

# Present Truth

The *Bible alone* as the only rule of faith and practice; *faith alone* as the only means of acceptance with God; and *Christ alone* as the only mediator between God and men.

---

Jul. - Sep. 2009

Volume 9, Number 3

---

Editorial Introduction:

Testing the TULIP – p. 3

Letters –p. 4

**Free to Choose – p. 8**

The Order of Salvation – p. 19

The Free Offer of the Gospel – p. 24

Elect in Him – p. 32

**Present Truth** is a magazine dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity in this generation. It is especially committed to upholding the truth of justification by faith in this time when it is being threatened by humanism, emotionalism, and ecumenism. Our publication is based on the principle of *sola Scriptura* – the Bible and the Bible only as a rule of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:15-17). We desire to give the gospel trumpet a certain sound (1 Cor. 14:7-9), that through words easy to be understood (Hab. 2:2) people may “be established in the present truth” (2 Pet. 1:12) and like Noah be proclaimers of the righteousness of Christ (2 Pet. 2:5).

**Editor:** Richard Marin

**Sponsors:** All those who share our goals. This magazine has no denominational sponsorship. It is supported solely by freewill offerings from those who see in **Present Truth** a hope and safeguard for this generation.

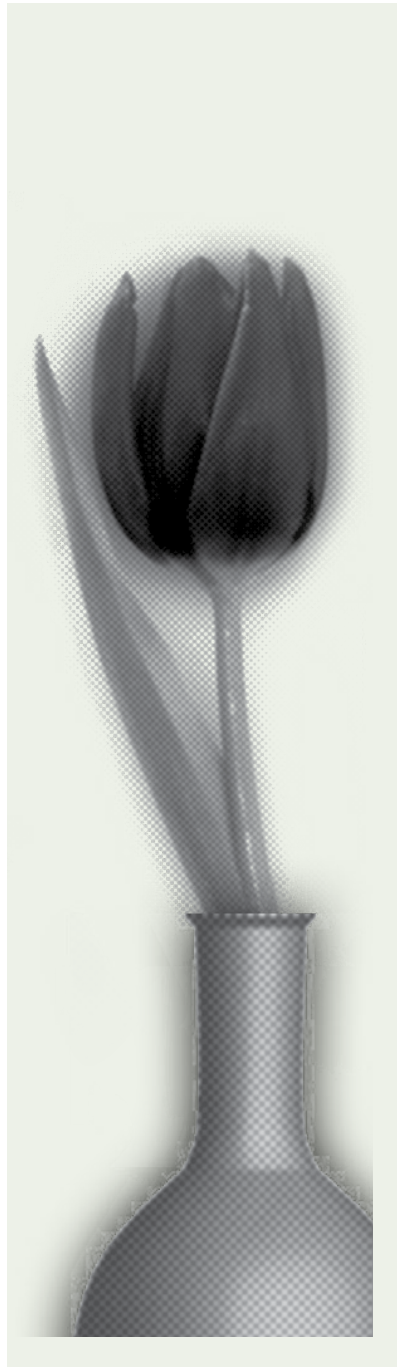
**Contributors:** Since truth is above the preferences and prejudices of any denomination, the editors welcome articles from anyone and will judge them on their merit alone.

**Subscriptions** are free to those who personally request. Donations and subscription requests may be made to:

**Life Research International**  
P O Box 1311 Fallbrook, CA 92088 USA

July - September 2009

WEBSITE  
[www.LifeResearchInternational.org](http://www.LifeResearchInternational.org)



# Editorial Introduction:

## Testing the TULIP

Our last issue dealing with the legal and moral aspects of redemption (Vol. 9 #2) mentioned some difficulties in Calvinism. Some of our subscribers were troubled and others encouraged by what we wrote. Your letters and e-mails demand a response. This issue will address some of these questions.

In the “Letters” section we begin responding to these unique inquiries. Next we consider additional aspects of **election** related to those dealt with in our last issue. This includes a glimpse at the five points of Calvinism (summarized with the letters TULIP). We especially examine the concept of *irresistible grace*. In “The Order of Salvation” our question is: “Which comes first? – regeneration or faith? Finally the late Reformed scholar Dr. Philip Edgcumbe Hughes takes a penetrating look into God’s unlimited grace. As an Anglican clergyman and visiting professor at Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia) he published *The True Image – the origin and destiny of man in Christ*. It contains the results of a lifetime of Bible study. We highly recommend this controversial book.

Let’s search the Scriptures together.

RAM

# LETTERS



I recently received your April-June issue of **Present Truth** [Vol. 9, #2]. It is interesting to renew acquaintance with that magazine. The issues of the first few years were an extraordinary presentation of Gospel truth. They are still in my library although I admit I haven't looked into them for some years. I became very disenchanted with the direction away from solid Scriptural truth after a few years and dropped the publication.

Parts 1 & 2 in the issue you sent me is again [a] refreshing and edifying return to saving biblical truth. Part 3 is somewhat puzzling to me and will require more study. It fairly well deals with Calvinism Reformed theology. That in Christ the whole world has been declared "not guilty" (what we term objective justification) is presented. What seems not so clear from my cursory reading is that a believer's faith in Christ is entirely the work of God the Holy Spirit, working through the Gospel (subjective justification). That others are lost eternally [as] the result of the unbelief that they exercise within themselves. I guess I still do not see these three points all brought [out] clearly in the essay.

I would not mind receiving more of **Present Truth**, especially if other doctrinal issues of contemporary concern are treated.

P. S., retired Lutheran pastor  
Arizona, USA

*We prefer not using the terms "objective justification" and "subjective justification." While it is true that Christ bore the guilt of the whole world in his own body on the cross we believe that justification is an individual matter. If this is true then we were not born justified. We also believe that justification is "by faith." This requires a person to believe prior to justification. That, of course, did not take place for all mankind at the cross. And to call any form of justification "subjective" runs against the grain of our Reformation heritage which teaches that justification is objective, never subjective. Or stated dif-*

*ferently: that justification changes the way an object is regarded and does not change the object itself.*

*This may be in harmony with how some Lutherans use these terms but we shy away from suggesting that human beings are born free from condemnation and from suggesting that justification is ever “subjective (something done inside of us).”*

*Editor*

Thank you for the Apr-Jun 2009 Present Truth. [I] have read it three times...

On pages 8 & 9 the assertion is that guilt is “legal.” I don’t understand that. To me guilt would be moral – something that happened in the mind of Adam/Eve when they chose to eat the forbidden fruit...

L. C., Nebraska, USA

*Can you be guilty of something that you don’t know about? Numbers 15:24-29 speaks of something like that. We might break a traffic law without knowing it but we are guilty just the same.*

*Jesus was counted guilty of our sins in which he had no share (Mark 15:28). The iniquity of us all was laid on him (Isa. 53:6). So we see that guilt is something legal. Guilt is not the same as feelings of guilt. A person can be guilty and not feel guilty. A person can feel guilty and not be guilty.*

*Forgiveness is a declaration of “not guilty.” In Mark 2 Jesus forgave a sick man’s sins. Later he healed the sick man. Forgiveness is not transformation (the moral) but rather it is a legal declaration that the guilt has been removed. Guilt and forgiveness are “accounted” not infused. They are imputed, not imparted.*

*Editor*

I received the latest issue of **Present Truth** [Vol. 9, #2], which reprinted an article that, in my view, confuses the truth of the Gospel ... [it] taught that salvation had two aspects – the moral and the legal...

When we speak of salvation, are we thinking theologically or in biblical terms? Are we using the word salvation to include sanctification or are we talking about the objective work of Christ to save us from condemnation and restore us to divine favor?

If by salvation we understand that which was done to restore us to God's favor and give us the verdict of justification, my question is: is the moral aspect a complementary part of salvation?

Speaking of two aspects of salvation suggests that sanctification is a complement to the work of Christ, that final salvation depends on the moral transformation that takes place in us...

The case of the two aspects of salvation depends on our concept of original sin, as you know very well. Catholicism understood original sin to be corruption, that is it understood that the cause of condemnation was not legal and representative, but moral and individual. Calvin was ambiguous in his theology of original sin, (inconsistent) on the one hand he spoke of the moral aspect of the fall and on the other of the legal aspect of our justification. He claimed that Romans 5 taught that we were condemned because of the corruption which was in us (moral) and that we were justified by the righteousness of Christ (legal). This has led to a misconception of salvation and the doctrine of the two aspects of salvation. Thank God that those who followed Calvin realized the problem and began teaching the legal aspect of the fall and the legal aspect of salvation...

My contention is that talking about a moral aspect in the fall as well as in salvation destroys the concept of representation in Adam and in Christ, makes the work of Christ insufficient, and makes the moral experience of the believer a complementary addition to the work of Christ. I would like to see the biblical evidence on which you believe that this doctrine is biblical...

S. R. New Jersey, USA

*We together with you have no desire to lead people to believe that their final salvation is based on a combination of God's work for them and God's work in them! But the word "basis" does not mean the same as the word "aspect." The article to which you refer says that justification and sanctification are two aspects of salvation, not two bases of salvation.*

*We use the concept of "legal and moral aspects" in both a theological and biblical sense. The Bible expresses forms of the word salvation in the past (1 Cor.1:18), present (Heb.10:39) and future (Matt. 10:22) tenses. And in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 the apostle Paul writes: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through*

*sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” Sanctification is an aspect of salvation but NOT an aspect of justification (see Rom. 5:9-10).*

*Theologically “sin” is both legal and moral. Its legal aspect is called guilt and its moral aspect is called corruption. Adam and Eve incurred both upon eating the forbidden fruit. Legally we receive “original guilt” from Adam (Rom. 5:12). This the Bible calls “condemnation.” Morally we receive “original sin” from Adam. This the Bible calls “corruption” (1 Cor. 15:53).*

*Theologically “atonement” is a legal act but that same act of suffering and shedding of blood has a moral aspect in its display of God’s inestimable love for sinners. Its legal aspect is called “propitiatory atonement” while its moral aspect is called “moral influence.” The Old Testament is replete with the word “atonement” which means “a legal cleansing” and was generally accomplished by the blood of the sacrifice. The New Testament uses the terms “atonement,” “propitiation,” “reconciliation,” and “ransom” to refer to Christ’s payment for our sins by his death (Rom. 3:25; 5:11; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). It was the same act of Jesus that both paid for our sins and draws us to himself. While atonement was made for all at the cross its application is individual and takes place when the eye of faith focuses on the uplifted Christ.*

*Theologically “salvation” is both legal and moral. Its legal aspect is called justification and its moral aspect is called sanctification. When people believe in Jesus they are justified. But salvation includes more than a right standing before God – it includes eternal life in his presence. Salvation includes transformation as well as declaration (Matt. 1:21; Titus 3:5-7). We would do well not to boast that we are “saved” until “this mortal puts on immortality.” This does not mean that our final justification in the judgment is based partly on God’s work for us and partly on God’s work in us. The basis of our salvation is always what God has done for us, outside of us, in his Son.*

*Legally we receive salvation when we believe and it is secured to us in the last judgment. (Matt. 12:36-37; Acts 16:31). This the Bible calls “justification.” Morally we receive salvation as we are transformed from glory to glory. This the Bible calls “sanctification” (which culminates in glorification). Any salvation that doesn’t include resurrection or translation to life eternal is not Biblical (Rom. 13:11; 1 Pet. 1:5-9).*



## Free to Choose

**Richard A. Marin**

In Eden mankind was free to choose life or death. Created perfect and equipped with an unshackled will, Adam and Eve were offered blessing or cursing. They were free to choose loyalty to God which would bring life eternal or disobedience which would bring eternal death.

When Adam, our representative head, chose death humanity lost its freedom to choose life. “Sold under sin” we are legally under the curse – held captive by the enemy Adam chose to serve. Apart from divine intervention we are all without Christ, without “hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:1, 12; Rom. 3:11; 7:14). And without Christ there is no salvation (Acts 4:12).

God the Father must act first if any are to find salvation in the Son. No one can come to Christ “except the Father... draw



him.” John 6:44. “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” 1 John 4:14.

Having lost the freedom to choose *life* we were left with only the freedom to serve our master the devil. This freedom was not taken away by the fall. Scripture says: “...we have turned every one to his own way.” Isa. 53:6. Fallen beings have *not* lost the ability to choose their own way in accord with their slavery.

So what does this remaining freedom allow fallen human beings to do? One thing it allows them to do is to reject God’s drawing!

But we are getting ahead of ourselves... How does God draw the lost?

What is that divine act by which a person is brought to Christ? Must God first transform one’s corrupt nature in order for them to believe in the only begotten Son? Must regeneration, or even subconscious regeneration, occur before a sinner can hear the voice of God? How is it that God comes to lost humanity?

## **The Doctrines of Grace**

As we saw in the previous issue (Vol. 9, #2), the Bible teaches that the legal aspects of redemption are to take precedence over the moral aspects. God’s method always:

1) puts the root before the fruit – the legal *before* the moral;

2) considers the root more important than the fruit – the legal *over* the moral; and

3) teaches that there is no fruit borne apart from the root – the legal *produces* the moral.

That issue showed the predicament of hyper-Calvinism. Under the influence of Augustine that system considers only the *moral* aspects of the fall when looking at the enslavement of the will. It sees human depravity (the moral aspect of the fall) as the cause of our inability to choose Christ. Like Augustine in this area, Calvinism ignores the condemnation (original guilt) that

passed upon all men at the fall (see Rom. 5:12-21). Since it views human depravity as the cause of our inability to choose Christ it logically concludes that a person must first be regenerated before being free to accept God's call.

Considering that it is our moral corruption that prevents us from responding to the call of God, Calvinism changes the definition of *grace* from an attitude in the heart of God to an internal transformation in the heart of man. The belief that our moral condition must be changed in order to free our wills places the *moral* over the *legal* and teaches that regeneration must precede justification. The result is that Calvinism follows Rome in placing the new birth before justification. "Saving grace" becomes an internal transformation of the sinner rather than an external attitude of God. The moral aspects of redemption are placed *before, above, and apart from* the legal aspects.

Since Calvinism rightly rejects the idea that everyone will be saved it turns to the idea that some previous decree of God must determine to whom he will show grace and to whom he will not show his smiling face. This is called *unconditional election* and this choice on God's part happens before a person is able to meet any conditions. The idea is that God decides the destiny of each individual before the foundation of the world.

In order to free the bound wills of those whom God has chosen the Calvinists propose their "doctrines of grace" that teach that God will renew those whom he has previously chosen. These then choose life. All the rest God willingly passes by leaving them in sin.

In order to explain how a totally depraved person can choose life and be eternally saved Calvinism presents its five point "TULIP". The five points of Calvinism are reduced to the letters "T," "U," "L," "I," and "P" which stands for total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints.

**Total depravity** means that "all of man's nature is corrupted by sin, but he is not as evil as he could be." – Craig R. Brown, *The Five Dilemmas of Calvinism*, Ligonier Ministries

(Orlando, Florida, 2007) p. 25. The Bible supports this doctrine (Psa. 58:3; Isa. 1:5-6; Matt. 7:11), but it does not limit humanity's fall to depravity (corruption). The fall was primarily legal. When Adam freely chose to eat the fruit he chose *condemnation* for the entire race (Rom. 5:16). Condemnation and corruption are our legal and moral inheritance from Adam. Condemnation is guilt. Corruption is depravity.

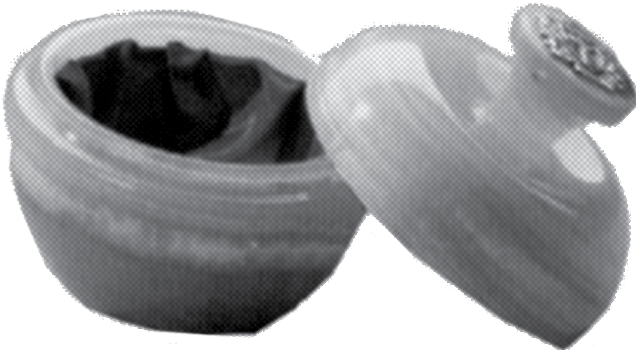
**Unconditional election** means that "God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc." – David N. Steele & Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented*, (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1963) pp. 16-17. In the area of election the Bible takes a different approach. It teaches that God chose to save all those found "in Christ" (Eph. 1:4). And entrance into Christ is by faith – not God's faith but our own (Eph. 2:8). While Calvinism rightly rejects universalism (the belief that everyone will be saved in the end) it suggests that God *unconditionally* chose before the foundation of the world to save some of us and to damn the rest (U).

In order to continue this logic it *limits* Christ's act of atonement on the cross to only those pre-elected few (L). **Limited atonement** means that "Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners." – *Ibid.*, p. 17. The Bible is abundantly clear on this point. Christ's propitiatory atonement was made not just for certain specified sinners but for every human being (Rom. 5:18; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1John 2:2).

Being faced with human depravity Calvinism then adds the "I" (**irresistible grace**) in TULIP. This is the idea that when coming to these chosen ones God's call *cannot be resisted*. They state it this way: "...the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation... the internal

call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be refused; it always results in conversion.” – *Ibid.*, p. 18. We will examine this point in more detail below (see also the article by Dr. Hughes later on in this issue). Suffice it to say that the Bible knows nothing of irresistible grace!

When these pre-chosen ones are accepted (justified) by “faith” Calvinism teaches that they will *persevere* in the way of salvation and never be lost (P). This is called **the perseverance of the saints** and is stated as follows: “All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.” – *Ibid.*, p. 18. That this is God’s desire for every believer none can deny. The Bible continually exhorts believers to press on towards the “mark” of perfection not letting anyone beguile them of their reward nor take their crown (Phil. 3:13-16; Col. 2:18; Rev. 3:11).



### **God’s Drawing Power**

We agree that the Bible teaches that in Adam we are *totally depraved* (T). But we reject the idea of *irresistible grace* (I).

There is a freedom left within fallen human beings. That freedom is the freedom to choose our own way and to resist God’s drawing. Jesus taught his disciples that he would be rejected by “the elders” (Mark 8:31). John wrote:

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” John 12:48.

And the author of Hebrews clearly exhorts us not to harden our hearts when God calls (Heb. 3:7-8). In chapter twelve he reemphasizes the warning:

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Heb. 12:25.

The deacon Stephen pointed out to the Jewish leaders their rejection of his Spirit-filled plea saying: “...ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.” Acts 7:51. Because of these Scriptures that clearly show we still have the freedom to refuse God’s call we must reject the idea of *irresistible* grace.

Nor can we accept the idea that Christ’s sacrifice made on Calvary was *insufficient* for every human being. Christ “is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” 1 John 2:2. God’s grace was manifest in the gift of his Son (2 Tim. 1:9, 10). The Bible makes very clear that Christ died for the sins of the whole world (1 John 4:14; 1 Tim. 2:6; 4:10). So we must reject the idea of a *limited* atonement on the cross. When Mary broke the alabaster box to anoint her Savior the perfume filled the room. But not everyone in the room appreciated her costly gift. This illustrates the costly sacrifice of Christ. Like Mary’s fragrance that filled the room, Christ’s sacrifice includes atonement for many more than those who accept and appreciate it.

### **The Question of Election**

Before the foundation of the world God made His final decision on who should be saved and who should not. In order

to continue in God's universe perfect obedience to his precepts is required of all (Matt. 5:48; Rom. 2:13). So God's electing decision was based on grace – the grace of God in Christ. Grace is an attitude in the heart of God not an action in the heart of man. It is God's favor, considering us better than we are. By grace God chose to accept every person who found their perfection in Christ. According to God's purpose grace "was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:9. In him we have perfect obedience and are accepted (2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10). God graciously elected and accepted his Son as Substitute and Surety for the race. Jesus is God's Elect. We were chosen "in him before the foundation of the world." Eph. 1:4.

There in the councils of heaven Christ offered Himself as Substitute and Surety for the human race (Zech. 6:13; Heb. 10:7). He pledged that if for any reason the proposed creation should depart from perfect conformity to God's universal government he would step into the gap and take full responsibility (Job. 9:33). Like aged Jacob who accepted the pledge of his son Judah, the Ancient of Days accepted the pledge of his Son Jesus and proceeded with the creation of mankind. Just as Jacob accepted Judah's life and inheritance as guarantee for Benjamin's safe return home so our Heavenly Father accepted the life and inheritance of his Son as guarantee of humanity's faithfulness. Judah was spared that painful fate but Jesus and the Father were not. Only through suffering, death, and eternal loss do the Father and the Son secure a tested and sealed humanity. From before the foundation of the world they loved us and pledged themselves in sacrifice for us (Gen. 43-44; Zech. 6:12, 13; Rev. 13:8).

When the fullness of time came "God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law." Gal. 4:4-5. Then God's purpose and grace were "made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. 1:9-10.

In eternity past God decreed that all those found in Christ should be made secure in his kingdom and that all sinners

left outside of him would not be part of the eternal inheritance (Dan.12:1; Eph. 1:3-10; Rev. 13:8). The limits were set and the decision made. This is similar to the decree made by king Nebuchadnezzar when the wise men were challenged to retell his dream. He declared:

“...if ye will not make known unto me the dream with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if ye shew the dream and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor.” Dan. 2:5-6.

Similarly in eternity past God decided and wrote in his book that life and every blessing would be given to those found “in Christ” and that the wages of sin would remain on those left outside of Christ (1 Cor. 15:22). The limits were set and the door is still open.

In the everlasting covenant God chose a tested and sealed humanity in Christ. Outside of Christ there was no election. Christ is God’s elect (Isa. 42:1-8; Col.1:18; 1 Pet. 2:6) and all that are found written in the book of his life will make up his sealed community (Dan. 12:1; Rev. 7; 20:15). Our final salvation is not based on any transformation wrought in us (the moral). Rather we rejoice that our names are written (the legal) in the Lamb’s book of life in heaven (Lk. 10:20). It is in the Lamb of God that our election is secure.

### **Except the Father Draw Him**

So how does God reach people outside of Christ – lost individuals – and bring them into the Beloved?

In Ephesians 2 Paul establishes the fact that apart from faith human beings are outside of Christ, without hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:1-13). And in Romans 16:7 he makes clear that people enter Christ at different times. Those eternally saved do not all enter Christ on the same day – be that

day before the foundation of the world, at Calvary, or at his coming.

Since Adam ate the forbidden fruit, God and humanity have had irreconcilable differences. But something happened in Christ's triumph on the cross. When Christ fulfilled his promise to the Father and paid our debt God was reconciled to mankind. Every legal barrier preventing full fellowship was broken down. Satan no longer had any rights to the human race and God was vindicated in his pursuit of a redeemed humanity. Like an estranged husband pursuing his unrepentant wife God comes to His creation with love and good news (See 2 Cor. 5:18-21). Through the preaching of the gospel He comes saying, "I have been reconciled to you, won't you now be reconciled to me? If one died for all, then were all dead. Your death which was just has been paid by Another, fear not but only believe." And faith to believe comes by hearing: by hearing the good news of the gospel (Rom. 10:17). When Christ is lifted up before mankind he draws lost sinners to himself (Isa. 45:22; John 3:14-15; 12:32).

"But they are dead," you say. Yes, dead in trespasses and sins, but that is not a problem for God. His voice penetrates death (John 5:25, 28). Having the legal right over the tomb he speaks and the dead hear his voice (John 11:43-44). When Adam sinned and hid in the Garden of Eden God came searching, calling Adam. Was fallen Adam able to hear God's voice? Yes! Adam says "I heard thy voice... and I was afraid... and I hid myself." Gen 3:10.

### **The Foolishness of Preaching**

No natural man seeks God but God relentlessly seeks natural men and women. And how does he seek them? By the foolishness of preaching!

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1, Paul clearly outlines how God reaches people to save them. Here he excludes both the "regeneration before faith" view and the "natural free will" view.



Today Calvinists hold the first view and liberal theologians and Arminians the second. (At the end of the sixteenth century Jacob Arminius objected to the ideas contained in the Calvinist TULIP.) In Paul's day it was the Jews that advocated a miraculous sign prior to faith and it was the Greeks who trusted in human wisdom to support their view of the freedom of the natural will of man. Consider verses 21-24 interspersed with our comments in brackets:

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God [Fallen human beings in themselves don't have the ability to search out, choose, or understand God.],

“it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe [So God comes to us in the preaching of the Gospel. This is his powerful, chosen means of reaching the lost. In the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed and by its preaching faith is inspired.].

“For the Jews require a sign [One sector of humanity believes God must first work an internal miracle in the lost – that the preaching of the gospel is not enough to create faith.],

“and the Greeks seek after wisdom [Another sector of humanity believes that human beings have in themselves the natural ability to find out God and be saved.]:

“But we preach Christ crucified [But we proclaim the Gospel which is the divinely appointed power of God unto salvation.],

“unto the Jews a stumblingblock [Ultra-Calvinism believes that it is heretical to teach that solely by the preaching of the Gospel freedom is granted to people giving them the ability to believe.],

“and unto the Greeks foolishness [The liberal theologians and some Arminians consider the preaching of the Gospel unnecessary for saving people.];

“But unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God [But everyone whom God invites are called through the preaching of Christ. This is both the powerful and intelligent means that God uses to save those whom he calls.]”

When God's apparently foolish way of bringing the lost to salvation is accepted then Jesus will receive all the glory (1 Cor. 1:31), for his sacrifice on Calvary is lifted up and people are drawn to him (John 12:32).

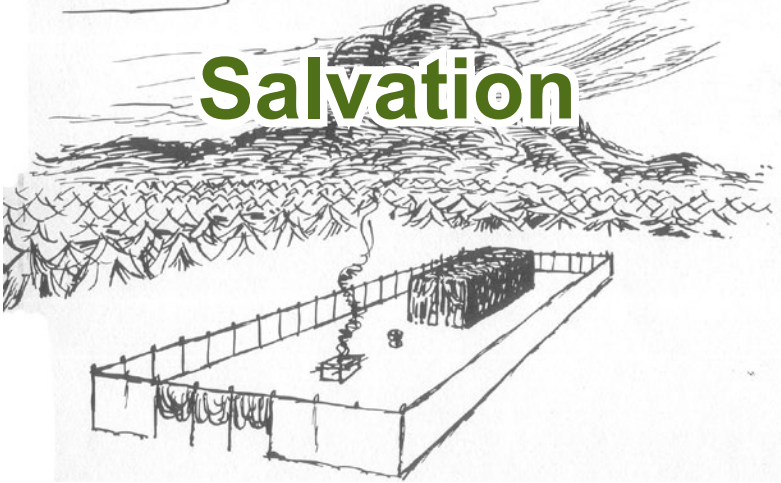
In the preaching of the Gospel God comes to us with our emancipation papers in hand saying, "I have found a ransom." God's work is not faulty that we should reject it. His mercy, grace, and love are overwhelming. He has given freely of himself that we might rejoice in our purchased freedom. We are like the American slaves that continued in bondage after liberty was decreed. If a messenger from the North comes crying, "Liberty, liberty to every bondman and slave," we should believe the good news and leave our old master, the devil. To neglect the proclamation of the one carrying the emancipation papers in hand is to forfeit our chance for freedom. Now is the day of salvation. There is no more convenient season than today. "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Heb. 3:15. If we are lost it will be because we would not come to Christ that we might have life (John 5:40).

God wants to bestow the blessing of forgiveness of sins, of pardon for iniquity, of the gift of righteousness upon all who will believe in His love, and accept of His salvation.

The freedom to choose life eternal is not natural in us nor is it infused by some supernatural regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Rather it comes solely by the wooing external call of the Spirit in the preaching of the liberating Gospel of Christ (Rom. 10:17; Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus said: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor... to proclaim freedom for the prisoners... to release the oppressed." Luke 4:18 NIV. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." John 8:32.

We are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes (Rom. 1:16). It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. So we go into the whole world preaching the Gospel to every creature. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mk. 16:16. "To those who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 NIV. A person is accepted into the family of God by faith alone, "for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. 10:13.

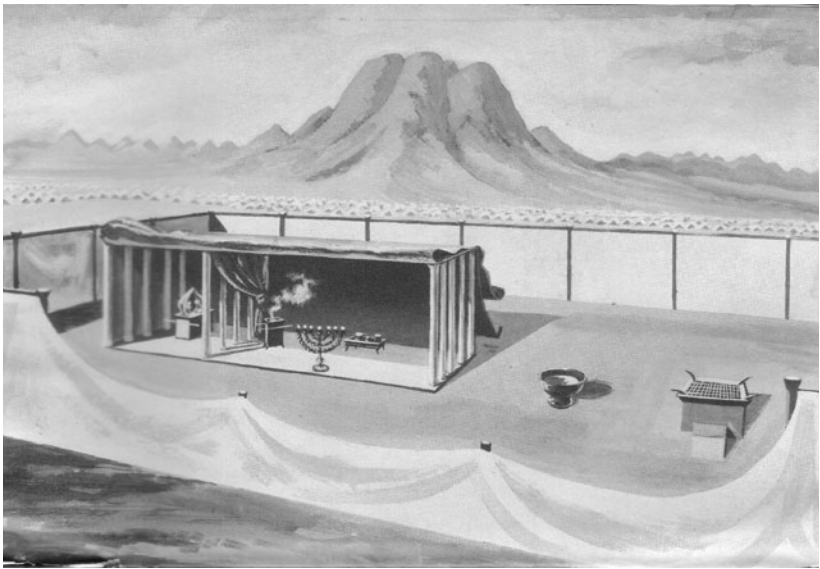
# The Order of Salvation



## the Editor

Many seem to be confused about the order of salvation. Some suggest that a person must be changed before they can believe. Others view baptism as a prerequisite. Do we need to keep the Commandments before coming to Christ? Let's look at what the Bible says about the order of salvation. There are several places where Scripture speaks about how we come to Christ.

God gave Moses a pattern for the construction of the tabernacle that teaches about the order of salvation. Every article had its specific location; every service had its appointed time. The sinner was to bring a lamb and enter the white linen courtyard. There at the altar he confessed his sins upon the spotless, innocent victim and took its life. The priest was to burn the sacrifice, then wash in the laver and sprinkle the blood in the sanctuary (or eat a portion of the meat). Thus guilt was removed from the sinner and placed upon the priest or sanctuary.



Entering the courtyard there was the altar of burnt offering where sins were confessed. Between it and the temple was the laver. Inside the temple was the golden candlestick, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense. These three articles represented the Spirit, the Word, and prayer. Behind the veil was the ark of the covenant where the high priest alone entered at the end of the religious year to cleanse the sanctuary and remove sin to the wilderness.

Some suggest the laver of baptism be move from the sanctuary court and be placed before the door of faith. Others seem to imply that the holy oil of God's Spirit be removed from the lamp stand and sprinkled on the sinner so he can enter the white linen courtyard. Even a few remove the Ten Commandments from the ark and suggest the sinner fulfill them before coming to the altar of burnt offering. But all these put stumbling blocks between the sinner and justification. Lambs were always available before entering the sanctuary.

The arrangement of the tabernacle paints a picture of salvation. When a person is confronted with their sin they

must *first* grasp the Lamb of God and enter the door of faith. Surrounded by the white linen representing the imputed righteousness of Christ they confess their sins at the altar and are forgiven. The laver which represents baptism comes next. Within the tabernacle the candlestick points to Spirit-filled meditation; the table of showbread to Bible study; and the altar of incense to prayer. Even at the end of the path in the Most Holy Place of judgment there is a mercy seat between the believer and the law. Trusting in the life and death of Christ on the Day of Atonement the elect receive the blessing of our High Priest and are prepared for the joyous Feast of Tabernacles that follows.

The book of Hebrews argues that since “Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices... it was necessary for... [Christ] also to have something to offer.” Heb. 8:3 NIV. This emphasizes the importance of the earthly sanctuary as a type of the plan of salvation. Jesus’s life is the gift and his death the sacrifice that have value in heaven’s sanctuary. The temple Moses built in the Sinai desert points to Christ and him crucified. There we see that by entering the door of faith we are justified and go on to confess our sins, be baptized and live a life of Bible study, Spirit-filled meditation and prayer.

In the New Testament the order of salvation is also clearly pointed out. Speaking to Gentile believers Paul writes:

“...you too, when you heard the message of the truth, the good news of your salvation, and had believed it, became incorporate in Christ, and received the seal of the promised Holy Spirit....” Eph. 1:13 NEB.

First comes “hearing the gospel”

Next comes “trusting in Christ by faith”

Then comes “the reception of the Holy Spirit”

The preaching of the Gospel brings faith to them that hear. Faith comes by hearing a clear presentation of the message about Christ (Rom. 10:17). After placing their faith in him they receive the Holy Spirit which is given only to those who believe.

The freedom to believe is not naturally present in us. That's why the Gospel must come to us. And if we don't believe the Gospel about Christ, his Holy Spirit is not given to us. The Bible order of salvation is very clear: **those that hear the gospel and believe, receive the Holy Spirit.**

In his letter to the Galatians Paul confirms the truth that personal faith comes before receiving the Holy Spirit:

“Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?” Gal. 3:1-2 NIV.

The New Living Translation answers:

“Of course not [by observing the law]! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ.” Gal. 3:2.

Paul continues by saying that the blessing of Abraham – justification – is received so “that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (v 14). This promise is “given to them that believe” (v. 22). We who believe “are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (v. 26). And because we “are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.” Gal. 4:6 RSV.

So we conclude that:

1. Faith comes by hearing the Gospel.
2. Faith comes before receiving the Holy Spirit.
3. Preaching the Gospel is God's method of drawing people.
4. The Gospel is to be preached to everyone.

The city of Samaria was at the point of death from starvation. It was surrounded by the armies of the mighty Syrian enemy. Inside the besieged city the price of food had skyrocketed and mothers were eating their children. The king blamed it all on God.

Outside the city wall four hungry lepers huddled near the gate and said to one another, “Why sit we here until we die? Let us go into the camp of the Syrians, if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.” So at twilight they snuck up to an enemy tent. No one was there. The Syrians had heard what sounded like the approach of a giant army and fled leaving everything.

Inside the first tent the lepers ate their fill, grabbed all the silver and gold they could carry and hid it away. After repeating this process in a second tent they said to themselves: “We’re not doing the right thing. This is a day of good tidings, and we are keeping it to ourselves. Let us go at once and report this to the royal palace.”

They shouted the news to the gatekeeper. He shouted it to the guards; and it soon reached the palace. After checking out the truth of the story the news leaked from the palace and everyone scrambled out of the city to enjoy the spoils (2 Kings 6-7).

This pictures the Gospel proclamation. “Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost” Jesus poured out his Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:33). “When he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” Eph. 4:8 NASB. The prophet Daniel predicted that he would “distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers.” Dan. 11:24 NASB. David wrote, “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor.”Psa. 112:9 NIV. And Isaiah says of him:

“...he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Isa. 53:12.

In Samaria, faith came by hearing the proclamation of the good news. Those who believed received the bounty. In the same way the announcement of Christ’s sacrifice inspires faith to grasp the spoils. The door of salvation is opened to lost, starving humanity and whosoever will may take the bread of life that came down from heaven (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:18, 21; 2 Cor. 4:6).



# The Free Offer of the Gospel\*

**Philip Edgcumbe Hughes**

Though it is plain that in the apostolic ministry of the New Testament the gospel was universally preached and freely offered to all, and that this was done constantly and sincerely, there are some who hold that to invite all to receive new life in Christ is an objectionable practice. They argue that the gospel invitation is for the elect alone, whose number and identity have been decreed beforehand, that the saving grace of the gospel is sufficient only for the elect, since, were it sufficient for more than the elect, there would be an excess of grace which would be wasted and ineffective, and that the offer of salvation is heard by the nonelect only for the purpose that they should reject it.

---

\* *This article is a portion (pp. 172-177) of the chapter titled "The Freedom of God" in The True Image – the origin and destiny of man in Christ (copyright 1989), and is reprinted with permission from Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (Grand Rapids, MI).*



It is an attitude that is governed by a strangely quantitative view of divine grace; whereas we are assured that “it is not by measure that God gives the Spirit” (Jn. 3:34). The grace of God is as boundless as his love. It cannot be weighed or computed. While the day of grace continues, so also does the report, “Still there is room,” and so also does the command, “Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Lk. 14:22 f.). Was the invitation at first extended to those who for worldly reasons excused themselves from accepting it and thus excluded themselves from the banquet of divine grace a hollow invitation? Was St. Paul’s incessant preaching of the gospel and his becoming all things to all men that by all means he might save some misguided (1 Cor. 9:16, 22)? Was he wrong in his conviction that where sin is abundant grace is superabundant (Rom. 5:20)?

The intense urgency with which the apostles applied themselves to the task of evangelism is explained both by the commission they received from the Lord to preach the gospel throughout the world and by their awareness that the present period between the two comings of Christ is the period of *the last days*, which will be terminated by *the last day*, the day of final judgment for the unrepentant. The mainspring of the gospel is that God is the source of life, life indeed from the dead, and that **no person is brought into being for the purpose of perishing**. Accordingly, the prolongation of this final age is explained by St. Peter as the prolongation of the day of opportunity for sinners to repent and return to God though through faith in Jesus Christ. He assures his fellow believers that, though the day of Christ’s return may seem to be long delayed, “the Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). It was because “*now* is the day of salvation” that St. Paul willingly endured “afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watchings, hunger” as with single-minded dedication he proclaimed the Good News to all people (2 Cor. 6:1-10; 11:23-29), and, further, that he urged that prayers should be made “for all men,” adding that to do this was “good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men

to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Why should Christians be exhorted to pray for all men, and how can it be said that God desires all men to be saved, if by a fixed decree many are destined never to be saved and cannot therefore be helped by our prayers? It only confuses the issue to argue (as e.g., Calvin does) that the Apostle does not mean all men as individuals but all orders or classes of men; nor is this contention confirmed by the specific mention of “kings and all who are in high positions,” as though this were intended as an illustration of one class of men, since the purpose of this particular specification is “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life,” which is the condition that is desirable precisely because it is conducive to the free declaration of the gospel and thus to the salvation of all men. Thus St. Paul asserts later in this same epistle: “For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe” (1 Tim. 4:10). This indicates that God reaches out redemptively to all men, but that only those who believe actually experience his redemption. If “all men” here means all classes of men, then “those who believe” must mean those classes of men who believe; but this is inadmissible since believing is the response of persons as individuals, not as classes. The obligation placed on Christians to be Christ’s witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth follows from the fact that **the propitiation achieved at the cross is cosmic in its amplitude** (1 Jn. 2:2).

St. Paul leads us to the same conclusion in the comparison between Adam and Christ which he develops in Romans 5:12 ff..., where he asserts that “as one man’s trespass led to condemnation of all men, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men” (v. 18). The argument rests on the exact numerical correspondence between the “one man” Adam and the “one man” Christ and between the “all men” affected by the sin of the former and the “all men” affected by the righteousness of the latter. In both places the action of one man has consequences that determine the destiny of all men. That “all men” means the entire human race, not just all the elect or all the nonelect or all classes of men, is evi-

dent from the declaration that “as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all men sinned”(v. 12), where “all men” indisputably signifies the whole of mankind. In Adam, therefore, there is perdition for the whole of mankind, and in Christ there is reconciliation for the whole of mankind. This being so, St. Paul is able, as we have seen, to speak of God as the Savior of all men and as wishing all men to be saved, to encourage the offering up of prayers for all men, and to require the proclamation of the gospel to all men.



In actuality, of course, all men cannot simultaneously be perishing in Adam and alive in Christ: the two conditions are mutually exclusive. As a matter of logic it would be possible for the whole of mankind whose status in Adam is one of perdition to be brought to the new status of redemption in Christ; but such universalism is unknown to Scripture, even though the potential may be said to be there. The reality is that the gospel which is offered to all for acceptance is rejected by many, and **to reject Christ is to remain in Adam**. The ultimate dividing line for the whole of mankind, then, is the line which separates those who are in Christ from those who are in Adam. Hence the offer of salvation is accompanied by the warning of judgment which gives it its true urgency, as is apparent from the frequency of admonitions such as the following: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God

rests upon him” (Jn. 3:36). Those who thrust the word of grace from them judge themselves unworthy of eternal life (Acts 13:46) – a conclusion that is also taught in Romans 5:17; where St. Paul writes: “If, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.” Only the reception of God’s abundant grace and the acceptance of the free gift of righteousness can ensure the transition from death to life.

Within this perspective the gospel is freely offered to all persons throughout the world as the provision of divine grace for the rescuing of mankind from the predicament in which through their sin they have placed themselves; and it is offered in all seriousness as “the power of God for salvation for every one who believes” (Rom. 1:16). Through his gossellers God genuinely appeals to mankind to be reconciled to him (2 Cor. 5:20). To those rejecters of his grace on whom his judgment inescapably falls he still says: “I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, ‘Here am I, here am I,’ to a nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hand all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices, a people who provoke me to my face continually” (Is. 65:1-3). Divine expostulation of this kind clearly indicates that **there is on man’s part responsibility for accepting God’s grace as well as for rejecting it.** Always the damning sin is the turning away from the grace and goodness of God which are there to be freely received. “What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me?”, the Lord asked through his prophet Jeremiah; and then he accused the people of committing two evils: “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” It was not that God had abandoned them, but that they had abandoned God: “Have you not brought this upon yourselves by forsaking the Lord your God, when he led you in the way?... Know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the Lord your God” (Jer. 2:5, 11, 13, 17, 19). Thus they were chided, but without pleasure on God’s part. Even so God pleaded with his

people to turn back to him: “Return, faithless Israel, says the Lord, I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, says the Lord. I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the Lord your God.... Return, O faithless sons. I will heal your faithlessness.” It is the cry of a father’s heart as he hopes and waits for the response: “Behold, we come to thee; for thou art the Lord our God” (Jer. 3:12, 13, 22). The appeal then made by God to Israel is now extended to all. God is at hand to do us good, chiding us with the reminder: “Your sins have kept good from you” (Jer. 5:25). Throughout Scripture God compassionately promises blessing to those who love and serve him according to his will, warns that those who rebelliously persist in ungodliness will bring judgment upon themselves, and entreats those who have wandered out of the way to repent and return to him. It is his grace manifested in and through the incarnate Son that creates the possibility for sinful men to make a positive response to his appeal.

The manner of God’s dealing with his human creatures is well illustrated by Jonah and his mission to the city of Nineveh. Jonah had been commanded by the word of the Lord: “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me” (Jonah 1:1 f.). When at length, when being frustrated in his attempt to escape from this assignment, Jonah arrived in Nineveh, he announced the impending judgment of God: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” The effect of this declaration was, contrary to what Jonah had expected, the proclamation of a fast and the putting on of



sackcloth by the entire population, from the king down. “Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands,” the king said. “Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?” And the consequence of this change of heart, we read, was that “when God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it” (Jonah 3:4-10). Jonah, however, was intensely displeased with the outcome of his mission, for he had desired to see the destruction, not the sparing of Nineveh – which shows how wrongheaded and lacking in compassion even a chosen servant of God can at times be. It was not as though Jonah did not know that God was a god of grace and mercy. “I pray thee, Lord,” he protested, “is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repentest of evil” (Jonah 4:1 f.).

From this and many other places in Scripture we learn that **God is not stearnly inflexible in his dealings with mankind**, that even in his denunciation of judgment there is room for mercy, and that he is not, so to speak, self-imprisoned in a sequence of events that has been imprinted on all history prior to creation. The absolute sovereignty of Almighty God does not have to be maintained by him or safeguarded by us as it were casting it in concrete. His sovereignty is dynamic, not static, and it is not less real for being sensitive to the fluctuations among his creatures between rebellion and repentance. He is a *personal* God, and in all his dealings with *personal* creatures formed after his own image how should he not take pleasure in showing mercy where his warnings of judgment has caused men and women to cry to him for salvation?

That so excellent a servant of God as Calvin should have found it possible to assert that “God declared to the Ninevites... that he would do that which, in reality, he did not intend to do” is indeed surprising, for such an assertion posits (however unintentionally) a dichotomy between the word of God and the deed of God. It empties God’s warning of judgment, in this case, of all content. Nor is the problem eased by the postulation that the supposed incongruity between what God said and what God did is attributable to the con-

trolling factor of his hidden or unrevealed intention, which is a type of rationalization quite foreign to the whole account. If the repentance of the Ninevites was fixed beforehand as the predestined consequence of the announcement of imminent punishment, which, however, God secretly had no intention of executing, how can it be said that “God repented him of the evil which he had said he would do to them”? (Such language, of course, means simply that God was moved by their change of heart to show them mercy instead of punishment. It is a human way of speaking about God: there was no wrongdoing for God to repent of; his “repenting” is descriptive of his sensitivity to the human situation; and certainly his judgment, when executed, is only holy and righteous, though, as it is experienced by man, evil in that it is the opposite of blessing.) Moreover, the qualification “yet forty days” indicated a period of opportunity for repentance, a time of grace, as the judgment was delayed. Thus the warning of judgment was not incompatible with the manifestation of mercy.

---

### FREE SUBSCRIPTION

Subscriptions are free to those who personally request them. Send your request together with your name and address to: *Present Truth*, P O Box 1311, Fallbrook, CA 92088 USA.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me a free subscription to *Present Truth*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

---

### ORDER FORM

Current *Present Truth* materials may be order free of charge. Gifts are tax-deductible in the USA. Simply indicate the quantity you wish to receive.

\_\_\_ V 8 #1 Divine Acceptance

\_\_\_ Catalog volumes 1-7 (1970s)

\_\_\_ V 8 #2 What is the Gospel?

\_\_\_ Four Great Certainties

\_\_\_ V 8 #3 By Faith Alone

\_\_\_ Please send me sample copies of your foreign language publications as indicated:

\_\_\_ V 8 #4 The Last Days

\_\_\_ V 9 #1 Federal Headship

\_\_\_ V 9 #2 Legal & Moral Aspects  Spanish,  Portuguese,

\_\_\_ V 9 #3 Free To Choose  Indonesian,  Finnish

# Elect in Him

Chosen in the eternal past  
to a life that's bound to last;

God decided that in Christ  
none should loose eternal life;

But in him to be preserved;  
grace in heav'n now reserved.

To redeem this sum he chose  
His own Son to meet man's woes.

Set his seal on only One:  
out of him we are undone.

But in him all blessings ours –  
finally removes all scars.

He has pledged security:  
this in him and not in me.

In the Son then all may say,  
“I believe, He's mine today”

So by faith I enter him  
who delivers from all sin.

As elect and heaven bound;  
praise his grace that I am found.