



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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SALVATION BY GRACE INITIATED

Fourth In a Series

By Wayne Camp

II Tim. 1:8-9: Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

In the past three messages on the subject of Salvation By Grace we have seen that salvation by grace is absolutely necessary because of the fall of man, the nature of God, and the saint's proneness to sin after God saves him. Because of man's condition he certainly did not initiate the salvation that is wholly of grace. Man's sinful pride forces him to make works the primary essential in whatever plan he might conceive. There are ways that seem right to men but the ends are always death, spiritual death.

Did angels initiate the way of salvation by grace? No! In the days that Peter wrote his first epistle he declared that ***“the angels desire to look into”*** God's salvation (I Pet. 1:12).

Did God get caught in a dilemma by the fall of man and have to figure out a plan of salvation? Again the answer is a resounding “No!” When was the plan of salvation initiated? For whom was it initiated? Through whom was it initiated?

It is the purpose of this message to answer these and other possible questions concerning the initiation of God's gracious way of salvation.

SALVATION BY GRACE WAS INITIATED BY GOD HIMSELF

God counseled with no one outside the

blessed Godhead when salvation by grace was initiated. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were the three Parties to the covenant of redemptive grace. No archangel was asked to inject his wisdom. No cherubim or seraphim was a party to this high and holy tribunal. Only the three co-existent, co-eternal Persons of the Holy Trinity were contracting parties. In its initiation, as in every other aspect, we can join with Jonah of old and herald forth the glorious truth: “Salvation of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9).

TO SAVE OR NOT TO SAVE: A DIVINE PREROGATIVE

Salvation is the prerogative of God. It is the exclusive and special right of God to save or not to save. It was God who made man. It was God whom man offended by his voluntary and willful fall in Eden. It was the Government of Heaven that was dishonored by the willful violation of its law. If purposes of grace and mercy were to be entertained the one who has been wronged must do it. Affirming this Divine prerogative concerning the salvation of sinners David wrote: ***He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto the Lord belong the issues from death (Psa. 68:20).*** He exercised this prerogative in the negative when He chose to pass by myriads of angels who fell with Lucifer and extended no arm of mercy to those formerly noble creatures. He reserved every one of the fallen angels in ***“everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).*** He ***“spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be***

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reserved unto judgment" (II Pet. 2:4).

Christ could have laid hold of angels in the covenant of grace but "**Verily he took not on him the nature of angels" (Heb. 2:16).** If one can see that salvation is a Divine prerogative and a special choice and unique option of God it will solve many problems in his study of the doctrines of grace. "**Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.**"

GOD'S MERCY SOVEREIGNLY BESTOWED

Since salvation is the prerogative of God, it

follows that God shows mercy and grace to whom He wills. He said to Moses: ***I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy (Ex. 33:19).*** Paul wrote: ***Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth (Rom. 9:18).***

In the exercise of His prerogative and exclusive choice to save or to not save God regenerates whom He will. The new birth is one aspect of our salvation and it is unequivocally a sovereign right of God to quicken whom He wills to quicken. One's bloodline, one's fleshly will (The natural man is flesh. Jn. 3:6), one's will as a man has nothing to do with his regeneration. Those who receive Jesus do so because they ***"were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn. 1:13).*** As Paul declared: ***"It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9:16).***

That regeneration is a Divine prerogative and according to the sovereign will of God is also affirmed by none other than Jesus Christ. ***For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will (Jn. 5:21).*** James wrote: ***Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth (James 1:18).***

Everything that God does, He does according to His own sovereign will. He ***"who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"*** has quickened those ***"who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 1:11; 2:1).***

SALVATION BELONGS TO GOD

Salvation by Grace was initiated by God because ***"salvation belongeth to the Lord" (Pea. 3:8).*** ***"The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord" (Psa. 37:39).*** The fountain of everlasting life has its source in God. ***"For with thee is the fountain of life,"*** wrote the Psalmist (Psa. 36:8-9). Salvation by grace is the salvation that was initiated by God and is the salvation that is of God ***Acts 28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. (Acts 28:28).***

(See Grace Initiated cont. P. 7, Rt. Col. Bot.)

IDOL WORSHIP

THE HEIGHT OF STUPIDITY

By Wayne Camp

TEXT: Psalm 115:4-8 *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. 5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: 6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: 7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. 8 They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.*

I am sure that there are those who, upon reading the title of this message, think that I am being too harsh. But, if you read the passage above and others that I will give, you will see that God considers idolatry of any kind to be absolutely foolish and stupid.

The more I travel and live in Thailand, the more I am impressed and distressed at the utter folly and futility of the worship of dumb idols



such as the one pictured below. Over 94% of the people of Thailand are worshippers of idols like this one. It is not only the idol that is dumb and stupid, the people who worship them are **"like unto them"** says our God, the living God of heaven and earth. Many times in Scripture God declares this without apology or reservation. Dumb people worship dumb idols.

While in Thailand this year I was blessed to have had very good high-speed Internet service. I took the opportunity to download some information about some of the early mission work in that part of the world. I found a book on the Web about a little known (previously unknown to me) missionary to India named John Thomas. He was the first missionary to India and worked primarily in Bengal. I was thrilled when I read the following about John Thomas.

John Thomas: First Missionary to India Exposing the Futility and Foolishness of Idol Worship

It was with wonderful tact and ability that he met and overcame the objections and opposition of the natives. Once when on a journey he saw a multitude congregating for worship of one of the heathen gods. Coming up and making his way through the company, he took an elevation near the idol, the on looking people wondering, as he did so, what the European could be about. Beckoning for silence, and pointing to the image, he said: "It has eyes" (then turning to the assembly), "but it cannot see! It has ears,—but it cannot hear! It has a nose,—but it cannot smell! It has hands,—but it cannot handle! It has a mouth,—but it cannot speak! Neither is there any breath in it!" An old man who was present, struck by what was so evident, cried out: "It has feet, but it cannot run away!" And then a universal shout arose and the faces of the priests were

covered with shame. (*John Thomas: Missionary to Bengal*, by A. C. Chute, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1893, Pp. 75-76).

John Thomas based his message at this idol on the following scriptures. *Psalm 115:4-8* (See the text given at the beginning of the message.) *Psalm 135:15-18* **The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. 16 They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; 17 They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. 18 They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.**

We pass the idol pictured earlier every time we go to Mae Sai, which is once each month. Having already read the book on John Thomas and having already scanned the quote above to be used in an article, I asked Bro. Anond to drive up to the temple in front of which the idol sat. There he sat, exactly where his makers had put him a number of years ago.

This dumb idol has never seen a single car, truck or motorcycle that has passed on the highway down below. **Eyes he has but he sees not.** He has never seen a single worshipper who has bowed before him. **Eyes he has but he sees not.** He did not see us as we walked around him and took pictures of him for **Eyes he has but he sees not.** He has never seen a sunrise though he faces the east. He has never seen a sunset because he cannot see nor could he turn himself around to watch the sunset. **Eyes he has but he sees not.** He is in perpetual darkness and has never seen that darkness and has never seen the light.



The worshippers have lifted up their voices to him but **he has a mouth but he speaks not.** He has never answered a prayer or inquiry that the dumb worshippers make to their dumb idol

because **he has a mouth but he speaks not.** Those who worship them are like them. Those who trust them are like them. Those who minister for them are like them. *Isaiah 56:10-11* **His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. 11 Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.**

God promises in his Holy Book that the person believing on Jesus Christ shall never be confounded. *1 Peter 2:6* **Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.** This is certainly not true of those who worship idols and graven images. They shall all be confounded, especially when they wake up in hell after all the adulation they have showered upon their dumb gods. *Psalm 97:7* **Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.**

These dumb idols have hands but they never feel anything. I was in Rome in the early 70's and visited the Vatican. I observed people



coming by and caressing and kissing the big toe of an idol to the Apostle Peter, allegedly the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. They did it though he never felt a thing. They had rubbed that big toe and kissed it so many times that workmen have had to rebuild the toe many times over the years. That is amazing being that it is made of bronze, one of the harder metals, much harder than gold.

God warned Israel that they would be scattered among the nations where they would

worship these dumb idols. **Deuteronomy 4:27-28** *And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. 28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.*

One of the great follies of the idol worshipper is that he often made his idol of a tree. He would use some of the tree with which to cook, some of it with which to heat his house and then use some of the same tree to make an idol. Nothing could illustrate the futility and stupidity of idolatry more than this. **Isaiah 44:13-20** *The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. 14 He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. 15 Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. 16 He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: 17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. 18 They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. 19 And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? 20 He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that*

he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

Again God describes the folly of idol worship through the prophet Jeremiah. If this description sounds a little like a Christmas tree don't blame this writer. **Jeremiah 10:3-5** *For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. 4 They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. 5 They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.*

IDOL GOD'S ARE WITHOUT ANY POWER TO SAVE

When I look at these idols in Thailand or in Rome I am reminded of another passage that shows the stupidity and folly of idol worship. It shows that an idol has no saving power whatever. Those who live and die with idols for their gods will one day lift up their eyes from the torments of hell. It is appropriate that the worshippers of Buddha burn the bodies of their dead. It illustrates outwardly what their soul is already experiencing in the torments and fires of hell when the body is being burned. **Isaiah 46:5-7** *To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? 6 They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. 7 They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.*

The folly and stupidity of idol worship is again declared by God. He speaks of the Northern Kingdom of Israel where the center of their idolatrous worship was Samaria. **Hosea 8:7** *For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.* Have you ever tried to harvest anything from a whirlwind? It is truly an exercise in futility. As a boy hoeing cotton in the summer

I saw many whirlwinds. But I never saw anyone harvest anything from one. I have seen them take the dust and a few dry cotton leaves or corn leaves high into the air but there is nothing there worth harvesting. Idolatry is the same. There is nothing in idol worship worth harvesting. Well does Habakkuk ask, **Habakkuk 2:18-19** *What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? 19 Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.*



Another thing we must remember is that those who sacrifice to idols sacrifice to demons, not to God. All idolatry is demon worship. The Roman Catholic who kisses the big toe of the statue that is an idol dedicated to Peter is as much a worshipper of demons as is the Buddhist in Thailand. When the Roman Catholic lifts up his prayers to Mary he is as much a worshipper of demons as is the Buddhist in Burma. When the Roman Catholic falls down before an idol of Jesus he is as demonic in his worship as was the worshipper of Diana in

Ephesus. **Acts 19:26-28, 35** *Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?*

THOSE WHO WORSHIP IDOLS BECOME LIKE THEIR IDOLS

Let us focus on verse 8 of our text for a few moments before concluding this message. **Psalm 115:8** *They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.* This verse tells us that those who make idols and those who trust in them **“are like unto them.”** This verse is

not alone in affirming this truth. Notice **Psalm 135:18** *They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.* “As stupid as the matter of which they are made; as sottish and as senseless as the idols themselves,” writes John Gill.

Matthew Henry writes, “By worshipping these foolish puppets, they make themselves more and more foolish like them, and set themselves at a greater distance from every thing that is spiritual, sinking themselves deeper into the mire

of sense; and withal they provoke God to *give them up to a reprobate mind, a mind void of judgment*, Rom. 1:28. Those *that trust in them* act very absurdly and very unreasonably, are senseless, helpless, useless, like them; and they will find it so themselves, to their own confusion".

God says again of those who worship idols, *Isaiah 44:18-20 They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. 19 And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? 20 He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?*

Notice in these verses that God says these folks who worship idols are without understanding or knowledge, God has shut their eyes so that they cannot see, they feed on ashes and their hearts are deceived. They are like their dumb idols. They understand not; they see not; they hear not.

MEN BECOME MORE AND MORE LIKE THE ONE WHOM THEY WORSHIP

Those of us who truly trust and truly worship God and his Christ grow to be more like them. We are told that we ought to walk as Jesus walks. *1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John 2:5-6 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

God has predestined that all those on whom he has set his elective love be conformed to the image of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. *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.

It appears that this is what Jesus had in mind when he said, *Matthew 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.* He claims us as his children and as his brethren. *Hebrews 2:12-13 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*

Ultimately we shall be like him. *1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. Psalm 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

Paul declares that just as we have born the image of the earthy (Adam) we will bear the image of the heavenly (Jesus). *1 Corinthians 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.* Jesus will come one day and he will change our bodies to be like his glorious body. *Philippians 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

The idol worshipper becomes like the object of his worshipper. The child of God who trusts in God and his Christ and who worship them in Spirit and in truth will grow more and more like them. *1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

SALVATION BY GRACE WAS INITIATED BEFORE THE WORLD WAS CREATED

This writer was preaching in a Bible Conference in a northern state several years ago when he heard a Baptist preacher of several years experience pray in these words: "Lord, we thank you that about two thousand years ago you decided to send your Son into the world to die for our sins. On another occasion in

a southern state he heard a Baptist preacher who was president of a Baptist Seminary for twenty-five years make a statement that went like this: "When Israel rejected God's Son it was necessary for God to initiate plan B. God always has a back-up plan. If plan A fails, He institutes plan B."

As these words were being written I held in my hand a study book for adult classes. It was written by an experienced Baptist pastor who was then vice-president of a Baptist Seminary. The lesson was called "The Problem of Disappointments." One section of the lesson was called "God's Great Disappointments." After listing several disappointments experienced by God he wrote: "His (God's) greatest disappointment came with the sending of His Son. **'But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son' (Matt. 21:37).** They shattered God's expectations by crucifying His Son! How disappointing that was!"

Did God decide about 2000 years ago to send his Son into the world? Does God need backup plans? Has God's one plan ever failed? Was God disappointed when they crucified His Son? Were His expectations shattered when they crucified His Son?

Of God's covenant with David we read that it was **"an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure" (II Sam. 23:5).** Certainly, the covenant of grace entered into by the three Persons of God-head is **"an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure."**

AN ETERNAL MYSTERY

Salvation by grace through the shedding of the redemptive blood of Jesus was no after-thought with God! It was **NOT** decided upon 2000 years ago! It was no back-up plan! It was not a disappointment when Christ was crucified! Expectations were not shattered when they crucified His Son!

Paul sets forth the covenant of grace as a mystery that has been revealed through the preaching of the gospel and was manifest by the Scripture of the prophets. He declares that this scheme of salvation by grace has been in existence **"since the world began" (Rom.**

16:25-26). It is an eternal mystery.

ORDAINED BEFORE THE WORLD

The word ordain means "to establish or order by appointment, decree, or law." Salvation by grace is the sure and certain way of salvation. It is the only way that is **"sure to all the seed"** whether they be Jew or Gentile (Rom. 4:16). Paul tells us that this great plan **is the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. (1 Corinthians 2:7).**

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul declared that our calling by the Spirit and our salvation was **"according to" God's "own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Tim. 1:8-9).** To Titus he wrote of the **"faith of God's elect" which has given them "the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:1-2).**

Before God ever spoke a creative word concerning this material creation, before an angel ever bowed in His holy presence, before the earth was formed, before the mountains were brought forth, before an eagle spread its wings upon the winds of uncharted space, before a cloud ever swept across a star-sprinkled sky, before man was created and before sin had ever touched the human race, God had entered into a covenant with His Son and the Holy Spirit that was **"ordered in all things, and sure."** That covenant made sure and certain the salvation of all the seed (Rom. 4:16).

SALVATION BY GRACE WAS INITIATED THROUGH CHRIST

The covenant of grace that was initiated before the foundation of the world was a covenant and testament which required the death of a testator. It was a blood-covenant that required that a qualified person shed the blood of this everlasting covenant (Heb. 9:16; 13:20).

When Christ went to the cross to die God's expectations were not shattered! Jesus was **"delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:22-23).** It

“pleased the Lord to bruise him.” It was the Lord who ***“put him to grief”*** and made his ***“soul an offering for sin.”*** It was Jesus the Son who saw ***“his seed”*** and the ***“travail of his soul”*** and was satisfied (Isa. 53:10-11). It was God who set Christ forth to be a propitiation for the sins of all the seed. ***Romans 3:25-26 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; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.***

When that bloodthirsty mob gathered at Pilate’s hall and later at Golgotha they ***“Were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done”*** (Acts 4:27-28). The Sovereign pleasure and will of God was perfectly executed. Had these men who sought to thwart God’s plan and destroy the work of Christ known that divine mystery which God had ***“ordained before the world unto our glory they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”*** (I Cor. 2:7-8). They did not shatter God’s expectations. They perfectly fulfilled the Divine purpose, pleasure and plan.

But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled (Acts 3:18). Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18). Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day (Luke 24:46).

Christ was ***“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*** (Rev. 13:8). The crucifixion of Christ as a lamb ***“with-out spot and blemish was foreordained before the foundation of the world”*** I Pet. 1:18).

If I have belabored this point a bit, I ask your indulgence but when I remembered and read again the disparaging, invidious, degrading, and depreciating remarks about our high and holy God who worketh all things after the counsel of His sovereign will I became jealous for His majestic glory. Oh, that men would cease their efforts to humanize God!

ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE

Salvation by grace is centered in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. It is ***“according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”*** (Eph. 1:11). Before the foundation of the world we were, in the Divine purpose, ***“blessed with all spiritual blessings, chosen in Christ unto salvation, predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, and made accepted in Christ, the beloved Son of God to the praise of His glorious grace”*** (Eph. 1:3-6). Salvation by grace was predestined to be through Jesus Christ. ***“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins”*** (Acts 10:43).

SALVATION BY GRACE WAS INITIATED FOR A PARTICULAR GROUP OF PEOPLE

If, in the covenant of grace, Christ had laid hold of the fallen angels they would have been saved. If he had laid hold of all the seed of Adam then all men would have been saved and Universalism would have been the true doctrine. But, when we open the God breathed Scriptures we find that ***“he took not on him the nature of angels”*** (Heb. 2:16). Dr. A. T. Robertson says that the Greek (epilambanetai) means ‘to lay hold of, to help.’

The Holy Spirit does not leave us ignorant of those of whom Jesus did lay hold in the covenant of grace. ***“He took on him the seed of Abraham”*** (Heb. 2:16). ***John 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel”*** declared Christ (Matt. 15:24). There are saved sheep who have already heard His voice and to whom He has given eternal life (Jn. 10:27-29). There are lost sheep who have not heard His voice whom he must bring and they will hear His voice. ***John 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.***

Then there are some who are neither lost sheep nor saved sheep. **“Ye believe not on me because ye are not of my sheep” (Jn. 10:26).** These were Jewish leaders in this case but the same may be said of some Gentiles.

THOSE GIVEN BY THE FATHER

There are many places where the elect are simply referred to as the ones who were given to Christ by the Father to save. Of His sheep Jesus said, **“My Father which gave them me,” (Jn. 10:29).**

Of His elect children Jesus said, **“The children which thou hath given me” (Heb. 2:13).** **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me,”** declared Jesus. They were given to Him and that assured Him that all would come. They will all come, none of them will be lost and Christ will raise every one of them up at the last day (Jn. 6:39).

The Father **“hast given him power over all flesh, that (note this clause of purpose) he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (Jn. 17:2).** **“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world” (Jn. 17:6)** **“I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me” (in. 17:9).** The whole human race, the world, was not given to Christ to save therefore they are not prayed for in this high mediatorial prayer. Only those whom the father had given to Him were the objects of His mediation.

CHOSEN AND ELECT

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians of their election in this manner: **“knowing, brethren beloved your election of God” (I Thes. 1:4).** As to the time of their election he thanked God **“because God bath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and believe of the truth” (II Thes. 2:13).**

The Ephesian brethren were also declared to have been chosen and predestinated unto the adoption of children **“before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4-5).**

When Paul preached to the Gentiles in Antioch in Pisidia, **“as many as were ordained**

to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

ELECTION IS OF GRACE

We have set forth many Scriptures that show that salvation by grace was initiated for a particular people. Let us conclude by emphasizing that this election unto salvation is itself of grace and is not based on any good seen or foreseen in the elect. Before Jacob and Esau were ever born **“neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to the election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth” (Rom. 9:11).** **“There is a remnant according to the election of grace,”** wrote Paul, **“and if by grace, then it is no more of works” (Rom. 11:5-6).**

CONCLUSION

This great salvation that is of grace was not an after thought with God. It was initiated by God the Father before the world for our Glory. Every detail was settled and it was ordered and sure before its objects existed. He loved His elect and He loved Christ and Jesus said: **“Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world” (Jn. 17:23-24).** Praise God for His eternal, electing, effectual grace!

WOMEN SPEAKING IN MIXED ASSEMBLIES

By Eld. J. W. Porter
(1863-1937)

(Taken from *The Baptist Debt to the World*
published in *The Historic Baptist, Winter*
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Text: Let your women keep silence in churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is shame for women to speak in the church. What! came the word of God out from? Or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that I write unto you are the commandments

of the Lord. But if a man be ignorant let him be ignorant. I Cor. 14:34-38

I will therefore that men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting . . . Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed: then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” I Tim. 2:8, 11-14

I do not defer to any man in my unfeigned admiration for womankind or in my estimate of her wonderful worth and work. Yea, it is on account of this exalted idea of her splendid sphere and mighty mission that I am anxious that her activities should be along scriptural lines. Not only am I in favor of woman's work in the churches, but in every church which I have served, there has been a noble band of godly women in whose work I have rejoiced. And will rejoice. And just here it may not seem amiss to note the determined effort of some misguided men to make it appear that those who oppose women speaking in the churches are enemies to the work that is being done by our women. This is not only begging the question, but is a species of political trickery unworthy of a Christian.

The only question is, What does the Bible teach on the subject? It is not even a question of what would be the result if we should enforce the commands of Scripture in this connection. Obviously, it is our business to comply with God's commands, and God's business to take care of the results.

The Scriptures relating to this question are so positive and so plain that the wonder is that there could have ever been any doubt as to their meaning. Indeed, their meaning has been so manifest that there is not a single commentary that does not interpret these passages as forbidding the public speaking of women in the churches. The first question that very naturally presents itself is one concerning the correctness of the text. Some years since, Dr. T. T. Eaton consulted the various versions of the Bible, giving the different translations of

these Scriptures. From these we take several and add another:

THE REVISED VERSION

Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as the law also says. And if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church. What? did the word of God come for them from you? or came it unto you alone? If any one thinks himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things which I write unto you are the Lord's commandments.

I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I permit not the woman to teach, nor to have authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived is fallen into transgression.

Here is the American Bible Union Version:

Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted to them to speak, but they are to be in subjection, as the law also says. And if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church. Did the word of God come for them from you? or came it unto you alone? If any one thinks himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things I write unto you are the Lord's commandments.

The Douay Version (Roman Catholic, from the Latin Vulgate) says -

“Let women keep silence In the churches: for it is not permitted them to speak, but to be subject, as also the law saith. But if they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church.”

“I will therefore that men pray in every

place, lifting up pure hands without anger and contention . . . Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man: but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not seduced: but the woman being seduced was in the transgression”

Wycliffe’s Version (from the Vulgate) says -

“Women in churches be still, for it is not suffered them to speak, but to be subject as the law saith, but if they would anything learn, at home ask their husbands, for it is a foul thing for a woman to speak in the church.” (I Cor. 14:34, 35)

“A woman learn in silence with all subjection, But I suffer not a woman to teach, neither to have lordship on the husband, but to be in silence, for Adam was first formed, afterward Eve, and Adam was not deceived; but the woman was deceived in breaking the law.” (Tim.

2:11.14)

Wakefield says -

“Let women be silent in your assemblies: for they are not permitted to speak, but must be in subjection as the law also commandeth. And, if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; as it is dishonorable for a woman to speak in a congregation.

“What? did the word of God come forth from you? or hath it reached you only? If any one have the character of a teacher, or of a spiritual person, he will acknowledge that what I am writing to you are the commandments of the Lord; but whoso doth not acknowledge this, let him be unknown as a spiritual person.”

John Wesley’s Version puts it thus -

Let your women be silent in the churches; for it is not permitted them to speak, but to be in subjection, as the law also saith. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is indecent for a woman to speak in the assembly.

Tyndal’s Version, on these passages, reads thus -

“Let your wives keep silence in the congregations. For it is not permitted unto them to speak, but let them be under obedience as saith the law. If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is a shame for women to speak in the congregation.”

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. I suffer not a woman to teach, neither to have authority over a man: but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, and then Eve. Also Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and was in transgression.”

Cranmer’s Version is as follows -

“Let your women keep silence in the congregations. For it is not permitted unto them to speak: but to be under obedience. as saith the law. If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is a shame for women to speak in the congregation.” (Continued April 1, 2006)

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