited to come to Christ. But the term the called means a particular group who are the called, and they are also people who are referred to here as loving God. And if you want to argue that point, they are also people of whom He says, all things work together for good to them. Could that conceivably be said of men who go to hell? Could that conceivably be said of Judas Iscariot, or of Pharaoh? Could that be said of Satan? And I say to you that it could not. It could not be said of them, that all things work together for good to them. But it is said that all things work together for good to them who love God. What is another name for those people, Paul? They are the called according to His purpose. Do you see the usage of it there?

Notice farther, if you would, Romans 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."* Now, you understand that the scripture is saying, in this verse, without any contradiction that everyone whom He did predestinate, He called; and everyone He called, He justified; and everyone He justified, He glorified; therefore, if you relegate this word called to a definition that simply means invited, then you have everyone who has ever been invited to turn to Christ, justified and glorified. Does the Bible reveal any such thing as that? It certainly does not.

Let us go ahead in the reading of the scripture to Romans 9:23: *"And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called,..."* Notice the term there: even us whom he hath called... *"not of Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"*



So he equates those whom he has called to the vessels of mercy, afore prepared unto glory. You say, I do not like that. God wrote it, do not fuss at me about it. I did not write it. I never would have figured that out. God revealed it to us, and we are obligated to hear it.

Then if you would, go on in I Corinthians 1:2: "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints...*" (How many times we find this term, 'called to be saints!') "*... with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:...*"

Verse 24 of that chapter: "*But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*"

Verse 26: "*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:...*" If you make that a universal call you have a real problem there, because he said, not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty are called. It is not a universal call. It is a call that is limited to particular people, and the Lord says, not many of those people who are called, are wise, or mighty, or noble. You have to accept that if you believe the word of God.

I Corinthians 7:15: "*But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.*" He is talking about the state of the saved, which he says is peace. And he said, that is what God has called us unto. It is not just an invitation. It is a work of God that has brought us into that blessed state. Verse 17: "*But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.*" In other words, he said, if you are called being a servant, then do not worry about it. If you are called being a free man, then use that freedom for the service of God. But he uses the word called here as being the work of God. Now notice this context. Please read it and pay attention to what God is saying. It is so plain, you cannot help but see it here. He uses this word called as being the cause of the person coming to saving faith and repentance. He uses the word called. But this work of calling is the reason for their salvation in the context. "*...is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.*" Verse 21: "*Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*" Now, is he asking 'were you invited?' No, of course, he is not. He is talking about this call as being the effectual work of God that brought these men to salvation.

Galatians, chapter 1 and verse 6: "*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.*" The Bible is replete with references such as this. And so, it is not an issue in which we have any option as to whether we give it our attention. I have just gone through three books, giving you some of the references from those books, and certainly not all of the references in those books. We could go on, and on, and on, and give you at least fifty-seven references out of your New Testament. Excluding the gospels and the book of Acts, we could give you at least fifty-seven references. And those should convince you that you had better know what this doctrine of calling is. We had better study it.

### DEFINING THE DOCTRINE OF EFFECTUAL CALLING

Thirdly: I want to go to the point of defining this doctrine. By the term, 'effectual calling,' or 'the inward call,' or 'the effectual call of God,' I mean that it is a work of the Holy Spirit, by which He causes a man to receive Christ through faith. The Bible teaches us that those whom God had given to the Son, in the eternal covenant of grace, will come to Him in faith. I do not have time to get into all of that, but you surely know that the Bible teaches it. Notice John chapter 6, verse 37: "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.*" John 17:9: "*I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.*" 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...*" He is

speaking of His own saving work. And so, you see that it is in your Bible, whether the world likes it or not, it is there. Whether the religious world can accept it or not, God said it. What I am saying here is that God not only has chosen men out of a condemned world, but God has reconciled them to Himself, by the blood of His Son, and that all of those who are by His blood reconciled; that is, those who died with Him on the cross shall be called into the faith. Do you understand that? If you are saved, there is a positional sense in which you were in Christ on the cross, and you died when He died. Positionally, your sins were carried away when He went to the grave. Positionally, you were made alive when He was resurrected. Positionally, you rose in Him. The Bible teaches that. That is not some dream that I have had. The Bible is very clear on that. This divine effectual call, secures in these people, repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ. What is that repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ? It is what Paul preached! Paul says in Acts 20:21, that what he preached, everywhere he went, was repentance toward God, and faith toward Jesus Christ. To the Jews and the Gentiles alike, he preached repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ. Nobody is saved without repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ. In the book of I Corinthians, chapter 1 and verse 23, the Apostle Paul said, "*But we preach Christ crucified.*" Are these two different messages? No! They are both the same message! Christ and Him crucified, and repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ are nothing but different aspects of the same message. Do you see what I am talking about? What is this responsibility? I ask this because the way Paul presents it in the book of Acts, repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ, are unquestionably human responsibilities. Someone says, I believe everybody that ever heard the gospel is responsible to repent. I have news for you. They are responsible to repent whether they ever hear the gospel or not. They do not have to hear the gospel to be responsible to repent. Do you know how I know? Because the Bible teaches me that God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. There are men who never hear the gospel. Indeed those men who do hear the gospel, hear it by grace. God does not owe it to them. It is by the grace of God that we hear the gospel. It is nevertheless, a responsibility, and it is this effectual call of God, that secures the execution of this responsibility. It is this call of God that caused Lazarus to come forth. And every time that a sinner repents toward God and trusts in Jesus Christ, spiritually, another Lazarus is given life, joyfully obeys God and comes forth. That is exactly what happens. It is God's action in quickening whosoever He wills. Do you believe God can do that? Do you have a problem with that? Do you have a poor helpless God who cannot quicken who He wants to quicken? I am glad to say that I have a God who can. And this is God's action in quickening whosoever He wills to quicken. The effect of this call is the converting of the unwilling heart. Now listen carefully, I want you to hear this. It is the converting of the unwilling heart, not the forcing of a man against his will. There is no claim made that this ever forces a man to turn to Christ against his will. It is the converting of an unwilling heart, thus making it willing. Paul tells us in the book of Philippians, it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. When we obey God, we obey God because we want to. We want to, because God works in our heart and it is this work, which causes us to will and to do of His good pleasure. We can see the result of this illustrated so perfectly in the case of Lydia from Thyatira, the seller of purple, in Acts chapter 16. We will not turn there, most of you are quite familiar with it. The Bible says that Paul and Silas went down to a particular place where a group of women met for prayer. At first it did not give any of their names, it just said that Paul spoke to those women. Then it said, among those women, there was a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, from the city of Thyatira, whose heart the Lord opened, so that she attended unto the things spoken by Paul. Think about that! God opened her heart. And the result of God opening her heart was that she listened to what Paul said. And the result of that was that she turned to God in repentance and faith. The account is right there. The scripture tells us so clearly that she did this because God opened her heart. "*Whose heart God opened,*" so that she heard and

believed.

#### THE AFFIRMATION OF THIS BIBLE DOCTRINE

Fourthly, and finally, I will state my affirmation of this doctrine. By that I simply mean that I want to affirm that this teaching is biblical. I want to take a stand and say openly, and clearly, and plainly, that the doctrine that I have presented to you tonight, is not merely a theory that some men hold, and that I may or may not hold. I want to say to you that I firmly stand, unquestionably, and unapologetically upon this doctrine. I believe it. I preach it. I stand for it. Now, listen to what I am saying. I have written this down, I am going to read it to you. If you want a copy of what I am stating here, I will be glad to give you a copy. Here is my statement: God having sovereignly chosen men out of justly condemned mankind, to be vessels of mercy, and having reconciled them to Himself by the blood of His Son, does through the preaching of the gospel, and by the work of His Holy Spirit, consistently, definitely, and effectually call them every one, to certain faith and repentance, and thus to certain eternal life. Now, if that looks to you like that stamps out human responsibility, you do not understand one thing about what I am saying. It is, indeed, the very foundation of human responsibility. It does not take away any human responsibility at all. I want you to hear it again. This is what I am stating: I am stating that God having sovereignly chosen men out of justly condemned mankind, to be vessels of mercy, and having reconciled them to Himself by the blood of His Son, does through the preaching of the gospel, and by His Spirit, consistently, definitely, and effectually call them every one, to certain faith and repentance and thus to certain eternal life. Some people, so ignorantly say, well, if that is the case why should we preach? My friend, if that is not the case, why should we preach? If that is not the case, there would be no hope in our preaching, for every man would remain in the blind state of the Jews and the Greeks, described in First Corinthians 1:23: *'To them it is a stumbling block, or it is foolishness.'* One brother said recently, concerning this matter, "The wonderful part of this is knowing that we are fishing in a stocked pond." In other words, God has some people to whom He has sent us. He is going to call them. But He is not going to finally call them into the faith, without the preaching of the gospel. He never has. He never will. That is the means He ordained, so we must go with the gospel. Our responsibility is there. Nor, are they going to come to Him without repentance and faith, for it is unto faith and repentance that He calls them. Furthermore, let me say, never one without the other. This gospel today that implies that a man may trust Christ, and continue to embrace in his heart, and hang onto and love his sins, is as false as a three dollar bill. It is not the gospel of the Bible, and it is not what God sent any man to preach. All hope of evangelism lies in this truth. Open your Bibles, to John 17:2. I quoted this a moment ago, but I want you to turn there and listen to this verse of scripture. I think to get the context right, we will take time to read also, verse number 1. *"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."* Now, the average philosophy today of the religious man is that Jesus Christ will give eternal life to as many as, for some unknown reason, happen to desire to cooperate with Him. After all, say they, He cannot save you unless you let Him. Have you not heard that? Is that what this verse says? Is that what your Bible says? This verse says, *"thou hast given him power over all flesh."* How did He save me? By my voluntarily, deciding, in my human nature, to cooperate with Him? I answer you, `No, but by His overcoming my flesh, by His power over my flesh, to defeat my flesh, to break my hardened, sinful heart, and to cause me to turn to God in repentance and to Jesus Christ in faith. That is the only hope there is in evangelism. All preaching to men with dead hearts depends upon it.

I have used the shallow little illustration frequently about the lady who asked Charles Spurgeon if he could call forth the dead. And he said surely I can call forth the dead. The only problem is they do not come.

Which of you could not go out to a graveyard and say to all the people out there, 'come forth'? You could walk along and read the names on the tombstones, and call them by name, and say, 'come forth.' Is there anybody here who could not do that? I do not know any reason why you could not. Unless you have some kind of phobia, or a fear of a graveyard, you could do that. But I will tell you something, I think you could do that from now until daylight in the morning and until dark tomorrow night, and I do not think you would have very many trophies of your labor. I do not think very many people would come forth. Do you? And you understand why. It is because they are dead, and they would not even hear your call.

And so it is, when we go preaching the gospel, we are preaching to those who, according to the Bible, are dead in trespasses and sin. You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin. (Eph. 2:1) These men to whom we are preaching are dead in trespasses and sin, thus we are totally dependent upon this work of God referred to in the Bible as calling. I would never see anyone saved, none of us would see anyone saved in response to our preaching, were it not for this work of God that effectually calls them forth. We preach the gospel and we invite them by the gospel, but they are actually and effectually called to life by the Spirit of God. They would never be saved otherwise. All prayer presupposes it. Some years ago, a young missionary wrote a letter, a standard prayer letter written to all of the churches, and he had been a missionary who probably would not have agreed with this doctrine, at least on the surface. If you let him preach it from the pulpit, he probably would have had some trouble with it. But he said this: "I want you to pray for this young man. I have said everything I know to say to him, the only one who can do anything for him now is God." He was stating exactly what I am stating tonight. That God must call him forth. And all of our preaching, and all of our prayers suppose that God has the ability to call him and persuade him to come.

Have you ever heard someone bow their head and say, 'Dear Heavenly Father, I have a burden on my heart for Joe. He is out here in the grips of sin, cheating on his wife, and he is drinking a bucket of whisky every day, and he is beating his kids, and he is a rotten employee and he is going from bad to worse, and Lord if You are able, I want you to save Joe.' I have never heard a Christian pray like that. If I ever heard a Christian pray like that, I would think, someone who did not know God had trained that poor person. I would think he did not know God from grandma. What does a Christian pray? What is it that his heart knows of God, even if his mind does not? When a Christian is disposed to bow himself before God and pray, what is it that his heart knows of God? His heart knows that God is able. And he says, Lord, please break Joe's heart, and turn him from his wickedness, and turn him from his sin, and save him. His prayer presupposes the ability of God to call him out of his darkness into light. That is what this doctrine of calling is.

May I go farther and point out that all means which are employed are only, only, only, the facilities of this call. When the Lord Jesus said to Lazarus, Come forth, it was nothing more than the giving of instruction to a man whom He had just resurrected from the dead. Do you have a problem with that? He has made him alive. Now, He is telling him what to do. God sends us out to tell dead men what to do. But they will never hear what we have to say, until God makes them alive. Repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ is our message. But they will never obey the message until God makes them alive. Who makes the difference?

Listen to this and I am coming to a close. Who makes the difference in the fallen man's destiny? When we stand before God and we praise God for our salvation, who will get the credit? Will we lift one hand to God in praise and pat ourselves on the back with the other, and say, thank you Lord for doing what You did, and thank you Sam for doing your part? I do not think so. I think all who know God, when they stand there, will know that it is God who made the difference. To whom do we credit this difference? Do we credit

**it to God, or do we credit it to the man? Will you not confess that it is God's calling that makes the preaching of Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God?**

## Chapter Eleven

### DIVINE PRESERVATION

I am bringing the eleventh message in a series entitled Grace Not Calvinism. Tonight, I am bringing the first of two messages, on the division of the series, which I will call preservation and perseverance. These will be the last two messages in the series, and the first of two messages (tonight's message) will be on the subject of Preservation. The doctrine of preservation is frequently identified as the doctrine of eternal security. However, there is a great deal more in it than just the subject of the saints' security. It explains why the saint is secure. It tells us about the reason behind this. In the final message, I will be dealing with the doctrine of perseverance. That is, the true Christian's responsibility and tendency to continue in His word, and in the pursuit of holiness. These two messages will be brought as being relevant to each other, and of course, as I said, they are the last part of the series entitled Grace Not Calvinism. In this particular passage, here in Ephesians chapter 6, we are dealing with Christian responsibility. Then in my other text of scripture, over in the book of II Timothy, I will be dealing with the statement, a definite statement, that Paul makes concerning God's preservation of the saint.

Let us start to read in Ephesians 6:13: *"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"* We see in this text the responsibility of perseverance. Of course, we can see that in many other places in our Bible. We will get to that later.

Now, let us read from the book of II Timothy, chapter 4, and for our text this evening, just verse 18: *"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* As you surely understand, these verses that I have read, are just a few of hundreds of verses in your Bible, that deal with these subjects, and yet they are somewhat unique in that they use these particular words. You will notice that one of the verses in the book of Ephesians uses the word perseverance, and it stated it as a Christian responsibility. Then, of course, in the book of II Timothy, we find Paul making the statement that God will preserve him. So obviously, whatever else these doctrines are, they are biblical doctrines. God preserves, and the Christian is to persevere.

Actually, it would be remiss, or careless, or perhaps even very ignorant of me to address one of these subjects without the other. I do not mean that I could not preach on one subject and not particularly preach on the other at that time, because I could. I know I could, because the Bible deals with those subjects individually, and therefore, I could do so. But I should not do so within an organized series like this, in which I am preaching on all the doctrines, which are supposed to encompass the whole biblical revelation of soteriology, and that is what this series is intended to do. Certainly, under these circumstances, I must deal with both sides of this issue. The question that should enter our mind is this. Is either of these doctrines true?

There are those who believe that both of them are true. There are those that believe that neither one of them is true. And there are those who believe that only one of them is true. And so, I want to look at it from that direction. Is either, is neither, or are both of these taught in the scripture? There are some who teach

**this doctrine very lopsidedly. I know of Baptists, who are ignorant of the responsibility and tendency of Christian perseverance. However, they are aware of the biblical truth of divine preservation. Therefore, they will teach eternal security as if it were something like an irrevocable contract that the Christian has made with God. In other words, as if man has gotten himself in, and now God does not have any right to throw him out, and therefore, God will and must keep him. I do not mean to imply that everybody that may teach this lopsidedly goes to that extent, but there are those who teach that. On the other hand, there are those, not Baptists of course, who do not believe in eternal security, who will teach very vehemently the responsibility for Christian perseverance, and will indeed teach you that if you do not sufficiently persevere you will not be saved. And even if you do persevere for a great period of time, you still might not finally make it, but you had better do your best, because that is the only hope you have. This group will not teach anything, of course, on the side of eternal security, or of divine preservation, because they do not believe it.**

### **DEFINING THE TERMS PRESERVATION AND PERSEVERANCE**

**First of all, I want to define these two terms. I know that I have implied definition already, but I want to be sure that you understand what I am talking about. When I say preservation, or I talk about divine preservation, as a biblical subject, I want to be sure you know what I mean. I am not interested in what the world has to say, as far as a definition. In other words, if you were to go to your dictionary, you would not get a Bible definition, but you would get a definition that is so broad that it would take all day to get from there to here, and would cover everyone's definition of it, so we are cutting through that. I am simply saying that when we talk about the doctrine of preservation, we are talking about God's activity on the Christian's behalf that will certainly keep him, and finally bring him to heaven. Let me say that again. We are talking about God's activity on the Christian's behalf that will most certainly keep that Christian, and finally bring him safely into God's everlasting kingdom.**

**When I talk about perseverance, I am talking about the Christian's basic continuance in God's will and direction in spite of adversity. Do you understand what I am saying? I mean to say that the Christian is not going to live a life where he is always walking in rose strewn pathways. There will be adversity. But we, as Christians, have a responsibility to continue in the direction that God has pointed out for us, in spite of the adversity that we meet. Both of these, as a necessity and as an activity, are Bible doctrines. By that I mean to say, that God's activity for the Christian, that will certainly bring him into heaven, is clearly a Bible doctrine; and that Christian perseverance as a Christian responsibility, and as a basic Christian propensity, is also taught in your Bible. I am going to be speaking on those two subjects, one tonight and the other, the Lord willing, next Sunday night.**

**Now in the scheme of soteriological order, which I have laid before you; that is, The fall of man, The choice of God, The work of God's atonement, The work of God's calling, and finally, The work of God's keeping, this is the final portion. It is God's keeping of those who have been sovereignly chosen, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and called to faith and repentance by the Holy Spirit. It is God keeping them so that they will, ultimately and certainly, spend eternity in God's everlasting kingdom. So, it is the last in the series. This doctrine is that which assures us, that everyone who is chosen, and is reconciled to God, and is called into Jesus Christ according to the purpose of God, shall be with Him in glory; as our Lord requests in John 17. So that is the doctrine I am dealing with.**

### **DIVINE PRESERVATION PROVED NEGATIVELY**

**The second thing I want to look at is the doctrine of divine preservation proved negatively. Sometimes, when we want to show the reality of a truth, we take the opposite side of it, and we say, what if it were this**

way? And we conclude, that would not make any sense at all, and so perhaps we had better look at it from the other side. If we take the Arminian view; that is, that a person may be saved and then be lost again, what would be the implications of that, either biblical or un-biblical? I know this may be an unorthodox way to come at this, but I want to do so for the sake of understanding.

In the first place, if a person could be saved and lost again, it would be quite obvious that his being lost again would be a result of sin. Therefore, his remaining saved would be a result of abstaining from sin, and therefore, all of the scriptures in the Bible that make it very clear that salvation is all of grace, would be in error. Salvation would not be all of grace. In other words, if after you are saved, you do something that keeps you saved, your ultimate salvation is not all of grace. Now, I am not contradicting the doctrine of Christian perseverance. We will get to it next week. Just leave that alone for now and follow what I am saying to you. If there is something you must do to stay saved after you are saved, and that must be done in order to get you to heaven, then when you get to heaven you cannot possibly conclude that salvation is all of grace. It is of grace, plus whatever you did, that made the difference between you getting to heaven, and that person who was saved, and did not finally get there. Surely, you see the logical conclusion. If you go the other direction, 'salvation by grace' will not work at all.

Not only that, but we understand that if we are truly saved by grace, that everything that differentiates between the person who is saved, and the person who is not saved, must also be of grace. Everything that makes a difference as to whether the person gets to heaven or does not get to heaven must be of grace. In other words, if I do something that makes a difference, and salvation is of grace, then what ever I do must be of grace. And I do something that makes a difference! Wait a minute, you say. Oh, yes, the Bible says, *"except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* I repented! Had I not repented, I would have perished. The Bible is clear on that subject. The Bible says, *"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already."* I believed. Had I not believed, I would have been condemned. The Bible is most clear on that point. May I then, credit to myself the merit of faith and repentance as being the differentiating factors? I say to you, no. These are differentiating factors indeed. The Bible makes that clear. But I cannot credit them to myself. They are the inseparable fruits of God's saving grace. So, if we extend this into the area of maintenance and we say, whatever I did in order to get into the favor of God, in order to have my sins forgiven, whatever was done there, that was of grace, but once I am in, there are things that I must do, and they are not of grace, then we have totally negated the biblical doctrine of salvation by grace.

Is the Christian different? Yes, he is. But why is he different? God makes him different. That is why he is different. God makes the difference. Ephesians, chapter 2 and verse 8: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:"* (that faith is not of yourselves) *"it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,"* (Does perseverance involve good works? Yes, it does.) *"unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* The point that I am wanting to make here is that salvation is all of God. Salvation is not of God, if you must do certain things and God repays you by saving you or keeping you, but the Bible teaches that salvation is of God, and that truth stands alone. I do not have time to dwell any longer upon that matter, but I am just saying that if we take the arguments against eternal security, and we ask, if a person fell, how would they fall, and when you have given any kind of an intelligent answer to that question, and anyone has accepted it, they have totally denied the whole principle of salvation by grace. There is no such thing as salvation by grace if you swallow that.

**DIVINE PRESERVATION IS A BIBLE DOCTRINE**



Thirdly, I must simply state, and then I will prove in the rest of the message, that this doctrine of absolute divine preservation is a Bible doctrine. That is basically what I am dealing with tonight and not perseverance. I will deal with perseverance next week, but tonight I want to prove that preservation is a Bible doctrine. If a doctrine is understood, and it is totally seen, and is truly illogical, it is not of God. Do you hear what I am saying to you? God's doctrines are logical, once they are understood. Now, some of them we cannot totally understand. Therefore, we will not always see the whole logic in them. But I am saying that the way that God does things is always logical or supra-logical as far as man is concerned. It is never sub-logical. In other words, you cannot find anything that God has ever done, and be able to say, I could work out a better way to do that. You never will. If you know anything about God, you will not come to that conclusion. If you think you have a better way of doing something, than the way God did it, you do not know up from down about God. You do not know any better way of doing things than the way God did them. Why? Because God does all things well. Not only does He do all things well, He does all things perfectly. You will never figure out any better way. So, I am saying to you, that we are not viewing something that is illogical, or sub-logical, when we look at the doctrine of divine preservation.

But on the other hand, if something is only logical, it may mislead us. For instance, you may see something, and you say, well, you know this is logical. It is quite logical to you yet it may be wrong. For instance, it may seem logical if you can argue with somebody thus: What if a person turns from the faith? What if they quit believing? The Bible says if you do not believe, you are condemned already. What if a person quits believing? Would that person not be lost and condemned? And the answer would be, yes, from any kind of a logical standpoint. But the problem is, that is only logical and it is built upon a false premise. That, of course, is a premise that a person begins to believe as an act of their own will, and therefore, they can quit believing as an act of their own will. Neither of those two things is even remotely true. And so, I am saying to you, that we need to be careful about looking at something only from a logical standpoint.

Having said that, let me say that if we are on scriptural ground, we are on safe ground. In other words, you may look at one of these doctrines, and you say, well, yes, that is what the Bible says, but it just does not make sense to me. Well, big deal. That is just because we are not smart enough. It is not because there is anything wrong with the doctrine, or because there is any flaw in the biblical revelation. If the Bible reveals that it is done in a particular way, and it just does not make sense to me, that is because of my ignorance. There are many things that I can say to my grandchildren, which are perfectly true, that just would not make sense to them. Why? Because they have not yet developed to the point of being able to understand those things, but that does not take away from the reality of those things. They are just as true. So the only view from which we can know that something is true, or that it is false, is from the Bible, not from the standpoint of logical argument, even though I believe that from a logical argument we could prove divine preservation. Why would God give His Son for someone and then let them fall? You say, well I do not think that I like that argument very much. Well, that is alright, I got it from Paul. Turn to Romans, 8:32: *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."* And in the context of this, he deals with divine preservation, so it is a logical argument, and it is a biblical argument. Do you see what I am talking about?

### SCRIPTURES THAT PROVE DIVINE PRESERVATION

Now, as the main body, and the remaining portion of our message tonight, I want to give you a biblical exposition of a few of literally hundreds of scriptures which teach this doctrine. We could just go on, and on, and on, with such scriptures, but I will only give a few. I heard a man speak some time ago, and I believe he said, I am going to give you, in the process of the relatively short message, it seems to me he may have said

49 reasons, or 40 reasons why the saint is secure. And he simply went through and laid down a reason and he gave a scripture, and he gave another, and all of these were just very, very logical, nor did he exhaust the scriptures. I saw one message on that some time ago, in a little flyer, and it seems to me like he said, a hundred and one reasons. I suppose if a person wanted to give a thousand and one, and wanted to spend long enough in the Bible, he would find them. I want to give you a few scriptures, and show you how that those scriptures unquestionably prove the saints' security, because of God's preservation of His people.

First of all, notice Romans 8:28-30; now all of us are familiar with that. But it is not worn-out as far as I am concerned. I am not finished with it yet. I hope you are not. Romans 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."* That verse alone assures us of eternal security if there was nothing else on the subject. Let us hypothesize that you are saved, you are among those who love God, you are among those who are the called according to His purpose, and there comes into your life something that causes, or allows, you to turn away from God, and you lose your salvation and go to hell. It could not conceivably be said of you, that the thing worked together for your good. For it did not. It would have worked for your damnation. Obviously then, that could not happen. Nothing could make or allow you to turn away unto damnation! He goes on to say, in explaining how it is that we know that all things work together for good; *"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. 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."* In other words, he sets this before us in such a way that he says everything from God's eternal foreknowledge to the ultimate glorification of the saint, when we are given a body like unto His glorious body, everything that takes place there, is of God. That is what he is saying.

Not only does he say that all circumstances must work for us, but he also says in the second place, that God's purpose and power work for us. In your Bibles in the Gospel of John, chapter 10; and really this message could come from the tenth chapter of John alone. I could spend literally weeks, right here, dealing with the subject if I desired to do so, but that is not my direction or purpose. Read John 10:27: *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:..."* I could not possibly preach on the subject of perseverance next week, without also bringing forth this verse of scripture, because it is relevant, and it is in context. But look at the next verse: *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* He goes on in the following verse to say: *"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* In other words, the indication here is that they are safe. They shall never perish. They shall never perish! Notice that. *"I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish."* Who is it Lord, that You are saying shall never perish? How do we identify this group that You are saying shall never perish? *"My sheep."* That is who He said. No question about it. My sheep shall never perish. Why, Lord? Because I give unto them eternal life. And because *"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* Out of Your Father's hand? Oh, yes, they are in My hand, and they are in My Father's hand. And if they were to be lost, someone would need to pluck them out of My hand, and out of My Father's hand.

Now, the Arminian comes along and says, 'Oh, but they can jump out.' Chapter and verse, Sir? And then we will talk about it. I have argued that point, and they all want to go over to the book of Acts, where Paul said, *"Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved,"* And they always misquote it and they say, the Bible said, except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. The Bible does not say that at all. Paul said this concerning those sailors. Paul told the soldiers, except these sailors abide in the ship ye cannot be saved. The sailors are acting as if they are going to let down a lifeboat, but they are preparing to abandon ship and you

cannot handle it. They are going to leave us on this ship by ourselves, and we would never know how to bring it to the land. And he said, if they do not stay in the ship, we cannot be saved. But Paul has already said, God has given me a direct revelation in the night, and no life is going to be lost. The ship is going to be lost, but no life is going to be lost. How are these lives going to be saved, Paul? These sailors are going to abide in the ship. The soldiers took their swords and cut the ropes and let the lifeboats fall into the water, and drift away. The sailors then had no way of making it to shore, except getting the ship into the cove. So they ran the ship into this little inlet, and let it break up, then they took the boards and floated to the shore, and all of them were saved. No one died. But the point is that the Arminians misuse that scripture. You will always have to misuse a scripture to do anything but accept this doctrine, for it says that God's power and purpose keep us. That is to say, the fact that His sheep shall never perish, is established by the fact that they are in the hand of God.

Then, Christ's intercession assures our security. John, chapter 17, verses 6 through 11: *"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."* Listen to that. Listen to those words. These words are the prayer of Christ for me. No, not just for the apostles, not just for the believers in that day and time, more than the apostles, but they are for me—keep through thy power. I ask you, will the Heavenly Father grant this prayer of the Son? And the Lord says He will. Whatever He asks of the Father, the Father gives it to Him. He says, I know You always hear Me, and always grant My prayers. And so the fact that Jesus Christ intercedes for us assures our salvation. John said in I John, chapter 2 and verse 1, *"...these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father,..."* we have an advocate. We have someone that intercedes for us, a High Priest. And so, we are secured by that. We are told in the book of Hebrews 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."* And so the intercession of Christ keeps us. I must hurry to a conclusion.

Let us move on and say, our faith, which is of God, assures us. He that believeth in Him shall never perish. If you are a believer, if you truly are a person trusting in Christ, if you know Him in the free pardon of sin, if you are looking to Him, that faith assures you. You say, Preacher, how do you know? John 5:24 makes it very clear. *"Verily, verily, I say unto you,..."* (Verily, verily, simply means truly. He says, I am not joking about this. This is something in which I am very serious. You can believe it. You can believe it, He says.) *"...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."* Shall not come into condemnation. You can write that off. That is not going to happen to him. All other kinds of things may happen to him, but that is not going to happen to him. He may come into the condemnation of the world. He may come into persecution. He may come into ill health. He may die of a great sickness, but he is not going to come into divine condemnation. The word of God says that is not going to happen to him, any way in the world.

Not only that, but Christ's blood totally secures us. If the Bible teaches anything about the blood of Christ, it teaches us that we, as Christians, are now reconciled. *'...being now reconciled by His death.'* Yes, we are reconciled by the blood of Christ. I know that this is difficult for some people to comprehend, but if any person who is reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus Christ, could ever be lost, the entire Bible

doctrine of atonement would be totally meaningless. If we are reconciled by the blood of Christ, we are totally secure. Consider Hebrews 10:14, and listen carefully to these words: *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* You say, 'Preacher, are you perfect?' Yes, I am. 'You mean you do not sin?' I did not say that. Sure, I sin. Someone said, if I believed in this doctrine of eternal security, I would sin all I wanted to. I sin a lot more than I want to. But I am perfect, not because I do not sin, but because my sins are taken away. I am perfected forever, by the offering of His blood. Therefore, says Paul, *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"*

The whole work of Christ as described in the gospel assures it. In your Bible, notice Romans, chapter 8 and verse 31: *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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."*

Now, what is he talking about? If God be for us, who can be against us? He is not saying, of course, that we will not have adversity, but who can ultimately win an eternal battle against us? Who can defeat us in this spiritual sense? Well, what do you mean Paul? What kind of a defeat are you talking about? He said, alright, we will get more specific. *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"* Who shall credit sin to their account? Why do you ask such a question, Paul? He said, because *"it is God that justifieth."* He said, it is not something that man did, that cleared him of sin, that made him just. It is God that made him just. It is Christ that died. That is the basis of the fact that nothing can be laid to the believer's account. It is based on the fact that Christ died, that He rose again, that He is alive, and He is seated at the right hand of God. He is the Great High Priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, who shall never die. We can never be thrust out of the city of refuge, because the Priest never will die. Remember how that the people in the city of refuge were safe as long as the priest lived, and I am safe in my city of refuge as long as my Priest lives. Whatever I am guilty of, whatever there may be out there waiting and lurking in the darkness, and seeking to pull me down, and to destroy me, they will surely fail as long as my Priest lives. And my Bible says, He liveth evermore. He is alive evermore. That is where the basis of my security or my preservation lies. It is not in something I am going to do. It is in something God has done, and something God is doing today. Only if God fails will I spend eternity in hell.

#### CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE ASSURES OUR PRESERVATION

Let us come then to the last point, and I have to hurry through this. Christ's obedience to God's will assures our preservation. I do not know of a stronger statement in all of the Bible for eternal security than John Chapter 6, verses 37 through 39. If you ever have a real need to establish eternal security for somebody, and you do not really know all the verses you ought to turn to, turn to this one. I hope you know dozens of them, but remember this one if you remember nothing else. 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. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."* Now, do you believe, do you believe, that Jesus Christ accomplished the Father's will? Do you believe that He succeeded in doing the Father's will, or that He failed? Well, you say, I believe He succeeded. I do not believe Christ failed. I agree. So let us look and see what that will is that the Father sent Him to accomplish in verse 39: *"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing,"* This does not say, 'Though they might jump, climb, or fall out of my hand and be lost, I will not lose them.' No, no, that is not what He says, He says; *"I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."* You see, that precludes the possibili-

ty of anyone `jumping out,' `falling out,' being dragged out of, fading away, losing the faith, or any such thing. He said God's will for Me, concerning those He has given Me, is this. I would save them and raise them up at the last day, to the resurrection of life. We could go on, and on, but if you are not established in this doctrine by these scriptures, then twice that many would not establish you. It will take nothing less than the grace of God to make any person a believer in Jesus Christ, and it will take nothing less than the grace of God to make any person a believer in the pure grace of God. And so I am not angry at anyone who does not believe it. I feel very sorry for them, but I am not angry at them. Our Lord says the Father gave me some. Precisely that number shall come to Me, and I will preserve precisely that number, and raise them up at the resurrection of life. If one was ever given by the Father, and did not come to Christ, Christ was in error here. Moreover, if one ever came to Christ and is lost, not preserved to the resurrection of life, He was equally wrong. I believe Christ! I hope you also can.

Next week I am going to address the issue of perseverance, but I want to ask you tonight, are you one of those who shall be preserved to God's everlasting kingdom? Are you? Are you really in that number? Are you in that group? And I can say, if you have turned to Christ, or if you ever shall repent and turn to Christ, then you can know that you are in that group. You can be sure. You can say, yes, God broke my heart over my sin, and He brought me to Christ, trusting nothing, holding nothing, embracing nothing, seeking nothing but the free pardon of sin through the person of Christ. May you say yes, yes indeed, my heart says, what the lady who wrote that great hymn said. "Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come!" Can you say, I came like that, that was the attitude and faith of my heart? Then, I can assure you, that you will be preserved to His everlasting kingdom. Remember what He says, also, *all the Father giveth me shall come to me*. There is no other way for a person to be saved, except to come to Christ. They do come, they come to Christ. Have you come to Christ? Has there been that time in your life when you definitely, unquestionably came to Jesus Christ? If not, I hope tonight, that all other hope will dashed to nothing, and you will completely despair until you have come to Him.

## Chapter Twelve

### CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE

Those of you who have been here throughout the series, know that this is the twelfth and last message in a series that I am calling, Grace Not Calvinism. The term Calvinism is a term that has been attached to these doctrines, wrongly or rightly, it does not matter to me so much one way or the other. The point is this. What I am teaching is not something that came from a man, by the name of John Calvin. It comes from the Bible, and if not, I ought not be teaching it. In the previous eleven messages, I dealt with the overview of the series. I dealt with human depravity. I dealt with the doctrine of sovereign election. I dealt with the doctrine of atonement. I dealt with the doctrine of effectual calling. And then, I dealt with the first part of this doctrine called preservation, the doctrine of God's preserving His saints.

In this message, I want to deal with the doctrine of perseverance, and it is simply the other side of the doctrine of preservation. Listen to these scriptures as our Lord speaks in John chapter 8, verses 30 through 32, and then we will open our Bibles to the book of Ephesians, chapter 6. John chapter 8 and verse 30: *"As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

You need to remember the context in which we are reading. It goes all the way back to John chapter 6, and of course, you find in that passage, Jews who falsely professed faith in Christ, and He is basically speaking to the same group of people here. I cannot take time to get into all of that, but I want you just to keep this context in your mind, particularly verse 31, and I will come back to it in a moment. Now, turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 6, and verse 13. *"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;..."*

I want you to have two verses of scripture in your mind, as we approach this subject. Verse number 18: *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;..."* Notice those words 'with all perseverance.' And then in the 8th chapter of the Gospel of John, and again in verse 31: *"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;..."* In the last message, I dealt with the doctrine of preservation; that is, God preserving those who are brought to faith in Christ, unto His everlasting kingdom. I showed you how that the Bible unquestionably, unquestionably, UNQUESTIONABLY, teaches that those who are genuinely born again will not lose their salvation, but will be kept unto everlasting glory. Our Lord Jesus Christ said in John 6:39, where we read earlier: *"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."* Now, lest someone should beguile you with human foolishness, and say, 'He does not lose them, but they can turn away.' The Lord said in that verse, among other things, that if He does the Father's will, He will raise up at the last day, all of those that the Father has given Him. You cannot escape that. It is in the scripture, and it is far too clear for argument. If that were not enough there are hundreds of other verses in the Bible,

that are equally clear.

But this message is not dealing with preservation. It is addressing the doctrine of perseverance. It is focused upon Christian perseverance. These verses not only enjoin perseverance in us, or exhort us to persevere, but they assume its basic presence in the life of genuine Christians. This is not the final truth of this issue. Preservation is the final cause; that is, God preserves us. I could not possibly preach properly upon perseverance until I had first preached upon preservation, for none of us could persevere unless God preserved. I have to come at it from that direction.

You must realize that our perseverance is not the thing which finishes our salvation. God's preservation is the thing that finishes the work, and our perseverance is basically the evidence of God's preservation. It is sad that most people who preach upon this doctrine, which I am going to present to you this evening, abuse it. For that reason, many Baptists never bother to preach it. I am sorry that this is the case, but it is true. Many Baptists never preach upon the doctrine of Christian Perseverance, because of the Arminians, who hold to the idea that you are saved, partly by the grace of God and partly by your persevering, or your continuing in the direction in which you are supposed to go. They may say continuing in your faith, continuing in the faith, continuing in good works, it does not make any difference. They mistakenly see it as being the cause, and of course, they are wrong. Because of that abuse, many people never preach the 'effect' side of this great doctrine. Tonight, by the grace of God, I am going to try to preach the other side.

#### DEFINING CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE

The first thing I want to do is to define what I am talking about when I say Christian perseverance. Perseverance means continuance in a proper direction in spite of adversity. You may wrongly credit yourself with perseverance, simply because you have continued to do something for a long time. That is not what the word perseverance implies, that is not the meaning of the word, and that is not the teaching of this Bible doctrine. For instance, you may go to church and you may enjoy going to church, you may enjoy the singing, you may enjoy the teaching, you may really like the people that you are attending with, and things of that sort, and you may say, I have been going to that church for twenty years, and I have really persevered in my attendance. Well, that is not necessarily the meaning of the word perseverance. The word persevere means to continue in a right direction in spite of adversity. It has to suppose adversity, something that would offend. You remember that the Lord was speaking to people here, who said, yes, we believe He is the Messiah. We are all for Him. And when He began to teach some of the things concerning the greatness of God, and the fact that the Gentiles were going to be saved, some of these Jews were offended, and they began to back away. And He did not hesitate, and He did not apologize to them. In John 6:44, he said to these people: *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."* In other words, He said, do not think yourselves wise, or intellectual, or perceptive, because you do not come unto me. *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:..."* They really began to back away then. And we will find here, in the last part of the 8th chapter, that most of them who claimed to be believers, turned away and went in another direction because they were offended. They were offended in Him. Perseverance implies a continuance, in the direction which we know is the right direction, in spite of offenses and adversities that may greet us. Our Lord describes this activity called perseverance in John 8:31: *"...if ye continue in my word,..."* He did not just mean continue reading the Bible, but He meant if you continue hearing, and believing, and embracing, and walking by the truths which I teach, then are you truly my disciples. Now, listen: He did not say that is how you get to be my disciples, nor did He say, that is how you finish the work of salvation. That is not what He is talking about at all. He is simply saying it proves that you are really, truly, indeed, my disciples, if you continue in the things which I teach. That is what He is

stating in this passage.

Paul describes perseverance in II Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 24 through 31. Listen to these words. Paul says, *"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not."*

Listen to what Paul is saying. He said I have suffered. He said I gave my life to preach the gospel. I have hazarded my life and God has allowed me to be persecuted, to be beaten, to be stoned, to be mistreated, to be lied upon, and to be plotted against. All of these things have befallen me. God has loaded me with responsibility, and I have preached with fear and trembling, and if all of that is not enough, my own family hates me for it. But in spite of all this, Paul had gone on in the path God had appointed. You see, that is what perseverance means. It speaks of when we go on in spite of the things that would normally cause us to turn away.

I read the story some years ago, of a martyr, and as he stood upon the fagots, and they were ready to light the fire, and burn him to death, one of his persecutors said to him, 'If you will only recant, we would prefer not to do this, if you will only recant, if you will just forget this profession and embrace once again the true church, we will most gladly set you free.' And he said, 'With heaven so close, why should I turn back now?' 'With heaven so close, why should I turn back now?' Now, this is the attitude of perseverance. In other words, God has given me a direction to travel, a job to do, God has given me a responsibility, and whatever the problems that surround me may be, I must not get my eyes upon those problems, but I must keep my eyes upon the task that God has set before me. That is what I am talking about, when I say perseverance.

#### PERSEVERANCE IS A BIBLE DOCTRINE

Secondly, I want to assure you that this thing called perseverance is a Bible doctrine. It is not some far out thing that has been invented by an Arminian teacher. It is a Bible doctrine. I want to give you some scriptures very quickly, although I have already read some of them to you. I would remind you, once again, of John 8:31: *"...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;..."* In I Corinthians 15:2: *"By which also ye are saved,..."* Now, he is speaking of the gospel. *"By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."* Paul is not telling these people they are saved by faith, plus remembering the gospel. But he is saying, if you turn away to another gospel, if the faith that you have is not steadfast upon that gospel, if you are not still remembering and attached to that gospel which I brought to you, your faith is in vain. You may have professed some kind of faith, either ignorantly or falsely. Many are like the people who said, 'we believe Jesus is the Messiah,' and they were all ready to shout Hosannah to the King at one point, but when the word of God came they were offended and they turned away. Paul is saying such a profession is false. The Lord said of such people, you are not really my disciples. You are not my disciples indeed! You are only professing disciples, who have no real spiritual life in you. And if you do not think that is what he said, you go back and read the 6th, 7th and 8th chapters of John, and you will find that is exactly what he was teaching those people. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, you are saved by this gospel of Christ, if it is something to which you tenaciously hold; that is, if you contin-



ue to believe and embrace it. If it is something that you can just embrace and then you can abandon and move on to something else, take it or leave it, which ever way you want to go, he said it is not any good to you. You have no saving faith. The gospel did not save you.

It is a sad fact that we have a lot of evangelist today, at home and on mission fields, who go into homes, and if they can get people to embrace the gospel of Christ, they really do not care what else they may believe or do, they acclaim them saved. Many of those people, especially in the areas of Africa and other dark places, do not really turn from idols unto serving the living God. Many of them have never even professed to turn from idols unto serving God. They simply accept the Christian religion along with everything else they embrace. This is not strange to them, they have all been polytheist for multiplied generations. They have believed in many gods, the more gods the better, the more the merrier, and they will embrace anything that promises joy or profit. This kind, however, does not continue in the gospel, as Paul says. They do not hold in memory this gospel truth of Christ as the only way of salvation. And they are surely not His disciples indeed, when this is the case. In I John 2:19, listen to these words: *"They went out from us, but they were not of us;"* Now, listen to this: *"for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."* What is he talking about? He is saying there were people who professed faith in Christ, but then they went out from us. In this case, they probably went back into Judaism. But he said they did that, that it might be made manifest that they were not genuinely, they were not truly, of us.

In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 24 and verse 11, we read these words: *"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."* I understand that there are those that hold to the idea that this is talking about enduring to the end of the tribulation period, and it very well may be. Regardless of what end the Lord Jesus Christ is referring to, it is clear that He is teaching here, that endurance or perseverance is a Christian responsibility. Throughout the Bible, scripture reveals that it is something to which you and I are supposed to be dedicated. Some pursue it as a hope of eternal life, and if they do it for that purpose, it is absolutely useless. Do you understand what I am talking about? There are people who say, oh, yes, I am saved by grace, and now all that I lack is continuing on in that right direction, being faithful to God until He calls me home. If only I do that I will make it. Oh, no, you will not! You do not even have a chance. You have no chance at all. Why? Because you are trusting in what He did upon the cross, plus what you must yet do. Which means that you are not trusting in what He did upon the cross at all. Christ is all in all or He is nothing at all. If you are pursuing this idea of Christian perseverance as a hope of eternal life, it is utterly useless to you. Indeed, it is a draw back rather than a credit. It will hurt rather than help.

On the other hand, there are those who know that salvation is by grace, plus nothing, minus nothing. They know enough about their Bible to know that, but they misunderstand the order of things. They do not understand the order of cause and effect. They reason thus: 'If salvation is all together by grace, then how could this doctrine of perseverance be true?' It is apparently a Bible truth, but how could it agree with pure free grace?' Because they just misunderstand those verses, they simply throw them away. They do this because they misunderstand the order of cause and effect. If we will hold to all scripture, if we are not afraid to believe every verse in the Bible this will come to the light for us. Are you afraid to do that? It is amazing how many people today are afraid to bow, unreservedly, to the teaching of the Scripture.

Recently, a young man, on a missionary questionnaire, was asked, concerning the Bible he was carrying, 'What do you believe about this book?' He said, 'It is the only book I use for teaching and preaching.' That is not a good enough answer. I wrote him another letter, and I made the questions more specific. And he

**gave me several more answers, about ten or twelve of them. Not one of them answered the question. The question was not that hard. Do you believe this Book? Do you believe everything it says is right? Do you believe that you can trust all that is in it, or do you believe that you had better correct it in a few places? It is not that hard. That is not that hard a question. Brother, if you have a hard time answering that question, you have already answered it. But the point is this: if we hold to all scripture, we will readily see that both sides of this doctrine are absolute truth. What is that truth? What are both sides of this issue? Let us look at them again.**

**Number one: God will unquestionably preserve those who are saved, unto His everlasting kingdom. There can be no question about that. Not one of them shall be lost. But, on the other side of that: the Bible does teach that there is a responsibility of Christian perseverance.**

### **WHY THE APPARENT CONTRADICTION**

**Let us then look at another view of this, and ask ourselves, Why the apparent contradiction? The less spiritual light we have, the more likely we are to see contradictions in the Bible. I do not know if you have ever noticed it or not, but the people who know least about the Bible will be most likely to find contradictions in it. That is absolutely, unquestionably, the case. You think, well, they have to know a little bit about it, or they would not notice apparent contradictions. That is not the case. They can read half a dozen chapters in the Bible, and they can find contradictions, when you might read a hundred and find no apparent contradictions at all.**

**A good illustration is one that I have used many times before. I read an article by a lady, some years ago, who had a doctorate "Of Religion." I do not know what a doctorate in religion is, but apparently it is something. She had gotten it some place where they bestowed that particular degree. This was way back in the 1960s, and the religious world has grown worse, and worse since then. Nevertheless, she said that some of the Bible's contradictions are so necessarily visible that no one could miss them. And she just assumed, I guess, that everybody agreed with her. She said, for instance, one of the gospel writers tell us that the Lord fed 4,000 with the loaves and fishes, while another tells us that He fed 5,000 with the loaves and fishes. Now, had this lady read the scripture carefully, or even casually, she would have realized that all four of the gospel writers tells us that He fed 5,000 with the loaves and the fishes. It is the only miracle, in the New Testament, that is recorded by all four of the gospel writers. But two of the four told of an additional case in another place, another geographical location, at a different time, when He fed 4,000 with loaves and fishes. There is no contradiction at all. She just did not know enough about the scriptures to rightly compare them. Most of the time, contradiction will be that way.**

**Now, listen carefully! The contradiction which is apparently so logical to the careless Bible student is this: If we are saved by pure grace, how can perseverance, which is indeed good works, possibly enter into the picture? That is the question? Of course, there are those who approach that very same issue from the opposite direction. They say, I know the Bible teaches Christian perseverance, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. They are aware of that. Therefore, they say, since that is true, salvation cannot possibly be by pure grace, plus nothing, minus nothing.**

**This error is illustrated by an incident that took place some years ago, and I am talking about back in the early sixties. I believe this took place in 1961. A family which I loved very much quit the church, because I kept using the phrase, salvation is by grace, plus nothing, minus nothing. This brother said, I agree with you on almost everything, but he said, we are just opposite on one particular issue. I said, what is the issue? He said, you say salvation is by grace plus nothing and I know a man has to repent to be saved. I said I do not disagree with the fact that you had to repent. I preached it. He said, yes, I know you preach it, but he**

said, the two statements are contradictions. Well they are not contradictions, because repentance is a result of that pure grace. But he saw it as a human activity flowing out of man himself.

That is the reason for the apparent contradiction here. People see this perseverance, not as a result of grace, but as a human activity that flows from some kind of goodness in men.

Now, all apparent contradiction flows out of one of two things: It will be either from ignorance of clear statements which are made in the Bible, as in the case of that lady speaking of the five thousand, or from the failure to interpret scripture, by scripture. You see, so much of the time, we allow our scripture to be interpreted by some other person, rather than the Bible. One person said, the casual reader just cannot quite understand this. Well, I do not know what he meant by casual reader, but I think I know what he meant, and that is, that "the casual reader" needs some 'great reverend' to show him the way. It is very sad if that is true. If you are a child of God, you should be able to read this book and understand it. Now, I do not mean just read it a few minutes, once or twice a week, and understand it. But I mean as you digest this book into your mind and into your memory, it should not be a difficult thing to understand. You see, the Arminian, who is doubting pure grace, embraces the doctrine of perseverance in error, and those who claim salvation without the Lordship of Christ on the other side, deny the doctrine of perseverance, because they believe that there is such a thing as a person being saved by grace, and yet not having any grace.

Contrary to both of these errors, the Bible says, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God:..."* You could say the same thing about repentance. It is not of yourself. It is the gift of God. Now, listen, verse 9 says: *"Not of works, lest any man should boast."* The next verse says: *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,"* What does it mean, we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus? It means that we are the creation of God, that God has made us, that He has created us, and that this creation is in Christ Jesus. Will it allow then, that it has no purpose at all except to get us to heaven? Is that what the Bible said? Not by the farthest stretch of the imagination. You see, that is where people misunderstand it. They imagine that there is some such thing in the Bible as salvation without Lordship. Indeed, all such teachers are teaching salvation without the new birth. There are those today, who campaign against what they call Lordship salvation. They say, if you are teaching that if Christ is not the Lord of your life you are really not saved, then what you are teaching is salvation by works. No, we are teaching salvation in Jesus Christ. You see, the Bible says, God hath made Him both Lord and Christ. God has made Him. You cannot make Him Lord. There is no such thing as Him being your Savior and not being your Lord. Do you hear what I am saying to you? That is the area of error. Men are claiming that there is a salvation without the Lordship of Christ. They misunderstand the doctrine of perseverance and thus deny it. They say, if you demand perseverance, you are mixing grace and works. How then, is this issue reconciled?

#### UNITY IS FOUND IN CAUSE AND EFFECT

The closing, and the most important aspect of the message will deal with cause and effect. The unity of salvation by grace without works, and the responsibility of, and the basic tendency toward, Christian perseverance, is seen in the area of cause and effect. Do you hear me? Cause and effect! The harmony of it is perfectly stated in Philippians 2:12 and 13. Now, if you did not get anything else so far, please listen to this. Philippians 2:12: *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* "Work out your own salvation." Does that mean to work for your salvation, or work your way to heaven? Certainly not! No one can work out their own salvation, except people who have salvation. Indeed, the Apostle Paul referred to this salvation as being theirs. You know many people are well aware of Philippians 2:12, and many people

are well aware of Philippians 2:13, but not too many realize that neither of them is complete without the other. They are part of the same statement. Look at them, as they are written in the scripture. *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For"* (A conjunction, it is like the word because. Do this because.) *"it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* Do you hear what I am saying? It is God that worketh in you, both to desire to do it, to want to do it, to will, and to do of His good pleasure. What am I talking about? I am saying, that when God saves a person by grace, that He places in that person's heart a desire to do what God wants him to do. To will to do of His good pleasure. You say, well, I am a Christian, but I am not into this thing of seeking the will of God. You better back off and ask yourself a question. What makes me think I am a Christian?'

I am not saying that Christians cannot be backslidden, and go through a period of time when they are frustrated and confused, and are not seeking the will of God, because I know that can happen. But I know that it cannot go on forever. If they are indeed a child of God, they will sooner or later be brought back to that place of subjection, because God works in them to will to do His good pleasure. That is why we persevere. The person who is trying to persevere in order to get to heaven is fooling himself. He could never do anything good enough to please God. But the person who is seeking to do the will of God, to the glory of God, for no reason except to glorify God, that person shows evidence of his salvation. One man said, 'if I believed that I could be saved and go to heaven no matter, regardless, there just would not be any question about it, if I could not lose my salvation, I would just get saved and I would go out and sin all I wanted to.' Well, that is a good evidence of one of two things: either somebody had taught him to peddle that stupidity, that he was repeating, or he was not saved. I will guarantee you, any true Christian sins more than he wants to. There is no true Christian who is not, to some extent, dissatisfied because of his sin, and who does not desire, in some way, to some extent, to walk closer to the Lord. Scripture reveals that perseverance is as sure as it is necessary. Did you hear me? Perseverance is sure. If you are a Christian, you will persevere. Holiness and good works are definite parts of God's immutable purpose. In your Bibles, once again, notice Ephesians 2:8: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* And then Romans 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."* Listen, He said, He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. That has to do with a state in which we are to be in heaven, but it also has something to do with our life here. He has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. If God saved you, He saved you, so that you might be changed and made more like the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:4: *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,..."*--Now, listen--*"that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:..."*

You see, God chose you, that you should be holy. You say, well, I do not have any interest in being holy. I do not have any concern about being holy. I do not care anything about being holy. Well, that is a very good evidence that you are not chosen of God, or if you are, that you do not know it yet, that you are not in Christ yet, because God has chosen you for that purpose. And to say, I know that is the way God would like to have it, but it does not necessarily mean that is the way it is going to be, is like saying, 'I know that God created me unto good works, but that does not necessarily mean what God has created will work as He planned. I know God has created this thing to do a certain thing, but it does not necessarily mean it will perform it.' Oh, yes it does. When God makes something to do a certain thing, it does it. God's inventions and creations all work. This does not mean you are a machine. You are not a machine. You work through will, you work by volition. But He has worked in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. God is able

to make His apparatuses work. So, when a person says, 'I do not care anything about perseverance, I am just interested in preservation,' it is either ignorance speaking, or it is a lost man speaking. It is one of the two every time!

We need to understand, that if, and because, God purposes, and preserves, we persevere. Perseverance is the effect, and God's preserving grace is the unfrustratable cause. In other words, it is the preservation of God that causes us to continue in that direction. It is the grace of God that causes us to persevere.

### CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE IS NEVER PERFECT

Now, listen, perseverance is never totally consistent, and perseverance is never perfect. Why? Because it involves human activity. Which of you out there, this afternoon, could say, last week I did everything I should have done and I did it exactly as I should have done it? I do not think anybody out there is that spiritually insensitive. To put that in a more common vernacular, I do not think anybody out there is that stupid. You know, you know! that there are areas in which you failed God last week. Everyone of us knows that. Yet, if I were to say, how many of you out there, at some time last week, simply turned away from God and denounced Him, you denounced Christ, and gave it all up? I do not think we would find anybody like that. I do not think we would find a single person in the congregation who would say, last week I just threw it all away. As far as I was concerned, I was no longer a Christian, He is no longer God, and Christ was no longer my Lord. I lost all interest in it. No such thing as that would happen. Our perseverance is never perfect, but it is always there in principle. In some way and in varying degrees, everyone of us fails in our perseverance, but God never fails in His preservation. You know what I am saying. God never fails in His preservation. He will preserve us, as the earlier message said, from the scripture, unto His everlasting kingdom. So, I say to you, do not profess that you have experienced the divine cause, which is salvation, if there is no effect, if there is no perseverance.

Again, I do not mean perfection. Sometimes we want to draw a little circle that just fits our own vocabulary, and our own personal preferences as to what continuance is. Somebody might say, well, I know a fellow that claims to be a Christian, and he seems to be a Christian, but he has not been in church in eight or nine years. Well, shame on him. He ought to be ashamed of himself. He is sinning. Is that proof he is lost? No, it is not. He may be spending much time with God in involuntary prayer. I have been summoned to the throne of God many times when I did not plan to go. He may be submerged in suffering because of his sin. Oh, he is sinning, do not misunderstand me. He is failing, but you do not know what is going on between God and him. And you do not know what God is going to do with him, because of the chastisement, in later years. Oh, his perseverance is not very good. It is not very good at all. It is not anything that you or I would hold up to anyone as a model, not in any sense. However, God's preservation is in good shape. It is alive and well, and if he is God's child, God will in His own time bring him back, and God will take those experiences in his life, and even use them to His glory.

You say, Preacher, how do you know? Because I have been down that alley. I have been there. I am sorry to have to confess I have been there. There was a period of seven or eight years when I was far from God. Oh, I did not forget about God. There was never a time, when I was not aware that Jesus died for my sins. You say, how could you go on like that? I do not know. I do not know how, but I did. I did. And I know that when God, by His grace, laid hold upon me and brought me back, He brought me back with the echoes and the shadows of those nightmares, in mind and in my memory, and in my heart in such a way, that I could never want to turn back again. He taught me some things through that which I do not suppose I could have learned any other way. And it was all part of God's marvelous preservation. You say, explain that. I cannot explain that. I do not have to explain that. I simply say to you, tonight, that the Bible teaches both

sides of this issue.

I think the whole scope of this series is seen best by simply reading to you, once again, from the book of Romans, chapter 8. I want you to turn there and we will close this series, not just this message, but this series, by reading from Romans chapter 8. I will try not to expound very much at all. But listen as I begin to read in verse 28: *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,..."* Who are those people? Well, it is *"...them who are called according to his purpose. 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. 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. What shall we then say to these things? Notice, Paul says this as though it is all in the past, though much of it is not yet experienced by the called. But it is past perfect tense in the decree of God, it is eternal. So he takes it all the way through and he says, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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."* That is where our hope stands, not in what we shall do, but in what God has done.

Hear me now. What God has done will make a difference in what we do. Every good thing that we ever do will be a result of what God has done. When a sinner repents, it is the result of the Holy Spirit of God working conviction in his heart. When a sinner believes, it is a result of the Holy Spirit's calling in his heart. Listen, when a sinner perseveres, it is a result of a Savior, who is at the right hand of God interceding for us. *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."* What is justification? Well, it is a particular aspect of salvation. But he shows in these verses that everyone that has that, has it all. *"Whom he justified, them he also glorified,"* that is the last part of it. That is when we are given a body like unto His glorious body. That is when we are given the total fruits of eternal salvation. That is when we are given life in the presence of Almighty God, in the presence of Christ. We have this promise, that everyone that He justifies, He also glorifies. He does it. He does it! If we can settle that one thing, it will be the answer to all of the problems that seem to exist. With all of these doctrines, salvation is of the Lord, no one else. No, not the Lord and our best. Salvation is of the Lord.