



FOREKNOWLEDGE  
ELECTION  
PREDESTINATION  
IN  
THE  
LIGHT  
OF  
SOUL  
WINNING

*Written for the Christian Worker in Layman's Language*

by Dr. James Wilkins

**FOREKNOWLEDGE,  
ELECTION,  
PREDESTINATION  
IN  
THE  
LIGHT  
OF  
SOUL-WINNING**

*By*  
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## FORWARD

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God must have implemented a way to motivate man to forsake this world and all its allurements and give himself completely to the eternal purpose and plan of God.

If God had a purpose for man ...

If God had a plan for man ...

Then common sense and logic dictates that God must have a way to motivate man to fulfill that purpose and plan.

The three doctrines which God placed in the Bible to give this motivation are the doctrines of:

FOREKNOWLEDGE

ELECTION

PREDESTINATION

By His foreknowledge He reveals tremendous future events and rewards which will be given to those who overcome and fulfill God's plan and purpose for their life.

By His election, God reveals his plan and purpose through individuals. Through the Doctrine of Predestination, God propels the believer's mind to the eternal. This makes the believer perfectly willing to forsake the trivial matters of this life in order to accomplish God's eternal purpose and Will in his life.

Through the ministry of Paul, we see a man who has a perfect knowledge of these three doctrines and the consuming effect it has on his life.

It is no wonder that the devil works constantly to blind the minds of men in order to keep these three doctrines in obscurity.

The Bible was written for the common man. The Doctrines of

Foreknowledge, Election, and Predestination are no more complex and difficult to understand than the other precious doctrines of the Bible. The devil has worked harder to distort and confuse in these areas because he knows that if they are clearly understood they will produce the zeal, separation from the world, and dedication that was demonstrated by the first generation of believers.

It is the author's earnest desire to show how these three precious doctrines harmonize and further the work of personal soul winning. By doing so we hope to have part in causing men to give themselves more fully unto the work of God.

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# Chapter One

## A COMMON MAN'S APPROACH

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### **FOREKNOWLEDGE, ELECTION, PREDESTINATION AND THE MINISTRY OF PAUL IN THE LIGHT OF SOUL-WINNING.**

In some people's mind, these doctrines and the practice of personal soul-winning are incompatible. Some reason, the two subjects are like oil and water; they do not mix! The advocates of these doctrines and soul-winners live in two different worlds.

**1. WHAT CAMP ARE YOU IN?** Some people who read this book will do so to find out what camp he is in and where he is coming from.

It has been my experience that when one of these subjects has been discussed, or a verse which referred to one of these doctrines interpreted, someone invariably labeled the author by saying, "You are a \_\_\_\_\_!" In another time and place, someone would ask, "Do you hold the \_\_\_\_\_, or, the \_\_\_\_\_ position?" Although I have attended Bible College and Seminary for seven years, have studied three years of Hebrew and four years of Greek, and have earned a doctorate in theology, I did not easily understand what they were asking me. I did not know whether they were trying to impress me, embarrass me, or confuse me. There were times when I thought they may be trying to do all three.

**2. THE COMMON MANS CAMP.** The answer to, "What camp the author is in?" is that, "I am in the common man's camp." I have always viewed the Bible as a common-sense Book written for the common man to practice. The Bible is to inform of man's origin, why man was created, what man's life is all about, and how to successfully live for God, raise a family and properly prepare for eternity. The author never understood that the Bible is a Book of philosophy given to mankind to debate and develop various theories so that man could develop his own doctrinal

interpretations. This was the basic situation which Paul found on Mars Hill and is described in Acts chapter 17. Rather, the author views the Bible as the Christian's manual which gives man the instructions successfully fulfill God's will and purpose for his life.

**3. DON'T BAD-MOUTH THE POPE.** The philosophy presented in this book is that which the author's mother taught him many years ago. As a teenage boy, I received Christ as my personal Savior. Several other members of our family were saved shortly afterwards. The Lord really changed our family. We were thrilled at His grace and goodness. Everyone noticed the joy and the new life-style of the Wilkins family. Among those aware of the change, were some good, Catholic neighbors who began to ask questions which revealed the Holy Spirit's working in their lives, also.

One day, I told my mother that I was going to visit the Catholic neighbors and witness to them. When she learned where I was going and of my intent, she wisely told me something I have never forgotten and have practiced ever since. She said, "Son, when you go over there to talk to them, it won't do you any good to bad-mouth the pope. Just tell them about the Lord!"

In most writings about the doctrines of foreknowledge, election and predestination, men make rebuttals toward other men's positions. They try to meet the scholars' intellectual and theological arguments of present and past ages. The average reader cannot keep all the definitions straight, or sort out the pages of explanations, logical deductions and arguments. Therefore, he concludes that these doctrines are too deep for him. He concludes that they are for the highly-skilled theologian or "brain" to understand. The author takes the common-sense approach and follows the wisdom of his mother's advice, "DON'T BAD-MOUTH THE POPE." He presents what he believes the Bible teaches concerning Foreknowledge, Election, Predestination, and the Ministry of Paul in the Light of Soul-Winning as if there WAS NO OTHER POSITION. He will not attempt to bad-mouth or make rebuttals. So that the common man can understand; an



honest, clear, common-sense explanation of these subjects is presented. Some readers will say, "He never met the arguments." They will be right. I will not meet the arguments. I am not interested in meeting the arguments. Some will say, "He is too simple. His approach is not from a theological standpoint." My answer is, "Thank you for the compliment; I never intended to. I write for the benefit of the layman, the Christian worker, or the young preacher."

#### **4. WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE FOR THIS BOOK?**

Because foreknowledge, election and predestination are considered to be the heart of theology, some may question this book's purpose, if these subjects are not considered in the realm of theology. Some may wonder, "Why write on these subjects if you do not debate or straighten out other people's views. The author's objectives in this book are presented in four parts. He sincerely desires to help the reader develop:

I. A Greater Love for the Bible

II. A Greater Understanding for Man's Purpose

III. A Greater Desire to Glorify God

IV. A Greater Awareness of Heaven and Eternal Things

#### **I. A GREATER LOVE FOR THE BIBLE**

To establish the believer in the Word of God and to make him fruitful, was Paul's primary purpose in working with him. He told the Corinthians, "that 'your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God,'" I Corinthians 2:5. Man changes; fads and trends come and go; evangelistic fervor dies away, but the Word of God endureth forever. "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven," Psalm 119:89. Man's greatest need is to be established and directed by the Word of God.

#### **How Do We Purpose To Create A Greater Love For The**

## **Bible?**

One of today's primary needs is to establish the believer in the Word. In order to do this, we must create a desire and a love for the Bible. But how can this desire be kindled so it will grow into a love for the Bible and its daily reading?

## **It Is Your Book!**

First, the layman needs to understand that the Bible was written for him and it is his Book. He can understand it. Notice that God commands the common people to study and to teach His Word. In order to teach God's Word, the teacher must be able to understand it.

## THE WHOLE NATION OF ISRAEL WAS TO TEACH!

*"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."-Deut. 6:6-9.*

## THE FATHERS AND MOTHERS WERE TO TEACH:

*"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother."-Prov. 1:8.*

This teaching is to be done in the home by the parents. It is not to be left up to "the church" or the "Christian school." Parents cannot fulfill their responsibility by passing the buck to someone else. God expects the parents to instruct their own children. The church and the school are but extensions and complement the teaching of the parents.

## THE CROWD WAS COMMANDED TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES:

In one of Jesus' sermons, He commanded the crowd to "search the

Scriptures,' John 5:39. Paul commanded the study of the Scriptures; *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* II Tim. 2:15. The average layman's ability to understand and to fulfill God's Will is indicated in these two commandments. God's Will is for them to understand His Word.

THE ELDERLY LADIES WERE COMMANDED TO TEACH:  
*"The aged women ... may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."*-Titus 2:3-5.

These verses clearly teach that the older ladies have a responsibility of teaching God's Word to the younger women so, "the word of God," is not blasphemed. Surely, the Bible is a woman's book, also. Women can understand it and are commanded to teach the younger women and children.

THE YOUNG MAN CAN KEEP HIMSELF CLEAN:  
*"Where(J.)ithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. "* Psalm 119:9

THE YOUNG CHILDREN CAN BE TAUGHT:  
*"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures ... "*-II Timothy 3:15.

THE UNTRAINED LAYMAN CAN BE TAUGHT:  
Jesus thanked God for revealing His secrets through the Word of God to what He called babes. They were babes by comparison to the wise and prudent (trained theologians).  
*"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. "*-Luke 10:21.

THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS GIVEN TO TEACH:  
*"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you,*

*and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him., - I John 2:27.* The dedicated layman has the Bible's author as his teacher. He was given to be your teacher and will illuminate your mind if you will sincerely ask him. John 16:13.

### **You Can Understand The Bible**

If all these groups of people were commanded to teach the Bible, then the Bible is the common man's Book. If it is the common man's Book, then **YOU CAN UNDERSTAND IT!**

### **Teach Them How To Study**

Pastors, evangelists and teachers were given, "For the perfecting of the saints ... " Eph. 4:11-12. Many of these dear men are making a major mistake in their efforts to "perfect" or develop the saints. They are hand-feeding, or teaching, their members the Word instead of teaching them **HOW TO STUDY** and **HOW TO RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD**. First, one hand-feeds the baby; then one teaches the baby how to feed himself. When the baby has been sufficiently taught, he can take his place in the family's routine and never has to be hand-fed again, unless he suffers an accident or becomes ill. Pastors needs to go back and teach their people how to rightly divide and study the Word.

### **Teach Them How To Work**

Parents do not do all the work for their children. A good parent teaches his children to work. Explaining and showing a child how to do something properly takes more time than doing it one's self. But a good parent realizes the merit of patiently working with their child and training him. Pastors need to re-think some areas of the ministry. Instead of hiring staff to do the major part of the church work they need to major on training the laymen to do the **work of the ministry**.

### **How Does This Book Create A Greater Love?**

Because the Bible was written for moms and dads, teens and even

children, then it concludes that they can understand it. They must search, study, and invoke the help of the Author, pastors, and teachers. But, it is their Book and they can understand it. We believe that through reading this book, the common man will learn to love and to appreciate the Bible more. This love for Bible study will be developed through the following three principles:

### **The Bible Is For The Common Man**

After a person becomes convinced that the Bible is for the common man and that he can understand it, then he is encouraged by that knowledge to study it more.

### **The Doctrines Are Simple**

By reading and studying this book, the common man will see the simplicity of the Bible. MAN MYSTIFIES WHILE GOD CLARIFIES. God wants man to understand the Scriptures so He uses His supernatural wisdom to write in a way that man can comprehend. As the common man reads through this book, he will be encouraged to study more because he CAN and WILL understand. The Bible will make sense to him more than ever before.

### **The Way To Success Is Shown**

One of the basic principles of life will spring into action. After a person accomplishes something he could not do before; after he comprehends something he did not understand before; it whets his appetite for more. When man succeeds, a desire for more success is bred. As the common man reads, he understands; as he understands, he will experience the joy of his new-found knowledge. This will produce a greater love and desire for further study and knowledge.

## **II. A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF MAN'S PURPOSE**

"Bro. Jim, it is so sad that a man has to live his whole life before he figures out what life is all about; then, it is too late because his life is over," said Dr. M. B. Hubbard, 87, one of the wisest and greatest preachers I have ever known. Therefore, it is my prayer

that this book will be an instrument to help someone better understand that this book will be an instrument to help someone better understand why man is on this earth.

### **Foreknowledge Reveals The Future**

By God's foreknowledge, he was able to see into the future before He created Adam and Eve. This enabled Him to inspire men to write and to reveal, under His direction, the purpose for His creation and its ultimate outcome. He could see from eternity past to eternity future.

A brief study on Foreknowledge In The Light of Soul-Winning helps a person better understand "TIME". Time is measured eternity. Time began "in the beginning" (Genesis 1:1) and will conclude at the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth. When man sees the doctrine of Foreknowledge In The Light of Soul Winning clearly, he also better understands his purpose on earth.

### **Election Involves Man's Purpose**

The truth of the doctrine of election is based on what man was ELECTED TO DO AND NOT ON DETERMINING WHO THE ELECT ARE.

In developing the subject, Election In The Light Of Soul Winning, the author shows how the believer is elected, when, by what means, and the role the believer has in his own election. This, combined with what the believer is elected to do, VIVIDLY reveals to man his true purpose of existence.

After man understands and submits to this purpose he will experience what Jesus said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

### **Predestination Primarily Involves Man's State of Eternity**

Predestination is not determining who will go to heaven. Predestination concerns what God predetermined to- do with and

for those voluntarily accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

By studying Predestination In The Light Of Eternity, one can catch a glimpse of the eternal glory which God has planned for His children. Paul said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," Romans 8:18.

When one understands predestination, he will understand that, "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Romans 8:28.

When one understands predestination, he will understand that, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," II Cor. 4:17.

It will thrill the believer to comprehend some of the things God has planned for him. It will strengthen him to see how God designs and works out his life so he will be blessed in this life and share God's glory throughout eternity. Predestination concerns man's purpose in eternity as well as his purpose on earth.

### **Paul's Life Inspires Greater Service**

In studying The Ministry of Paul In The Light of Soul- Winning, one is inspired to greater faith and dedication.

Paul declared that man was saved for a definite purpose:

*"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according TO HIS OH-W PURPOSE AND GRACE."* -1 Tim. 1:9.

Paul declares, "For this cause (or, reason) I obtained mercy. II Timothy 1:16. (NOTE: The very reason Paul was saved reveals much light upon the purpose for the reader's life.)

Paul experienced great joy when he came to the close of his life. Just before he was martyred in Rome, he said, "I have finished my

course," II Timothy 4:6. The very thought that he had finished the work which God saved him to do caused him to continue his joyful utterance of victory. "HENCEFORTH, THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS .... " II Timothy 4:8.

By studying The Ministry of Paul In The Light Of Soul- Winning, one can come to a fuller understanding of his own purpose for living.

### **III. A GREATER DESIRE TO GLORIFY GOD**

After the writers of the 150 Psalms, which is the entire Book of Psalms, had written about God's great love, His acts of creation, His acts of protection, His power and preservation, these writers concluded their work in Psalm 150:6 by saying: *"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."*

Revelation Chapter four records the sense of the glorified saints who have just been raptured. Hear them, as they praise the Lord and tell why man was created: *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."*- Rev.4:11.

#### **How Does One Glorify God?**

John answers, "Love not in word and in thought, but in deed and in truth." Talk is cheap! Empty words bring NO glory to God. There are several times in the Bible where God is disgusted at the words of empty message and praise in a religious service. In Isaiah 1:11-20, God ordered them to stop their empty sermons. In Revelation 3:16, God said that their church made Him sick. Standing in a service, lifting one's hands to the Lord, and joining in a song of praise to God, may be the farthest thing from real praise. It may cause God to say, "They are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them," Isaiah 1:14.

#### **Jesus Answers The Question**

Jesus answers the question of how man glorifies God in John 15:8 when he said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much



fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

In the chapter on Election In The Light Of Soul-Winning, we refer the reader to the Scriptures and discuss the fruit of the believer. "The fruit of the righteous (or, saved) is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise," Pro. 11:30. We clearly state that the fruit of the saved person's life is getting other people saved.

Jesus said, the way one glorifies God is not through empty talk or by lip service, but through bearing fruit. In fact, he said, we are to bear "MUCH FRUIT."

### **Fruit Is Our Greatest Desire**

The author sincerely believes that through reading this book, a person can gain a clearer understanding of God's purpose for man's life. And that understanding will create, within the believer, a desire to bear much fruit. John 15:8.

### **IV. A GREATER AWARENESS OF HEAVEN**

If man is going to be happy, he must have something he can look forward to with anticipation and expectancy.

Children make good grades because they work and look forward to making the honor roll. Athletes train hard and live under strict disciplinary standards in order to make the team, or become a star. Young married couples work long hours and live on a meager level in order to own their "own place."

The greatest stimulation for service "above and beyond the call of duty" occurs in the lives of those rare people who have caught the vision of their "eternal home" and glory.

### **"Off The World"**

One of the obvious teachings of the Bible is that God wants His children to be a separate people.

Jesus said that His disciples were in the world, but they were not of

the world. John 17:12-16.

Jesus taught that the cares of this world choke the word which causes the believer to become unfruitful. Matt. 13:22.

Paul commanded the believers to "be not conformed to this world." He literally commanded, don't live like, or adopt, the life style of those of this world, but, "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Rom. 12:2. One renews his mind by reading and obeying the Bible.

Paul likens the believer to a soldier in II Tim. 2:4 stating that, "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life." His next statement explains why the Christian should live a separated life, "That he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

One of the strongest commandments to abstain from worldly living made by the Apostle John (I John 2:15) said, "Love not the world, neither the things in the world."

Jesus admonished, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Matt. 6:19.

The world and "the works that are therein shall be burned up." II Pet. 3:10.

If the physical things which men work for, sacrifice for, and some even die for, are not worn out by the using or stolen by another, it **WILL BE DESTROYED WITH THIS WORLD.**

Jesus literally commands his children:

Get your minds "off the world."

Get your eyes "off the world."

Get your hands "off the world."

You are in the world, but you are no longer of this world system so do NOT adopt its life-style, fashions, language, or way of life.

## **"On Things Above"**

The Christian faith is not negative. It is not a system of "don't" or negatives. It is a positive walk of faith. The only reason God commands the believer to abstain from the world is for the betterment of the believer. God does not leave His child in a vacuum. God does not say, "don't do" and leave one to strain under that negative commandment of "don't do." He explains the positive benefits of "not doing" that which is followed by a commandment of "doing."

Jesus told his disciples to, "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Why? Because the moth and rust will corrupt it or the thieves will steal it. Then he adds, "BUT LAY UP for YOURSELVES treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Matt. 6:19-20.

"Set your affections on things above, not on things on this earth." Col. 3:2. Why, Paul?

"When Christ ... shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:4. Again, to abstain from the world is for the believer's eternal benefit. By turning away from "things on this earth" one can share in the eternal Glory of Christ. Rev. 3:21.

## **"Beans Up Your Nose"**

A young mother un-thoughtfully commented to her two-year-old daughter, who was eating green beans, "Don't put those green beans up your nose." She later explained to her doctor, while he worked to remove the bean pieces from the child's nose, "I don't know why I said that to Sherry. She was not putting the beans up her nose, nor had she ever put beans up her nose, until I said that."

Telling people "not to do" often has the reverse effect upon them. Forbidden fruit seems to be the sweetest.

Telling people "to do" seems to be almost as futile. A young

salesman who stopped an old farmer at the end of the field in order to sell him a book on being a better farmer was told, "Shucks, son. I'm not doing half that I know I ought to be doing, now." That statement summarizes the condition of most of God's children today. Many are not doing half of what they know they ought to be doing.

Much of the Old Testament is filled with instruction to the Jewish people about being separated from the world or their enemies, yet their lack of separation is what leads to their downfall. There must be some way to get the believer's mind off the world and onto heavenly things. There is, and the author wishes to close this chapter by commenting on how that victory can be won in the believer's life.

### **Getting The Job Done**

Wealthy Abraham "looked for a city whose builder and maker is God" while dwelling in tents. Heb. 11:9-10.

Moses refused the treasures of Egypt because he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Heb. 11:16.

Others refused deliverance from torture in order to "obtain a better resurrection." Heb. 11:35.

Paul worked night and day with tears because he was pressing toward the prize of the "high (upward) calling of God." Phil. 3:14.

All of these faith heroes were transformed by something. But what was it? IT WAS THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE ETERNAL. They began to view life in the light of God's eternal purpose for man. They realized that God sent them into the world to perform a service for God. They were pilgrims in the world, but they were not of this world. If they fulfilled their purpose here, regardless of the hardship or trials, then they would pass on to everlasting rewards in God's great, eternal paradise. The glory of that celestial country so overshadowed this poor, temporary land, that there was

no comparison.

They developed a conviction which drove them on to fulfill their purpose regardless of any earthly circumstances. These doctrines of God's foreknowledge, election, and predestination and the truths they reveal caused these strong convictions.

In the chapter about Foreknowledge In The Light Of Soul Winning, one will learn more about the future, eternal victories, and the blessings of God.

The doctrine of election concerns man's purpose on earth and what God has elected him to do.

The Doctrine of Predestination mainly concerns God's purpose with and for His Saints in the millennium and eternal ages.

Much of Paul's zeal stems from his constant awareness of Christ's second coming and the glories which will follow the rapture.

It is the author's firmest convictions that a careful study of the following pages will develop the reader's awareness of heaven, causing him to take his place-in the world, but not of this world - as he journeys toward his eternal appointment.

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## Chapter Two

# FOREKNOWLEDGE IN THE LIGHT OF SOUL-WINNING

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Within the four messages in this series, we will discuss **FOREKNOWLEDGE, ELECTION, PREDESTINATION AND THE MINISTRY OF PAUL IN THE LIGHT OF SOUL-WINNING**. May we hasten to say, do not let the titles of these subjects trouble you. Each subject is a Bible doctrine. The Bible was written for the common man's understanding, therefore, we have written specifically for the layman. We have placed on the cover of the book, in big, bold letters, "**WRITTEN FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS IN LAYMENS LANGUAGE.**" We want to strengthen the layman; the man who pays the bills and holds up his pastor's hand in Christian spirit and truth. This series of messages harmonize with our ministry of developing, mobilizing, training, and inspiring the layman to serve the Lord more effectively.

Let us go further with our introduction by asking some questions:

1. **WHY DID JESUS COME INTO THE WORLD?** Luke 19:10 answers this question by stating, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

2. **WHY WAS JESUS BORN IN A MANGER?** The angels said, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Then the angels announced, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR, which is, CHRIST THE LORD." Luke 2:10-11.

3. **WHAT DID JESUS DO IN HIS DAILY LIFE?** He saved sinners! Jesus traveled many miles to save the woman at the well. He told Nicodemus, " ... Ye must be born again." John 3:7. Throughout the ministry of Jesus we find Him seeking and saving

sinners. He even saved the thief in His dying hour.

**4. WHAT WAS PRIMARY IN JESUS' DAILY LIFE?** He saved sinners! "He must needs go through Samaria." John 4:4 Why? There was a lost woman there. In John chapter 3, Nicodemus came by night and Jesus saved him. If one follows the ministry of Jesus, he will see Him crossing the Sea of Galilee to save the lost Gadarene, walking under the tree to invite Zacchaeus to salvation; and, living as a friend of sinners. Here and there, everywhere, Jesus went about seeking and saving that which was lost. "And many more believed because of his own word;" John 4:41.

**5. WHY DID JESUS DIE ON THE CROSS?**

He died to save SINNERS! John 3:17.

**6. WHAT WAS THE MOST FORCEFUL COMMAND GIVEN TO HIS DISCIPLES?**

Jesus commanded them to go into all the world and make disciples of every nation. He commanded them to go, **TO WIN SOULS**, to seek sinners.

Study carefully the following verses:

- A. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus commanded, "Go and Teach ALL Nations ... "
- B. In Mark 16:15 He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
- C. Luke quotes Jesus in Luke 24:47, " ... that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
- D. In John 20:21, " ... as MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU."
- E. Dr. Luke (the physician) gave the actual prescription which will cure the ills of a lost world in Acts 1:8:

*... ye shall RECEIVE POWER after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in: Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

Everything that Jesus did was so the lost might be saved. If Jesus was on earth primarily to save sinners, if everything He did and taught revolved around getting people saved, then every doctrine when properly understood and interpreted, will further the cause of soul-winning. Therefore, the doctrine of Foreknowledge in the Light of Soul-Winning is presented through the following simple outline:

- I. FOREKNOWLEDGE STEMS FROM AN INFINITE GOD.
- II. FOREKNOWLEDGE JUSTIFIED BY GOD'S ELECTION.
- III. FOREKNOWLEDGE INSPIRES SOUL-WINNING.

### **I. FOREKNOWLEDGE STEMS FROM AN INFINITE GOD**

Every person who believes the Bible, believes that God is an INFINITE God. They believe that He is an all-wise, all-loving, and all-present God. The Psalmist declares, "Great is our God, and of great power, His understanding is infinite." Psalm 147:5.

He is undoubtedly a God of all knowledge which includes foreknowledge. Romans 8:28-29:

*"For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. JJ*

Notice, "whom he did foreknow .... " Foreknowledge is a Bible doctrine which originated and stems from an infinite God. I Peter 1:2 refers to the, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father .... " Because we are writing to Bible believers and limiting the subject to Foreknowledge in the Light of Soul Winning," only



one example is given prior to our next point.

### **Foreknowledge Stems From Almighty God**

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ALL power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18. Note the word "power" in this text. "Power" is translated from the Greek word **exousia** which means authority. Jesus said in Matt. 28:19-20:

*"All power (or authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world. "*

The literal translation of the above verse is - I will be with you perpetually, continually, and on every occasion to the very close and consummation of the age. Now visualize the expression, "All power is given (belongs) unto me .... "

### **The Power Belongs To Jesus By Right Of Creation**

John chapter 1 says that God made all things that are made, and without Him nothing is made. Jesus had the power by right of creation. He made it.

### **The Power Belongs To Him By Right Of Maintenance**

Colossians 1:17 says that " ... by him all things consist," or, are held together. "Consist" comes from the same root word which is translated "gravitation." Jesus literally holds everything together and in its place. All things were made by Him. Jesus has power by right of creation; and He has power by right of maintenance.

### **Power Belongs To Him By Right Of Redemption**

Our INFINITE GOD has power by right of redemption. In Matt. 28: 18 He stands in His glorified body. He has gone down into death, into hell; and all the power of death, hell and Satan could not hold Him. He overcame the power of sin and all the power of

the underworld and came forth triumphantly. He came forth in victory proclaiming that He is the infinite, overcoming, all powerful God. In Rom. 1:4 He, *"declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."*

He made all things; through Him all things exist; and He has overcome to stand as a conquering king over death, hell and the grave. Through this one act we see that God is an all-wise, all-powerful, all-conquering, infinite God. Foreknowledge stems from this all-powerful, all-mighty God!

## **II. FOREKNOWLEDGE JUSTIFIED BY GOD'S ELECTION**

We are elected according to the foreknowledge of God (1 Pet. 1:2). Foreknowledge is God's ability as a living, all-present, present tense God, to foresee things which lie in the future; things which are going to happen. He uses this tremendous knowledge and ability to elect, to foretell events, or to call a person into a special service. Consider the much-discussed example of Esau and Jacob. In Rom. 9:10-13 we read,

*"And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."*

The subject under consideration is God's foreknowledge, justified by His election. The example we will use to prove this is found in the statement, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." By the authority of God's Word, the doctrine of fore-knowledge, when properly understood, stimulates and inspires soul-winning. It has to. The entire Bible revolves around God's effort to deliver, rescue and save sinners from hell. Therefore, every Scripture must be interpreted within its own setting.

## **I Lie Not**

Romans chapter 9 begins with Paul announcing something so startling, so far-fetched, so far out, so inhuman that he has to persuade the people that he is telling the truth. He finally appeals to God to bear witness of the proclamation; that he is not lying. Consider Paul's statement in Romans. 9:1, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost."

What is Paul trying to tell us that is so unbelievable?

Paul is describing the great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart to see sinners saved. He said in verse 3, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren .... " Accursed literally means, cut off, stamped, sealed, damned, sent to hell, become a lost soul - if it were possible - so sinners could be saved. Paul meant that he was so burdened for his Jewish nation that if they would accept Christ as their Savior, he would be willing to go to hell for them. Oh, hear and understand who sent that burden into Paul's soul? It was God who caused Paul to be that burdened. Paul's closeness to God and the love that God had for a lost world broke Paul's heart for his lost nation.

## **Is Paul More Righteous Than God?**

If Paul was that concerned for the lost that he was willing to sacrifice himself to save them, then this question presents itself. Is Paul more righteous than God? Does Paul have a greater concern for the well-being of a sinner than God? Absolutely not! God was so burdened for the lost that He gave His own Son. Paul's anxiety to see people saved resulted in his willingness to die and go to hell if it were possible. It was not possible, but he was willing. Remember that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." IT Peter 3:9. He has no pleasure at all in seeing them die in their sins. After Paul begins the chapter with this startling statement of burden and concern, his life-style proved that this inner burden was genuine. He went after sinners night and day with tears. Acts 20:31. He was willing to endure

persecution, whippings and all types of bodily suffering in order to reach the lost.

### **They Seek Not The Lord by Faith**

In the latter part of Romans chapter 9 the Bible explains why the Jewish unbelievers are not saved; why they are not elected. Verse 32 states, "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith." Paul said,

*"Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offense; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."* -Rom. 9:32-33.

The religious Jews were not looking for a Savior, but they were looking to themselves. They were looking for a religion; something man can do for himself. In this state of religious ignorance, the Jews turned away from God in unbelief.

Paul re-expresses his heart's desire for Israel's salvation in Romans chapter 10. He wanted to see them saved. Hear his words,

*"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."* -Rom. 10:1-3.

The reasons the Jews were not saved was not God's fault. They would not believe the Gospel. They wanted to establish their own religion. In fact, they were zealous in their religion and in their zeal they rejected God's salvation.

Paul begins Romans chapter 9 with unbelievable utterances of concern. The chapter concludes with an explanation of why the Jews were not saved. They would not submit to God's plan of

salvation, but went about establishing their own plan.

In the midst of chapter 9, a statement appears which men use to pervert God's burden and plan of salvation. But, one must remember a primary rule in proper Bible interpretation. This rule is stated in II Peter 1:20: "... no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation." That statement simply means that one cannot interpret a verse by itself. It must harmonize with the other verses in that context and with the teaching of the rest of the Bible. Reason and common sense, as well as good, Biblical interpretation, would dictate that if the first and last part of the chapter were clear and harmonize, then the verses which connect these passages would, when properly interpreted, teach the same truths.

### **The Birth of Jacob and Esau**

Now consider the statement, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," found in Romans 9:13. To examine this statement, we must investigate the birth and lives of both these men. Let us go back to where these boys were born in the book of Genesis.

In Genesis chapter 25 the birth of these two boys is recorded. In verse 21 we read,

*"And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah, his wife, conceived."*

These boys were born in answer to prayer; and, as they struggled within Rebekah, she asked,

*"If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her. Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her"*

womb. "-Genesis 25:22-24.

God's foreknowledge saw that two babies were there. As these two little fellows had movement within, Rebekah asked God, "What's going on?" God answered by saying, "You are going to have twins and the older will serve the younger. You have two nations in your womb."

The account of their birth is found in verse 25.

*"And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them."*

The inspired writer further describes the boys' early life. As they grew, Esau became a cunning hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was average. Jacob was described as a plain man, dwelling in tents. The Bible reveals that Isaac loved and favored his sportsman son, Esau, while Rebekah favored and loved Jacob. We have the story of their births and lives, but nothing is said about, "JACOB HAVE I LOVED, BUT ESAU HAVE I HATED." The Scriptures reveal that dad prayed and God told him his wife would have children. The history of their births, their personalities and much of their lives are recorded with God's prediction that the older would serve the younger. This prediction was based on His fore-knowledge. The accounts of their births and lives are presented but one does not find anything of God's love, or the lack of love, in any way, in the minute details of Esau's and Jacob's lives.

### **That Statement Is Not Found In the Book Of Genesis**

The phrase, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," is not found in the book of Genesis. One can read the entire account of their births, lives, and deaths, but that statement will not be found. Paul does quote from the Old Testament, "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." But, it is not from the book of

Genesis.

### **Malachi 1:1-3 Is The Reference**

The prophet, Malachi, begins his prophecy from the Lord to Israel by referring to his love to Jacob. In verse 3, he said that he hated Esau. One cannot find any reference in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, but he does find it in the last book of the Old Testament.

### **1,400 Years Later**

From the time that Isaac inquired of the Lord, asking Him to bless his wife with children, until Malachi made the statement concerning Jacob and Esau, was about 1,400 years. To visualize the length of time between these events, consider Columbus discovering America in 1492 and compare it to the time that Jesus died on the cross: the difference between these events is about 1,400 years. That is about the length of years from the brothers' births until the statement was made in Malachi. This statement was not made prior to the births by some cold-hearted God, but it was made many years after the sum total of the effects of these men's lives upon the world.

### **Which Father Must Bear The Blame?**

Many scholars leave the impression that Esau's problems were because of God, the Father. In their reasoning, GOD IS JUST AS CARNAL AS ESUA'S PARENTS who chose sides. The mother loved and favored one son while Isaac favored and loved the other son. In their theology, God arbitrarily chose and favored Jacob, but He rejected and disfavored Esau. They picture Esau as a victim who was destined to failure and ruin; one that couldn't do anything about his fate. God, the Father is pictured as the villain.

A father had a great deal to do with the ruin and downfall of Esau, but it wasn't God, the heavenly Father.

### **What God, The Father, Did For Esau**

Consider how God, the Father, favored Esau.

1. God allowed Esau to be born into a praying family who personally knew the true God of heaven. What a blessing!
2. God allowed Esau to have one of the greatest Christian grandfathers and grandmothers who ever lived!
3. God gave Esau good health, good vision, good coordination and an athletic body.
4. God allowed Esau to be born into a wealthy, influential family.
5. God made provision for Esau's sins by offering His own Son on the cross as a payment for them.
6. God endured the agonizing experience of hearing His Son, Jesus, cry out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" God could have answered, "Because of Esau's sins, my Son."
7. God loved Esau and gave him every opportunity to make good. Grandpa Abraham, no doubt, told his grandson about taking Isaac to Mount Moriah to sacrifice him. No doubt, the tears would roll down his cheeks as he related how God interceded and provided a ram. Then, Abraham would tell Esau about the promised Messiah. The grand, old man, the man of faith, the friend of God, the patriarch of Israel and one of the greatest men who ever walked the earth, loved, prayed for, and lived a godly life in front of Esau.

God actually sent Esau into what most people would consider a dream situation. When Esau was born everything was in his favor - tremendous grandparents, Christian parents, good health, financial security, and natural ability. He even was the first born son which carried tremendous privileges and special benefits. When one carefully considers what God, the Father, did for Esau, we must in all honesty agree that it certainly was not God's fault that Esau failed and misspent his life.

### **What Isaac, The Father Did For Esau**



Isaac loved Esau, bragged on him, admired him, favored him and ruined him. Examine the verses once again. They will reveal that Esau was a mighty hunter, a cunning outdoorsman while Jacob was a plain, untalented boy who dwelt in tents. Esau had natural ability, a ready smile and answer, while Jacob did not have much athletic interest. Esau could out-run, out-shoot, out-hunt and outlast all the young men while Jacob could care less. It became clear to Esau how to get his daddy's attention, how to please and obtain daddy's favor: win the tournament, bring the blue ribbon home.

### **Many American Fathers Are Making The Same Mistake**

Isaac is typical of so many American fathers today who are turning their boys into secularism by bragging on their physical skills instead of instructing them concerning God and the eternal. They are educating their sons to become doctors, lawyers, contractors, great businessmen instead of praying that God will call them into the ministry or to a mission field. Isaac could not see the infinite, eternal blessings that God wanted to give his first-born son, Esau. He wanted to see him play ball now, to fish now, to become a great businessman-administrator over their vast holdings NOW! As a result, he contributed to the secular, humanistic nature of Esau which caused his downfall. If Isaac would have taken his little boy, Esau, and taught him about the eternal benefits of God's covenant to Abraham, God would have honored His Word and Isaac's efforts. But no, Isaac did not do that. He is to blame. He is the one who caused the tragedy of Esau's wasted life. It was his failure and not God's which led to the statement, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

### **God's Choice Justified**

By means of God's foreknowledge He could see the end results of the brothers' lives. He could see that eventually Jacob would surrender his life and become a spiritual man. It took the death of his wife, the near destruction of his whole family, and many hard whippings, but Jacob finally gave in to the will and eternal purpose of God. But God could see that through the failure of Isaac to

stress God's word, and his wrong emphasis on Esau's secular abilities, that Esau would turn away from God into false religion. Fourteen hundred years later, in the book of Malachi, God is saying, "MY FOREKNOWLEDGE WAS JUSTIFIED. It turned out just as I foresaw it. By my foreknowledge, I elected the one who would yield to the will of God. I love him, but Esau do I hate. I hate his works, the way he broke his mother's and father's hearts by marrying lost, idol worshipping wives. I hate the way he warred against the truths which Abraham taught and believed. I hate the way he started a false religion which has damned to hell the eternal souls of so many people.

### **I Hate The Works of Eichmann**

God is saying, "Esau have I hated," just as we can say, "Adolf Eichmann, the German who murdered six million Jews during World War II, do we hate." There has never been anything more horrible than what Eichmann did for Hitler. The poor, Jewish people were loaded like cattle into box cars and sent over the mountains. Without food, and holding their babies in their arms, they would rattle along in those box cars for days. They could not sit down and did not have a restroom. They would urinate all over themselves. Many of them died! Such stench, such human debauchery! After they finally arrived at their destination, their persecutors would receive them with apologies.

They would say, "Someone is going to have to pay for the shameful treatment. Now, you folks go in and shower. When you finish we will give you clean clothing and warm food." When the poor Jews would throw out their soiled clothing, their persecutors would turn on the poison gases. Inside, those poor, helpless people would fight for the last breath of fresh air. The strongest men would climb the pile of human flesh until everyone of them died!! Then, their persecutors would come in, knock their teeth out, take the gold, and throw their bodies into a mass, unmarked grave. WE HATE THAT KIND OF THING! The whole human race can shout, "We hate that kind of INHUMAN TREATMENT!"

That is exactly what Romans 9 is saying. God foresaw the terrible end results of Esau's life. Election is according to the foreknowledge of God, and He saw (foresaw) how Esau would become a reprobate, an idolator and war against God's true people. Based upon His foreknowledge, He elected a man, Jacob, who would surrender his life and serve God. After 1,400 years, the prophet would say, "Jacob have I loved; but Esau have I hated. I hate the works of Esau. I hate what Esau became." ELECTION, according to FOREKNOWLEDGE, was justified by the end results of the boys' lives.

### **III. FOREKNOWLEDGE INSPIRES SOUL-WINNING**

The foreknowledge of God, which enables Him to prophesy about future events, INSPffIES SOUL-WINNING. Consider the marvelous events of power, success, and victory revealed by God's foreknowledge in Joel 2:28-32. This prophecy was given to Joel, but stemmed from the foreknowledge of God. God moved upon Joel to prophesy:

*(And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call. "-Joel 2:28-32.*

#### **The Major Change**

This prophecy foretold that God was going to make a major change in His method of dealing with mankind. Only specially chosen men such as kings, prophets or judges were filled with the Spirit in the Old Testament period. When God wanted a king, He

would speak to a prophet and say, "Go and anoint Saul or David as king." If He wanted a prophet, the Spirit came upon Elijah or Elisha. All believers WERE NOT anointed or filled with the Holy Spirit. God's spirit moved upon Joel to tell of a time when this would be changed. He moved upon Joel to foretell of a time when all believers could be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit for soul-winning.

Many years passed and still this prophecy had not come to pass. Jesus was born. He lived! He died! He rose again and still this promise had not been fulfilled. The last personal instruction Jesus gave the apostles before ascending back into Heaven was to go to the upper room and wait for the promise.

### **The Major Confusion**

Ten days after Jesus ascended back into Heaven, the Holy Spirit power came upon the disciples as promised in Joel 2:28-32. Pentecost, the day He chose, was the second, most-prominent holiday of the Jewish year. He knew of the scattered people's tendency to come to Jerusalem and worship on this special, Jewish holiday. He chose a time when Jews from 17 different countries were present to fulfill this earth-changing promise. There were 120 dedicated disciples in the upper room who were filled with the Holy Spirit and who began to witness to the masses from the different countries. God not only empowered them to witness by filling them with the Holy Spirit, but He gave them gifts of languages so they could witness to each in his own language.

### **What Meaneth This?**

This caused great excitement and confusion. A huge mob quickly gathered. Many cried out, "Aren't these men Galileans? How then can we hear them speak in our own tongue wherein we were born?" Acts 2:8. Others cried out and said, "These men are drunk!" Still others looked on in astonishment and questioned, "What meaneth this?"

## **This Is That**

The Apostle Peter, the one chosen by Jesus to pastor the church, quickly rose, answered their questions and stilled their confusion by using the Word of God. He first silenced the critics by saying, "These men are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day, (9:00 a.m.)" verse 15. Then, with the Word of God, he answered their questions by saying, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," verse 16. What you are seeing before your very eyes, and asking about is that which was spoken by the prophet, Joel. Then he quoted verbatim Joel 2:28-32. Compare this Scripture with Acts 2:17-21. You will find they are the same. Peter simply proved his point by quoting Scripture.

*"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my andmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. "-Acts 2:17-21.*

## **This Is That, How Long?**

God's foreknowledge enabled Joel to give this prophecy many centuries prior to the day of Pentecost. The day of Pentecost was the first day in the period of Holy Spirit power and soul-winning which would continue throughout the whole dispensation. It began on the day of Pentecost. It would end when the sun became black and the moon became blood.

Peter told the crowd that the power of God was upon the lives of the disciples and that the crowd was seeing Joel's prophecy fulfilled. Peter explained that the same was available to every saint who would obey God. He closed his sermon by saying, the

promise is unto your children, and to all that are afar off (Gentiles, Eph, 2:17), " ... even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts 2:39. He said, that every believer could be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit for soul-winning. He said that this age is an age of revival and an age of getting people saved. "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered (saved) ... " Joel 2:32. Whosoever, means Jew or Gentile! Whosoever is anyone from any nation! God will no longer select a few, such as a prophet, judge, or king, but He will pour out His Spirit on young men, old men, educated men, uneducated men, the scrubwoman, the bond slave, the elite, the common man, and upon all flesh that is born of God. The reason for the power is so that they can win souls. I BELIEVE THAT when man understands this principle, it INSPIRES SOUL-WINNING. The foreknowledge of God inspires soul-winning.

Brother Wilkins, you say that soul-winning will continue through the tribulation period. Yes, but do not be mistaken about what I believe. I am a pretribulation preacher. I believe that Jesus Christ is coming for His saints before the tribulation. I am so "pre" that I will not even allow my children to eat Post Toasties. We do not even have them in the house. No sir, but that does not alter this great prophecy. Peter said that this Spirit- filled soul-winning period would last until the sun turns black and the moon turns into blood ....

### **It Fit My Theology**

I used to fit Acts 2:17-21 into my own theology. I used to say that when Jesus died on the cross, the sun turned to darkness and there was blood. A great earthquake occurred. There must have been fire, and evidently, the moon turned to blood. I said that all these things must have happened when Jesus was crucified. (I just didn't find it in the Bible.) The reason I did not find it in the Bible is because it was not there. Here is the point, my friend. God said that throughout this dispensation we will have Holy Spirit outpouring. It has nothing to do with speaking in tongues. The modern-day speaking in tongues and the gibberish of today is

counterfeit, artificial, a smoke screen. The devil does not want people to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If they are ever filled with the Spirit, there is going to be a great revival. Every time people really empty themselves of the world and let God control them, revival comes.

In the book of Revelation, chapter 6, we find a fulfillment of Acts 2:21-22:

*"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"-Rev. 6:12-17.*

Thus, the end of that dispensation is concluded. The period of the Holy Spirit power began on the day of Pentecost and will conclude when the sun turns black. I am telling you by the authority of God's Word that there is going to be a tremendous outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon mankind, upon believers, before this age ends.

### **A Great Multitude Which No Man Can Number**

In Revelation chapter 7 we find the sealing of 12,000 people from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, totaling 144,000. After John saw 12,000 sealed from Israel's twelve tribes, he saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, people and tongues. (verse 9) They were shouting and singing!

Even the angels expressed great joy, falling on their faces before the throne of God, joining their voices of praise to the Lord.

Then one of them asked John, "Who is this great multitude and where did they all come from." John answered, "Sir, thou knoweth." Then the angel answered his own question by saying, "These are they which came out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" verse 14. There is a double, definite article in front of the word "tribulation" which literally makes it read, THE TRIBULATION THE GREAT. It is clearly speaking of the time of Jacob's trouble, the day of wrath or as we refer to the period today, the Tribulation Period.

Think of what you read, " a multitude which no man could number," SAVED IN THE TRIBULATION! Brother, the foreknowledge of God which caused John to see and tell us about this tremendous, coming event, INSPIRES SOUL-WINNING.

## **The Major Harvest**

### **A Simple Story**

In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus tells a simple story about a good man who planted some good seed. While the man slept, an evil man came and corrupted the crop by planting tares among the wheat. Later, the servants asked what they should do about it, and their master told them. A very simple story indeed.

### **A Simple Interpretation**

After hearing the story, the disciples asked what Jesus meant; what he was specifically trying to teach them through this simple story. They approached Jesus direct with their question. Without making a fuss, a big to-do, or great fan-fare, the disciples asked Jesus to clarify the meaning of the story. He obliged them by defining the symbols and thus explained his real message to them.



## **A Mind-Staggering Truth Stated**

The story was so simple and the explanation so clear that it seemed everyone in our age has missed it.

The seed was the children of the kingdom, verse 38. The tares were the children of the wicked one, verse 38. The good man was Jesus, verse 37.

The evil man was the devil, verse 39.

The reapers were the angels, verse 39.

The field was the world, verse 38.

The harvest was the end of the world, verse 38.

The harvest was the end of what? Jesus said, "The end of the world," or the end of the age (aionos) translated, "age." The main part of the harvest will come at the end of this age.

## **The Mind-Staggering Misinterpretation of Scripture**

If Jesus clearly taught that the major harvest of souls would come at the end of this age, then why all the defeatism today? Why do we hear one voice of doom after another? If this is so clear, then why aren't Christians rejoicing and shouting the victory instead of so many of them crying the blues? No Scripture is given by private interpretation and every truth is taught and supported by more than one verse of Scripture. In the Old Testament, they demanded that every truth be established by two or three witnesses. Please note John's clear account of this great harvest of souls at the end of this age.

*'~nd I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand A SHARP SICKLE. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the HARVEST OF THE EARTH IS RIPE. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And ANOTHER ANGEL came out of the temple which is in heaven, HE ALSO HAVING A SHARP SICKLE. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying,*

*Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust IN HIS SICKLE INTO THE EARTH, AND GATHERED THE VINE of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. "-Rev. 14:14-20.*

What happened in verse 14? One like the Son of God had a sharp sickle in his hand and was told by an angel that the time is come for you to reap. Why? The harvest of the earth is ripe. He thrust in his sickle and reaped the harvest. What a harvest! There are 4.5 billion souls on this earth at the present time and the experts estimate that this number will double by the year, 2000.

### **Another Angel With Another Sickle**

In verse 17, there is another angel with another sickle. A terrible misinterpretation of this passage of Scripture occurs when one reads one angel with only one sickle, and all of them go into the winepress of God's wrath. No, these verses declare two sickles and two different harvests. One will be reaped by Jesus and it will be a multitude which no one can number. The other harvest will be reaped to damnation and judgment. Jesus foresaw this GREAT HARVEST AT THE END OF THE AGE. He spoke of it by His foreknowledge in Matthew chapter 13. Praise God! Hallelujah! I am telling you by the authority of God's Word that His foreknowledge inspires faith and soul-winning.

### **The Major Question**

#### **A Discouraged Ministry**

The apostles had been preaching for about three years. They had seen the miracles of Jesus. The crowds which once gathered to see and hear Him began to dwindle. There was open hostility to Jesus by the Jewish leaders. Briefly, things were not going well. The tremendous excitement of the earlier days had faded. The apostles had gone up and down the countryside, worked night and day, yet it seemed things were getting worse instead of better. The apostles

were discouraged. They began to discuss the situation among themselves. Among the things they questioned concerned what they would be paid for their services. What are we going to get for our effort, traveling, and long hours? They were in the process of re-evaluating their role when they were interrupted.

### **A Discouraged Ministry Provoked To Ask An Embarrassing Question**

The background for this episode in these preacher's lives is found in Matthew chapter 19. The interruption was quite dramatic. The rich, young ruler came running, cast himself down before Jesus and asked, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "Give up everything, and follow me and you will have eternal life." The rich, young man went away sorrowfully because he was trusting in his morality and riches. Jesus startled His disciples by saying, "Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (verse 24-25). He literally said that it is easier for a two-humped camel to go through the eye of a sewing needle than for a rich man, who is trusting in his own riches, to go to heaven. The apostles were shocked! Many of them were men of means. All of them had rich friends. Verse 25 says, "When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" Jesus calmly answered, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Jesus knew what the apostles were thinking. He wanted to shock them in order to bring their thoughts and their questions to the surface, so He could inspire them to greater soul-winning and service. He knew they were going around saying, "Man, we gave up everything. What are we going to get out of it? What are we going to get paid? This whole thing about being a soul-winner, a preacher, sure doesn't pay much. We work night and day and our crowds get smaller. It surely doesn't look like we have much of a future." Jesus knew their thoughts, but He also knew they would

never directly ask Him that embarrassing question: "What are we going to get paid for preaching?" Instead, He shocked them into asking. Note the exact question, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (verse 27). It was out! Peter had blurted it out! What shall we have, or, what are you going to pay us for following you? What is our paycheck going to be? Jesus deliberately provoked them into asking the question so He could deal with the subject of paycheck or reward.

### **A Discouraged Ministry Transformed**

There was no hesitation or arguments on the part of Jesus about the disciples' startling question, "What are you going to pay us for serving you?" Jesus provoked them to ask so He could transform their lives forever. He knew His earthly journey would soon be over. He wanted to inspire them to faithfully serve Him so they would never give up or get discouraged again. In verse 28 He answers:

*"Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. "*

Their paycheck, Jesus said, consisted of sharing His millennial glory, as a ruler over one of the twelve tribes of Israel for one thousand years. What a paycheck for those Jewish Preachers! There is not a nation in the world which has greater national heritage and pride in its people than does the Jewish Nation. By right of their position of leadership these apostles would have personal contact and fellowship with their life-time heroes. During the great Messiah's kingdom, they would rub shoulders with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, Elijah, and all of the old heroes of Israel for 1,000 years. Can you imagine the apostles' glee when the impact of what Jesus promised finally penetrated?

Peter might have said, "Lord, do you mean that if I serve you faithfully here on earth, I'll get to sit, for example, on the throne of

the tribe of Judah during the whole Messianic Kingdom?"

"Yes, Peter, that is what I mean."

"Lord, do you mean that my brother, Andrew, would be the ruler over one of the other twelve tribes of Israel while James would rule still another? Then, there is my cousin, John, who would reign over still another tribe?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, Peter, that is what I mean."

Peter would continue to question by saying, "Lord, bear with me a little longer: but do you mean, for the whole 1,000 years?"

"Yes, Peter."

"You mean, Lord, we will have personal fellowship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?"

"Yes, Peter."

"Lord, with Moses and Daniel and all the other great heroes of our country?"

"Yes, Peter."

"For a whole 1,000 years?"

"Yes, Peter, for the whole 1,000 years."

It was no wonder that these apostles never quit. They never gave in to pressure.

All the apostles, except John, became martyrs.

Their enemies couldn't threaten them with death because death would mean they had died for the Lord and they could claim their throne.

The world couldn't buy them because the money gained was nothing in comparison to ruling for 1,000 years with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

There was no longer a need for "a big 'I' and a little 'you' ." Their inheritance was coming: a ruler over one of the tribes with Jesus for 1,000 years.

The world couldn't handle them any longer.  
There was nothing to fear from the world.

There was no earthly glory in the world to compare to the glory they would share with Christ for 1,000 years.

With their eyes fixed upon Jesus, they became transformed; THEN THEY TRANSFORMED THE WORLD!!

### **The Major Reward**

#### **The Major Rewards Are Yet To Be Earned**

This narration concerning rewards continued. First, Jesus reveals to the apostles their tremendous rewards for following Him. Then, in verse 29, He states that everyone who leaves houses, lands, families and their personal desires in order to follow Jesus shall receive an hundredfold, AND SHALL INHERIT EVERLASTING LIFE. The subject under consideration is not eternal life. It is a paycheck or reward for following Jesus. Everlasting life is not inherited, it is a gift! The apostle Paul declares, " ... the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 6:23. Interpreting this statement in light of its setting and in harmony with the rest of the Bible, Jesus clearly says that those who forsake their lives, lands, and loved ones for the cause of Christ will receive an hundredfold; which will be an ETERNAL INHERITANCE.

### **The Last Shall Be First**

Verse 30 concludes discussion on the question, "We have for-

saken all, what shall we have therefore; or, what is our paycheck?" In order to capture their DISCIPLESHIP forever, Jesus deliberately provoked the apostles to ask these questions. He accomplished that goal. But He was far more interested in the following generation of workers than He was in His first generation of workers. Verse 30 declares, the first shall be last; and the last shall be first. What is He talking about? REWARDS! Many that are first (first in dispensation) shall be last (those having lived in the last of this age) shall be first (have a greater reward).

How does one obtain a reward? He has to work for it. The Bible declares, "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." (I Cor. 3:8). "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me," (Rev. 22:12). Many that are first; first in what? First in this dispensation.

The first part of this dispensation is recorded in the book of Acts. Many that served God during this time period shall be last as far as rewards go. The last, or those living in the days before the second coming of Jesus, shall have a greater reward. Why? Because they will do a greater work in soul-winning and church building. Jesus said, "I am going to pour out my Spirit on all flesh." It began on the day of Pentecost and it is to continue throughout the whole age. One sees God pouring out the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. One sees God pouring out His Spirit several times during the past 1,900 years. When America had revival, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon preachers. Sons of Thunder arose and preached God's Word with power and God gave an old-fashioned revival. I am telling you, by the authority of God's Word, that it is not over yet. The sun has not turned to blackness. The moon has not been turned to blood. The day of God's wrath has not yet come.

The foreknowledge of God declared that many of the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Foreknowledge inspires soul winning!

There is within each of us a desire to excel. We are made in the

image and likeness of God. He designed us to want to be great. Jesus said that He came that we could have the abundant life. That is, we could be overcomers, excellers. It is natural for people to want to do well. A group of young boys gather to play softball. Who wants to be the pitcher? ALL OF THEM DO. That's the prominent position on the team and every one of them would like to fill it. You and I want to do well. You and I want to excel. You and I want to be great. God placed that within us.

### **God's Foreknowledge Reveals The Superstars Of Eternity**

Who will be the prominent people in eternity? Will it be the famous kings and queens of the earth? Will it be the presidents or the Henry Fords? the Rockefellers? the Kennedys? In Daniel 12:2-3, we have God's declaration,

*"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."*

The Bible declares that, "He that winneth souls is wise," Proverbs 11:30. "They that be wise (the soul-winners) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament."

Right now, there lies within you a desire to be happy, to excel, to be great. God placed it within you. He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I will write down by my foreknowledge that they that be wise or win souls shall shine, and be the Super Stars forever and ever. I will write down in my Word that those in the first of this dispensation shall be last and the last SHALL BE FIRST. The SUPERSTARS are alive today. They will build the greatest churches. They will win the greatest number of souls that have ever been won." We now have everything at our disposal- radio, television, the printed page, and millions of people who need the Gospel. The Holy Spirit power is available until the sun is black." I will empower those who will go. I will reward them that go, by



making them shine as the stars in the sky forever." The greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit is yet to come.

This is not the modern-day's "last-days-blues" theology. THIS IS THE BIBLE. The Bible reveals God's foreknowledge which foretells future rewards. By His foreknowledge, God tells who will shine in the brightness of the firmament forever and ever. He said, it is those that are wise; he that winneth souls is wise. God is glorified when we bear much fruit. The fruit of the saved is souls won. In using His foreknowledge to reveal who will be the ones to obtain the greater rewards, God inspires soul-winning.

The doctrine of the foreknowledge of God, when properly taught, INSPIRES SOUL WINNING.

PRAYER:

Father, we pray that you will take this message and inspire someone to give his whole life, like the apostles did. If necessary, God inspire someone to become a martyr. You promised that you would return an hundredfold for everything invested. You promised that the soul-winners will shine like the stars in the sky forever. Jesus, help our generation of preachers to allow the doctrine of foreknowledge to inspire them to become great soul-winners. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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### **Chapter Three**

#### **ELECTION IN THE LIGHT OF SOUL-WINNING**

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"Make Your Calling and Election Sure." II Peter 1:10 Election in the light of soul-winning is the second of four messages in a series. Here, we will discuss Foreknowledge, Election, Predestination and the Ministry of Paul in the Light of Soul Winning. Do not let these topics trouble you. They are Bible doctrines.

The Bible was written for the common man's understanding; not for the intellect or theologian's understanding only. If a man is saved and knows how to properly divide and study the Word, he can understand the Bible regardless of his educational background. We have written specifically for the layman's understanding and benefit. We have on the front cover of most of our books, "WRITTEN FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS IN LAYMAN'S LANGUAGE." Our ministry is dedicated and directed toward the common man; the man in the pew, who tithes, pays the bills, and upholds his pastor. This series harmonizes with our whole ministry of helping and involving the layman.

Let us continue by asking the following questions:

#### **1. WHY DID JESUS COME INTO THE WORLD?**

In Luke 19:10 Jesus answers this question by saying that He came to "seek and to save that which was lost."

#### **2. WHY WAS HE BORN IN THE MANGER?**

The angels came shouting, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST THE LORD," Luke 2:10-11.

#### **3. WHAT WAS PRIMARY IN THE DAILY LIFE OF JESUS?**

He saved sinners! "He needs go into Samaria," John 4:4. Why? There was a lost woman there. John 4:41. Nicodemus came by

night and Jesus saved him. If one follows the ministry of Jesus, he will see Him crossing the Sea of Galilee to walk to the Gadarenes; walking under the tree to invite Zacchaeus to salvation; and living as a friend of sinners. Here and there, everywhere, Jesus went about seeking and saving that which was lost.

## **WHY DID JESUS DIE ON THE CROSS? HE DIED TO SAVE SINNERS!**

### **4. WHAT WAS THE MOST FORCEFUL COMMAND THAT HE GAVE TO HIS DISCIPLES?**

He commanded them to go into all the world and make disciples of every nation. Matthew 28:19-20. He commanded them to go, **TO WIN SOULS**, to seek sinners.

Study carefully the following verses:

- A . In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commanded, "Go and Teach **ALL Nations** ... "
- B . In Mark 16:15 He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
- C . Luke quotes Jesus in Luke 24:47, " ... that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
- D . John said, " ... as **MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I you,**" John 20:21.
- E . Dr. Luke gave the actual prescription which will cure the ills of a lost world when he said, "Ye shall **RECEIVE POWER** after the Holy Ghost is come upon you, then ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8.

If everything Jesus did and taught revolved around getting people saved, then one can rest assured that every doctrine, when properly understood and interpreted, will further the cause of soul-winning. The doctrine of Election in the Light of Soul Winning is presented through the following simple outline:

#### **I. WHEN WAS THE BELIEVER ELECTED?**

II. WHAT PART DID THE BELIEVER HAVE IN HIS ELECTION?

III. HOW DID GOD ELECT THE BELIEVER?

IV. WHY WAS THE BELIEVER ELECTED?

## **I. WHEN WAS THE BELIEVER ELECTED?**

### **From The Beginning**

Paul writes,

*"But we are bound to give thanks always, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God HAS FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION, through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."*

Notice the expression, "GOD HAS FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION." He is talking to the saints in Thessalonica. God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation. The point which God chose the sinner to salvation was "FROM THE BEGINNING." The automatic question which arises in one's mind is WHAT BEGINNING?

### **Before The World Began.**

Paul also wrote the book of II Timothy. Hear the Apostle in II Timothy 1:9,

*"Who has 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,"*

When? "BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN."

In Ephesians 1:4 Paul uses the word "CHOSEN." The words "chosen" and "elect" come from the same root word and mean the same. Notice the phrase, "according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world." The word translated "before" in this verse is the compound Greek word, katabola. Katabola means, "the casting down of the foundation." In Ephesians 1:4, Paul said that before the casting down of the foundation of the

world, or before the world was, Jesus elected or chose the believer to salvation. The beginning that Paul referred to was the same as found in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God .... "

### **Don't Get Excited**

Remember our topic, Election in the Light of Soul-Winning. Remember that we stated earlier that every doctrine properly interpreted will encourage and further soul-winning. But we must be honest in our Bible interpretation. We must properly divide God's Word. We believe a proper analysis of God's Word will reveal that a saved person was elected to salvation in the beginning or before the foundation of the world.

## **II. WHAT PART DID THE BELIEVER HAVE IN HIS ELECTION?**

What part did the believer have in his election? Some would say, "None." They would reason, "How could one have a part in his election if he were elected in the beginning?" He was not even born then. If he was not there, how could he have a part? Our text declares differently. Let us reexamine the text. II Peter 1:10, "Wherefore the rather brethren, GIVE DILIGENCE TO MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE, for if you do these things you shall never fall." Note the phrase, "make your calling and election sure." Here, Peter admonishes the believer to make his "calling and election sure."

Some may reason that if election took place back in the infinite, eternal place, and the believer was not there, how could one make his calling and election sure? All a person could do is realize he isn't saved then lament about it the rest of his life. No, that is an improper deduction. Consider the setting of this statement: II Peter 1:4 says, "Wherefore, it is given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature." In verse 5 he said, "and besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue (or good habits)." The faith refers to the FAITH one places in Christ when he is saved. The Bible says to "add to faith virtue." Then he said, add "to virtue

knowledge (Bible knowledge}." Peter continued by admonishing the Christians to add other Christian virtues to his saving faith. Verse 8 explains why one should add these things in his life. Peter taught, "If these things be in you ... " (What things? Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity) "and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But he that lacketh the traits that Peter said one should add to his faith is blind and cannot see afar off. He has forgotten that he was once purged from his old sins. **WHEREFORE, THE RATHER BRETHREN, GIVE DILIGENCE TO MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE.** If you do these things, you will never fall. You will never backslide. You will never stumble.

Now, Peter argues that one born of God becomes a partaker of the divine nature. If he is going to grow, gain assurance of his salvation and abound to every good work then he must add to his personal faith and grow as a Christian. If one adds these things, he will neither be blind or unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord. If he doesn't add to his faith, then he will be blind and unfruitful. Notice the expression, "**WHEREFORE, THE RATHER BRETHREN.**" That is, the thing that one needs to do to make his calling and election sure. Do not live under the circumstances, nor lament over the fact that things go wrong. **MAKE SURE YOU ARE SAVED,** by making your calling and election sure. If one will make sure he is saved then add to his faith, he will know that he is saved and never stumble or fall.

What part did the individual have in his own election? He was admonished, "giving all diligence, make your calling and election sure." This statement forcefully teaches that man does have a definite part in his election. Man has part in his election or this admonition makes the Bible a sham. The Bible instructs man to make his calling and election sure when man is without power or ability to do so. This would make God a party of sin and God cannot sin. Man has part in his own election. It is a thrilling

experience when one learns to harmonize these two truths which otherwise seem to contradict one another.

### **Man Elected By God In Eternity**

Now how could God elect the believer from the casting of the foundation of the world and the believer still have a part in making his calling and election sure? This question is difficult to explain, but the DIFFICULTY LIES ON THE PART OF MAN. Man thinks of God as he thinks of human beings. He views everything in the light of time, thinking and feeling that time has a past, a present, a future. Therefore, man thinks of God as a God of past tense, a God of present tense, and a God of future tense. No, God is not a God of three dimensions. God is the God of the great present tense, THE ETERNAL NOW. In the book of Exodus, God said to Moses, "Tell Pharaoh to let my people go." Moses knew the response Pharaoh would make to that demand. He would say, "Who are you and by what authority do you come in here and demand that I free several millions slaves?" So, Moses inquired of God, "When Pharaoh asks me, 'Who are you and by what authority do you demand this?' what shall I say?" God's answer was, "You tell him that I AM sent you." With the statement, I AM, God declared Himself to be the GREAT PRESENT-TENSE GOD, the creator of heaven and earth, the God that always was and always will be. God is the great I AM or the ETERNAL NOW. He is the eternal, present-tense Almighty God.

### **The New Testament Example**

In the New Testament we see the pre-existent Jesus, born of the Virgin and becoming flesh. Thirty years later we see Him baptized and entering into His public ministry. In John 18 he announced, "My hour is at hand, I am going to be delivered into the hands of wicked men." A huge mob came out after Jesus with torches and with swords drawn.

Jesus asked them "Whom seek ye?"

They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Note the reply that Jesus made, "I AM HE." Jesus literally said, "I AM," and when He stated that eternal truth, it knocked the crowd backward and they fell to the ground. Can you visualize the sight? At the declaration that He was I AM, it knocked the huge mob flat. They went rolling on the ground. Check the word HE. It is italicized. Jesus really did not say, "I AM HE," He just identified Himself as God Incarnate, "I AM." When He declared who He was, it knocked them flat on the ground. The point is: if God is a great, present God, the great I AM, it would be very easy for Him to elect the believer to salvation and yet be able to let him have a part in that election.

### **Man Makes His Election Sure in Time**

In time, man is commanded to make his calling and election sure. He obeys this command by examining his heart and responding accordingly.

God, who is eternal, has the ability to see the beginning and the end at the same time. You, as a person, have the ability to look across the room and see all the objects in the room at one glance. There is no time element involved. God is able to see all objects in time with the same glance. God, in the beginning, was able to look down through all time and see all men in all ages. As an all powerful, all-knowing, all-loving God, He responded to each man as each man responded to the drawing of the Holy Spirit and to the preaching of the Gospel. God, IN THE BEGINNING, elected man as man responded to the call of the Gospel IN TIME.

### **III. HOW DID GOD ELECT THE BELIEVER?**

The Bible definitely states that you were chosen from the beginning and that you can make your calling and election sure. Now, the question arises, what means did God use in the election of the believer? Read again II Thessalonians 2:13. Many people read this verse to say, "we are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation ..." They read the verse as if



there is a period after the word salvation. There is not even a comma, much less a period after the word, salvation. Notice how the verse continues, "Chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth." Now, here is what He is saying. God elected them to salvation from the beginning; but, God elected by the use of means or conditions. What were these means? They were sanctification, or the setting apart of the Holy Spirit, and belief of the truth.

### **Romans 10:13 States "Whosoever."**

Romans 10:13 has been one of my favorite verses for many years. This verse declares the Good News, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." But, look at verse 14:

#### **Consider these questions:**

- a . How shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?
- b . and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?
- c . and how shall they hear without a preacher?
- d . and how shall they preach, except they be sent? ... Romans 10:14,15.

II Thessalonians 2:13 says, "belief of truth," but how could the Holy Spirit set them apart unless they had heard the truth? How could the Holy Spirit set them apart unless He was striving with them? How could they answer the call that they had never heard? The following verse, II Thessalonians 2:14 says, "GOD CALLED THEM BY OUR GOSPEL." That is, God called them by the preaching of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God called them through the Good News that God loved the sinner so much that He gave His Son to die on the cross in the sinner's place so the sinner could turn from his sins, receive Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, and be saved. Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me."

## **Election Is Very Simple**

God elected them from the beginning to salvation, but He did it according to His foreknowledge. To illustrate, visualize the following personal example:

The boy was 17 and it was summertime between his junior and senior year in high school. Unless sports was the topic, one could not communicate with this boy. His lifetime ambition was to become a professional athlete, or at least, to compete on a major college team. Good grades were required to be accepted in college. So his full concentration was on grades or sports.

At 17 and in high school, he had no thought of God, or any plans for God in his life. But, God foresaw the means that lead to his salvation. He was saved on July 10, 1949, in a little church located on State Highway 4, one mile north of Brentwood, California.

## **From The Beginning, God Elected James Wilkins To Be Saved.**

He elected him to be saved according to His foreknowledge. God not only saw James Wilkins on July 10, 1949, when he was saved, but He saw him prior to that date. He foresaw all of the contributing events which led to his conversion.

## **Elected According To God's Foreknowledge God Foresaw him As a Little Boy**

He saw him as a little boy when his brother, Wayne, saved his life. They were fishing and the boat turned over. Wayne dove under the boat and pulled Jim out, saving him from drowning.

## **God Foresaw Him At The Funerals**

He saw Jim Wilkins as he stood by the side of his dad when a train came bringing that same brother home as a corpse. He saw the confusion and bewilderment as Jim questioned, "Where is Wayne? What happened to him? Why did he die?" God foresaw Jim Wilkins a few months later in the Oakland hospital while he stood by the bedside of his father, who was dying. His father, with

a Bible in his hands, was telling him how to be saved. Jim didn't understand a thing that was said. God foresaw him going to his dad's funeral, standing by the grave and hearing his brothers, Joe and Clint, say, "Dad we promise. We'll meet you in heaven. We'll be saved."

### **God Foresaw Him In Church**

God foresaw him going to a Pentecostal Holiness Church, hearing the Gospel but not understanding it. He foresaw Jim going to the pastor's house and having the pastor talk to him about everything except the plan of salvation. God saw Jim walking out of that church during the invitation. God foresaw him following three teenage boys who were members of that church. They would sit in the car and wait until the girls came out at the close of the services. He saw Jim sitting in the back seat of the car, crying. The three teenage church members encouraged him by saying, "Jim, go back in." God foresaw Jim's answer, "I will if you will," but they would not. God foresaw that in confusion and disgust, Jim quit going to church. He said, "I'll never be saved. There is nothing to it." And, he returned to his god of sports.

### **God Foresaw The Good Neighbors**

God foresaw him when he stopped going to church. God used the pastor's kindness and the good neighbors to get him back to church one more time. The pastor had resigned and was leaving to pastor another church. He had been so kind to Jim's mother and family during the time of the funerals. He and his good people had brought food even though the Wilkins were not Pentecostals and the pastor had not performed the funeral services. They had been sympathetic and neighborly to the Wilkins family during their time of bereavement. God foresaw Jim going to hear the pastor preach his final sermon.

Jim went only to show appreciation for his kindness and to partake of the service honoring the pastor and his family. God foresaw Jim walking out of the church service, down the long roadway, confused and troubled. Jim's dad had taught him to be a

man and face his problems. So, Jim just couldn't allow the pastor to think that he had gotten up and walked out on him in disrespect. Jim had to go back in and say, "Preacher, God bless you, and I wish you the best."

### **God Foresaw An Old-Fashioned Altar**

I

God foresaw Jim going back inside the church, falling down at the altar and crying out, "Oh God, if you will forgive me, I'll do anything!"

IT WAS HERE, WHEN JIM ASKED FOR MERCY, THAT GOD ELECTED HIM TO SALVATION.

You see, God FORESAW ALL THE MEANS AND THE STRIVING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, the understanding of a little of the truth, the Gospel's penetration, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and the struggle which Jim experienced. God didn't just see him and elect him from the beginning, but He foresaw the means, the prayers and all of the above events working together. God foresaw all of this and based upon the WORKING OF HUMANITY and the WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, elected to salvation. Election, my friend, is according to means. God did not unconditionally elect me. He saw all the workings of the Holy Spirit, the working of the saints, my mother's prayers, the circumstances which broke my heart and got my attention, and finally, my willingness to fall down and confess my sins and ask forgiveness. Based upon God foreseeing all these elements and my surrender to His drawing, HE ELECTED ME IN ETERNITY and when I CALLED UPON HIS NAME, HE SAVED ME, IN TIME.

### **One Can Make His Calling And Election Sure**

LET US EMPHASIZE HOW ONE MAKES HIS CALLING AND ELECTION SURE. The Bible says, "God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation." That is Scripture. It is written down in black and white. Remember that in Ephesians 1:4 Paul declared we were CHOSEN BEFORE THE FOUNDATION of the world. In II

Timothy 1:9 he says that God saves us, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE THE FOUNDATION of the world. No one can deny that the Bible teaches that we were elected before the world began. Neither can one deny that the Bible commands one to make his calling and election sure. The question arises, what part does one have in his election and how can he make his salvation sure? If you are reading this and do not know whether you are one of God's elect, then you CAN MAKE SURE RIGHT NOW. God is a present-tense God. He wants you to examine your heart and make sure that you are saved. God uses means to bring about your salvation. God foresaw those means in eternity, and according to His foreknowledge elected you to be saved when you surrendered your life to the wooing of the Holy Spirit. God will elect when you believe the truth. Jesus died on the cross for you. He paid the wages of sin in your place so you could turn from your sins and accept Him as your personal Saviour and be saved from Hell.

When you understand and yield to that, acknowledge that you are a sinner by saying, "I know I'm a sinner. I know I'm lost, and if I should die I would go to hell. But, because I am a sinner, Christ died for me and paid for my sins; and, because God is an infinite, eternal, present-tense God, I now turn from my sins and call upon His name. I do renounce any works or goodness on my part, and, God, I do ask you, because Jesus died and paid for my sins, for His sake, save me." My friend, if you will trust Him and receive Him as your personal Saviour, then at that point you can make your calling and election sure, and YOU WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE SAVED.

#### **IV. WHY WAS THE BELIEVER ELECTED?**

Let us go to John 15:16 and the wonderful doctrine of election. My whole premise for presenting this study is to show THAT EVERY SINGLE DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE WHEN PROPERLY INTERPRETED WILL UPHOLD AND ADD TO THE CAUSE OF SOUL-WINNING. Everything Jesus did revolved around getting people saved from hell. The reason Jesus came into the

world was to save sinners. He suffered to save sinners. He died to save sinners. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit into the world to convict and strive with sinners. God does not want any to perish and is longsuffering towards sinners. John 15:16 states, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." We have already explained the word, chosen, could be translated, elect, and the word, elect, translated chosen. Here, Jesus said that you have not chosen me, but I have chosen, or, elected you, and ordained (appointed) you. But what were you elected to do?

### **Elected Unto Good Works**

What would be your goal if you were running for some office? Would you run just to be elected? Would that be your purpose? If that is all that you were concerned about, just getting elected, then you would certainly have a perverted view. A person who has the proper understanding strives to be elected in order to render some service. Being elected is not the end, it is only the beginning. The person elected has certain duties, certain obligations along with a particular life-style to live in order to fulfill the purpose of his election. This simple illustration reveals the proper attitude toward our subject. The Bible stresses what the believer is elected to do rather than on the hopeless situation of trying to figure out who the elect are.

### **Who Are The Elect**

There is a lot of misunderstanding on the doctrine of election, and no one really knows who the elect are. You can't look at a person and tell if he is one of the elect. If one is really saved, he is the only person who knows for sure that he is saved. One may have confidence that another is saved because of the Christian life he lives, but he doesn't know for sure. One does not know that his pastor is saved for sure. You probably believe with all your heart that he is saved when you consider the love that he has for the Lord, the lost, and for you. You have observed how he has given his whole life to the cause of Christ, but you really don't know for sure that he is saved. You don't know for sure about anyone else's salvation but your own. If you really know, according to the Bible

and your Christian experience that you are saved, then you are the only person who knows positively that you are saved.

### **One Fellow Said He Could Tell**

I heard about one fellow that said he could look into a person's eyes and tell if he was one of God's elect. I have always wanted to meet that fellow. I want to pull my glasses off and let him look into my right eye. You see, it is what the optometrist calls a lazy eye, and I have little benefit from it. I am actually legally blind in that eye. I can visualize him looking into that eye and saying, "Jim, I don't believe you are one of God's elect." About the time he pronounced me as one of the non-elect, I would like to challenge him to examine my good eye. I believe he would say, "Wait a minute. There is hope. I believe you may be one of the elect." Doesn't that sound dumb? You say, preacher, no one knows who the elect are. You can't tell that way!! That's right. I cannot tell and no one else can tell who the elect are. **BUT WE KNOW WITHOUT RESERVATION WHAT THE ELECT ARE SUPPOSED TO DO.**

### **Elected To "GO"**

Keep in mind that in John 15:16, Jesus said, "You have not chosen me, but **I** have chosen you and ordained you that ye should ... " What does your Bible say? "GO." Yes, "That ye should go .... " Look at the word, "GO." It is the smallest verb in the English language. It contains only two letters, G, O. The simpler the command is, the simpler the instructions are, the easier it is for everyone to understand. Jesus said, "I have elected you to GO."

### **The First Thing A Child Learns**

Every little child knows what GO means. One of the first things he learns is, "Daddy, can I GO?" The other day I was going to Oklahoma City to fill an appointment to preach. My little grandson, Alan, heard that I was going to Oklahoma and immediately wanted to go with me. He climbed up on my lap and asked, "Grandpa, can I go?"

I said, "No, Grandpa is going to see some men and you can't go."

He began to plead by saying, "Please, Grandpa, I have never been to Oklahoma before." He really gave me a sales pitch because every little boy and girl knows what GO means. It is one of the first things they learn.

### **Many Are Retarded**

Isn't it strange that some preachers and Christian workers grow up, become retarded, and don't know what GO MEANS? They read this verse to say, "Here am I, Lord, send my brother." They claim to be saved, but somehow they do not know what GO means. They interpret the verb GO as always referring to the other fellow. Jesus said, "You have not chosen me, but I have elected you, and ordained you." To do what? GO. TO GO!! That is what the great commission is all about. "Go ye into all the world and make disciples." "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Dr. Luke said, "Repentance and remission of sins be preached in His name, beginning in Jerusalem." John 20:21 states, "As my Father hath sent me, even so, send I you." That's the great commission according to John. Acts 1:8. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost comes upon you .... " Then, "You are witnesses in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth." The primary emphasis in the Bible is GO! If you are one of the elect, you are to GO! If you know Jesus, if you have believed and have received Him, you are elected to GO. The believer is elected to go and tell the lost about his wonderful Saviour.

### **Elected To Bring Forth Fruit**

One is not elected to the task of just going and carrying the Gospel, but he is elected to BRING FORTH FRUIT. Many just go out and piously "share" the Gospel. Jesus strongly commanded "Compel them to come in." "Henceforth, you will catch men." It is not enough to go out and share. The Bible says, "He that winneth souls is wise." The child of God is to BRING FORTH FRUIT.



### **What Does The Expression, "Bring Forth Fruit" Mean?**

Someone may ask, "What does the expression, 'bring forth fruit' mean?" Someone else answers, "It means the fruit of the Spirit as described in Galatians 5:22 which is joy, peace, love, gentleness, meekness, and kindness." My friend, I would never, never say anything against the fruit of the Holy Spirit. How we need the fruit of the Spirit in our lives! But, Jesus is not talking about the fruit of the Spirit in John 15:16.

### **A Piece Of My Mind**

Many of us Fundamentalists need to be sweetened up a bit, don't we? We need the fruit of the Spirit in our life. We need to have a little more joy, peace and gentleness. Some fundamentalists are strong and strict on doctrine, but their attitude, love and spiritual kindness is really lacking. Often you will hear one say, "I GAVE HIM A PIECE OF MY MIND." That always scares me when I hear someone say that. When I hear that, I always think, "What would I do if I were there when he gave the last piece away? What would happen then?" If some of these folks knew how little they had left, they would quit giving away pieces. How many pieces can one give away and still have anything left? We need the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. We need JOY, PEACE, AND LOVE, but Jesus is not talking to the Holy Spirit here. He is talking to the disciples. He said, "I elected you to GO, and bring forth fruit." The fruit of the Holy Spirit is Joy, Peace, Love, etc., but the fruit of the saved is winning souls.

### **The Fruit Of The Saved**

Proverbs 11:30, "The fruit of the righteousness ... " or the fruit of the saved. The word, righteous, means saved. In Romans 4, a person becomes righteous when he has the righteousness of Jesus imputed to his account. Lot was a backslider, but he is referred to as a righteous man. "He vexed his righteous soul. ... " So, the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. What does the symbol, tree of life, represent? In Genesis it says that God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden, and put an angel there lest Adam stretch forth his hand

and eat of the tree of life and live forever . . . So, the symbol - Tree of Life - stands for eternal life. The fruit of the saved is eternal life in another person, or, winning souls. There are two clauses in Proverbs 11:30. The first, "The fruit of the righteous," the substance of the saved, is the tree of life, or winning souls. The second clause is, "he that winneth souls is wise." The second clause in Proverbs 11:30 is God's interpretation of the first clause. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and then God emphatically states, "He that winneth souls is wise." In this verse God declares that He elected you to go and be a SOUL WINNER. That is exactly what the Bible teaches. But, you say, "Preacher, I don't think I am called to be a soul-winner." Are you saved? If you are saved, then you are called or elected to be a SOULWINNER.

### **Everything Reproduces" After Its Kind"**

Genesis 1:4 says that every living thing reproduces after its kind; the herb after its kind, the cattle after its kind. God even said to Adam, "replenish the earth and be fruitful, and multiply." So everything that had life - vegetables, animals, fowl, as well as mankind - was to reproduce "after its kind." This same principle is true in the spiritual realm. If one is spiritually alive, then he is to reproduce, and his substance is, "He that winneth souls is wise."

Consider these questions: (1) What is the fruit of an apple tree? Apples! (2) What is the fruit of a young husband and wife? Children! He doesn't have to be a Mr. Atlas, and she doesn't have to be a beauty queen before they can have children. Just any little, scrawny fellow can become a dad. I knocked on a door many years ago and a young fellow came to the door. He would have had to use liquid fertilizer on his face to grow fuzz.

I said, "Is the man of the house at home?" He answered in a high-pitched voice, "I am the man of the house."

I didn't even tell him who I was. I knew I had blown it. I knew it because JUST ANY LITTLE O'FELLOW CAN BECOME A FATHER. If that is so, then one does not have to be some kind of

super Christian in order to be a soul-winner.

### **God's Promise of Spiritual Fruit**

"He that goeth forth and weepeth and beareth precious seed SHALL DOUBTLESS come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves (fruit) with him." He that goeth forth, doesn't mean he who has a divine call, or he that has the gift of gab, or he who has a pleasing personality. It is HE, anyone - a saved person.

Jesus said, "I have CHOSEN YOU TO GO AND BRING FORTH FRUIT OR WIN SOULS." If one had to have a pleasing personality in order to win souls, I would have been left out.

I have a brother named Jack who smiles all the time. He has a built-in smile. He has been a good singer all his life and has recorded a long-playing album. In promotion on the album, he is referred to as SMILING JACK. He smiles all the time. When we were kids, I slept with him in an old-fashioned bed out on the back porch. There were many nights when I looked over and Jack would be sound asleep, but he would be smiling! When he was a kid he loved to fight. I have seen him fight dozens of times and while he was beating the tar out of the other guy he just kept smiling! But, I have a natural, built-in frown. When everything is going great and I have a song in my heart, if I don't remember to smile, then my outer expression looks like I have a problem.

NO! NO! God didn't say if you had a pleasing personality you could be a soul-winner. He said, "I elected you, and ordained you to go." If you are saved you are to go. If you are saved, you are to win souls. If a milk cow does not give milk, it won't be long before she will visit the butcher shop. If a chicken quits laying eggs, then the farmer will be eating chicken and dumplings. Now, there is something wrong if there is no reproduction. If you are not reproducing, then, my friend, there is something wrong in your life.

Evangelist Vance Havner says that things are so subnormal today

that when you meet someone normal, you think they are abnormal. He said you have to backslide to get into fellowship with the average Christian. Hear the Word of God, "I have elected or chosen you to go and bring forth fruit, (win souls)."

### **Elected To Preserve The Fruit**

Notice the next expression in John 15:16: "and that your fruit should remain." Who is Jesus referring to when He uses the term, "YOUR FRUIT?" The fruit referred to here is the people who have been won to the Lord. This means that God has a way of conserving the fruit as well as a proper way of winning souls. He is not referring to eternal security, but He is referring to a proper way of developing the new converts into good, active, mature disciples. God has ordained a way of evangelizing. And He has ordained a method of discipling and preserving the souls won. The child of God is elected to discipleship, to win souls and to followup as well.

### **Elected To Great Things**

#### **Examine The Rest Of The Verse**

The child of God is elected to GO. He is elected or chosen to bring forth fruit or win souls. He is elected to conserve the results or disciple the new converts. Note the final expression of this verse, "WHATSOEVER YOU SHALL ASK OF MY FATHER IN MY NAME, HE MAY GIVE IT TO YOU." Now that sounds like a blank check to me.

If the richest man in America walked up to you and asked, "Are you so and so?" You say, "Yes, sir." He would continue and say, "I have a check made out to you and have signed it. All of my vast resources are at your disposal. All you have to do is fill in the amount. Whatever you fill in - five bucks, fifty thousand dollars, or five million dollars - then that is what you will get." Most of us would have the same problem, wouldn't we? We would just write and write and write until we ran out of check space before we would run out of zeroes. Well, here is a blank check for you, dear sir; and another for you, dear lady. Jesus said, "Whatsoever ye ask

of my Father in my name, He may give it to you." I am talking about election. I have chosen you to go and to bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain; and whatsoever you ask in "MY" name, God will do it for you. You see the great present tense God is a God of infinite power and infinite resources. He said, "I'll fill out a blank check and give it to you and allow you to fill in the amount. God elected you to live the abundant life. In John 10:10, Jesus said, "I came that you may have life and have it more abundantly!!"

### **The Believer Is Elected To Unlimited Potential**

The believer is elected to go, to win souls, to conserve the fruit and to ask the eternal, present-tense God for "whatsoever" or unlimited requests. The God of creation, of gravitation, great and marvelous miracles of the Old Testament, and who has manifested himself in power in the apostles' lives and other great men throughout the past 20 centuries is the same one who made this statement. If one will take God's past performance into consideration, then he will see that God is able to fulfill any "Whatsoever" one may ask.

### **This Promise Demonstrates God's Concern For The Lost**

This promise demonstrates God's purpose or goal to do every thing in His power to rescue souls from hell. If God sacrificed His Son, allowed Him to become a sin offering and die as a lost soul suffering the torments of hell so the sinner could be saved - then, there is nothing He would withhold to get people doing what He chose them to do. Paul expressed this fact in Romans 8:32. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

In times of war or in time of extreme emergency, many kings or rulers have offered great incentives for complete abandonment of self and total dedication to winning the battle or to achievement. This is exactly what Jesus did in John 15:16. He literally promised, "If you will give yourself totally to the purpose for which you were elected then I will let you write your own ticket. I love lost souls so much that I sacrificed myself to save them. If I paid the ultimate

price, by sacrificing myself on the cross, then I will not hold back anything in order to stimulate others to sacrifice themselves for a lost world."

### **This Promise Is Based Upon Conditions**

The conditions have been clearly presented. If a child of God will accept the fact that he was chosen to:

- (1) GO
- (2) WIN SOULS
- (3) FOLLOW-UP AND CARE FOR THE NEW CONVERTS,

AND

- (4) ASK GOD IN PRAYER FOR THE DESIRE OF HIS HEART

If the believer will do these four things, then God, for Jesus' sake will work mightily in the Child of God's life and give him the **WHATSOEVER** he may ask.

### **SUMMARY**

The Bible was written so the common man could understand it. The doctrine of election is a Bible doctrine. Every doctrine in the Bible supports and stimulates the one supreme purpose of God which is to **SAVE SINNERS FROM HELL**. Election in the Light of Soul-Winning, when properly understood increases one's vision and desire to win souls. Oh, God, help us to surrender ourselves to the task for which **WE WERE ELECTED**. **OH GOD** help us to Glorify you with our lives by bringing forth fruit .... winning souls. **OH, GOD**, help us to submit to the purpose of our lives. Amen.

*"HEREIN IS MY FATHER GLORIFIED, THAT YE BEAR MUCH FRUIT: SO SHALL YE BE MY DECIPLES."* -John 15:8.

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**Chapter Four**  
**PREDESTINATION IN THE LIGHT**  
**OF SOUL-WINNING**

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Predestination is the third of four messages in a series on Foreknowledge, Election, Predestination and the Ministry of Paul in the Light of Soul-Winning. The word, predestination, may seem difficult. It may be intimidating to the average layman.

Predestination! What does it mean? Before psyching out the word, remember the Bible was written for the common man's understanding. Predestination is a term that everyone can understand. This is especially true when the believer is on good terms with the Bible's Author and seeks the Holy Spirit's leading and illumination while studying God's Word.

This message, then, is written with the layman in mind. It is not a theological discussion, but a simple presentation so the common man might have a clear view of Predestination in the Light of Soul-Winning.

**1. WHY DID JESUS COME INTO THE WORLD?**

Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Luke 5:32.

Paul said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ... " - 1 Timothy 1:15.

**2. WHAT DID JESUS DO WIDLE HE WAS ON THIS EARTH?**

He saved sinners! He won Nicodemus one night. He won the woman at Jacob's well. He won the woman taken in adultery. He won the Gadarene demoniac. He won Zacchaeus, the Publican. He won the woman who wept at his feet. He won the woman who touched his garment and was healed. He won the man who was paralyzed and let down through the roof by his friends. He won the thief on the cross. The ministry of Jesus was largely a ministry of personal soul-winning. His daily business was personally winning

sinners.

### **3. WHAT DID HIS DISCIPLES DO?**

John the Baptist pointed Andrew and John to the Savior. Andrew won his brother, Peter. Jesus won Phillip who won Nathaniel. The new convert that Jesus won at the well brought many to Jesus. The Gadarene new convert went home to his friends and told them, "What great things Jesus did for him." The Philippian jailer, along with Paul and Silas, won his whole household shortly after he was saved. When scattered by persecution, all the early disciples "went every where preaching the Word." Acts 8:4. Personal witnessing and soul-winning were normal practices of the early Christians of Bible days.

### **4. WHAT WERE THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS?**

Before ascending, Jesus' last words, as recorded in the five accounts of the great commission, can be summed up in one word, GO!

A logical deduction: If the Bible is for the common man then he can understand it. If everything Jesus did, taught and practiced revolved around getting people saved from hell, then Predestination, when properly understood, will help a person be a better, more zealous soul-winner.

The development of this chapter will revolve around three headings:

- I. Predestination Pertains To The Saved
- II. Predestination Propels To The Eternal
- III. Predestination Promotes Soul-Winning

### **I. PREDESTINATION PERTAINS TO THE SAVED**

#### **Predestination Has No Reference To The Lost**

Predestination has NOTHING, whatsoever, to do with deciding on who will be saved and who will be lost. It has nothing to do with the sinner and hell.



The Apostle Paul made it clear that the believer should have no fellowship with the works of darkness and sin by asking questions which had obvious answers. (II Corinthians 6:14-17.)

Paul asked:

1. What fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?
2. What communion hath light with darkness?
3. What concord has Christ with Belial?
4. What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?
5. What agreement hath the Temple of God with idols.?

Now, in harmony with the above five questions of exact opposites, What reference does predestination have to the sinner? The answer is a resounding, NONE! Predestination has nothing to do with determining where the sinner will spend eternity.

### **Predestination Deals With God's Plan For The Saved**

There are many doctrines in the Bible referring only to the saved. Four examples of this fact are the rapture of the saints, justification, sanctification, and heaven. Predestination also belongs to this exclusive number. (1) Predestination deals with only those who have made their choice; those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. (2) Predestination has to do with what God is going to do for and with those who believe and become His children.

When we use the term, predestination, we mean God's act of predetermining some specific things before the foundation of the world. In the beginning (before the foundation of the world) He predetermined, predestinated, predecided, or had a definite agreement that certain things would happen or come to pass.

We are stating by the authority of the Word of God that predestination has nothing to do with deciding on who will be saved or who will be lost. It has only to do with those who respond

to the drawing of the Holy Spirit, believe the Word of God and accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and God. He has predestinated to do many great things for those who do believe and are born into His family.

### **Predestination Explained By A Childlike Illustration**

Consider the following illustration which pictures the doctrine of predestination. Say that my wife and I decide to have a party for one of our children. We sit down to plan on the number of guests, the games, the refreshments, the time, and all the other details necessary in order to have a good party. We decide to invite all the children in our community. We decide to serve chips, coke, different entrees on trays, cake, and ice cream for all who come. We decide to play certain games with gifts as rewards to those who win. Then, as a special bonus, we decide to treat everyone who comes with a surprise. Everyone present will be taken, as our son's guest, to Six Flags Over Texas.

We know that everyone who is invited will not come, but we invite all. We have predetermined that everyone who does come will be fed well and received with love and friendliness. We have special prizes for some and a surprise which will exceed what any child would expect - an evening at Six Flags Over Texas with the closest buddies and friends.

This simple illustration perfectly pictures the doctrine of predestination. Everyone is invited with the host predetermining to do certain things with and for those who accept his invitation. But the predetermining has nothing to do with the choice of those who do accept the invitation. That choice is left up to the individual. He and He alone must decide on whether or not to accept the invitation.

Everyone is sent an invitation. Those who respond are the benefactors of God's glorious Predestination.

## **Predestination Is Preceded By A General Invitation To All**

The Bible declares that God is not willing that any should perish but all come to Him through repentance. II Peter 3:9. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Jesus said, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." John 3:17.

The Bible is literally filled with invitations from God to man to come for reconciliation. May we note six of the better-known texts which give forth this invitation:

### **1. Notice the Whosoever in John 3:16,**

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

### **2. Notice the Clear, Direct Invitation of Romans 10:13,**

*"For **whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

### **3. Notice the Invitation to the Weary in Matthew 11:28,**

*"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

### **4. Notice the Cry of Invitation to the Thirsty in John 7:37,**

*"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."*

### **5. Notice the Urgent Invitation of Luke 14:22-23,**

*(and the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out*

*into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."*

#### **6. Notice the Final Invitation of Revelation 22:17,**

*(and the spirit and the bride say, "Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*

There are many invitations from God to the lost to repent, to turn from their sins and come to God. The above six verses are among the most well-known verses which teach that God invites ALL sinners to be saved.

#### **Predestination Clearly Pertains To The Saved**

God wants everyone who will, to be saved and go to heaven. The invitation is sincerely extended to all, but predestination pertains only to the saved.

*"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. "-Romans 8:29,30.*

For whom he did foreknow. He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. What did predestinate them to be? He predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son. Philippians 3:21 states it more clearly, "Who shall change our (believer's) vile body, that it may be fashioned like (conformed) unto his (Jesus) glorious body."

Those verses show one of the primary things which God predestinated to do. He predetermined to give the believer a new, eternal, glorified body. Paul shed further light on this in Ephesians 1:5 when he said, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure

of his will. Adoption has to do with our bodies. We are born or quickened and made alive spiritually through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. This happens when we are born again of the Spirit. But the new birth does nothing for the flesh. The old body is just as sinful, carnal, and foreign to God as it ever was. So God, according to his good pleasure, said, to those foreign, alienated persons who are born of depraved, degenerate parents, "I will bring them into complete harmony with heaven." When one accepts Jesus, my Son, as his Savior He is made partaker of the divine nature through the new birth, but he must still live in that old, depraved body. I will change that. I will conform him. I will fashion and adopt them into my family and give them a body like unto the body of my own Son. He will no longer be part Spirit and part Adam. I will change his old sickly, weak body into a powerful, glorified body. That is what Paul said about the saints who died: "sown in corruption, raised in glory; sown in natural, raised in supernatural; sown in weakness, raised in power; conformed and fashioned like unto the image of Jesus. Predestination has to do totally and completely with what God will do with and for the believers.

### **Predestination Has To Do With God's Good Pleasure**

Continue reading slowly through chapter 1 of the Ephesian letter. Verse 6 says, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

Read the wonderful words of verses 7 and 8 which continue our thought: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."

Verse 9 says God is going to do His good pleasure which He purposed to do: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."

Verse 10 tells us when, and through whom, He is going to do it.

*"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."*

Verse 11 tells us what we are predestinated to - **an inheritance**:

*"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."*

Verse 12 tells us why - to the praise of His glory - and who the predestined are - those who first trusted in Christ, the Believers: "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

From these verses we conclude that God's good pleasure has to do with the saved. He has predetermined the time, the place, and the events which will bring glory to himself and delight to those who responded to his invitation and are saved.

### **It Sounds Like A Party To Me**

Another verse to consider is Ephesians 2:7

*"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."*

Jesus is going to come! He will change our old, depraved bodies and fashion us like unto Jesus. The Bible speaks of mansions in heaven. It speaks concerning streets of pure gold. It talks about walls of jasper and precious stones. It talks about a marriage supper, a banquet. It talks about an innumerable company of saints from every nation, country, tribe, and village singing. It talks about ... Hey! It sounds like a party to me. But, it is such a tremendous party! Heaven will be so real and wonderful! It is not Six Flags Over Texas. It is victory and the Lord's Flag over heaven. It is such a tremendous celebration to the Son of God that Paul said, it will

take "ages to come" just to "shew the exceeding riches of His grace" toward us. (Eph, 2:7).

### **The Invitation Goes Out**

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." Simply stated, "Come to the party." Let him who heareth say, "Come to the party." Let him who is athirst say, "Come." Do you want to go to the party with me? Do you want to accept Jesus as your Savior? Do you want to get rid of your guilt? Do you want to have eternal life?

You say, "I want a change. I am tired, so bored. There must be something more to life!"

Come on! Go with us. God will save you. He will give you forgiveness, peace and eternal life. He will conform you to the image of His dear Son. Hear the invitation, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

## **II. PREDESTINATION PROPELS TO THE ETERNAL**

By propels, we mean that it thrusts or forcefully directs our mind and attention toward the eternal.

### **God Wants Our Minds Off This World**

Jesus told his disciples, "You are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world." John 15:19.

Paul said, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Col. 3:2.

John admonished, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." I John 2:15.

Jesus commanded His disciples, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, ... But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... " Matt. 6:19,20.

This earth and all that lies within is temporal and will all perish. If

it doesn't wear out, if it is not stolen, then it will be burned when this earth is cleansed by fire. God knows that any investment, work or lifetime efforts for gain will only be short-lived and will actually distract from God's will and purpose for our lives. Therefore, He wants our minds off this world and on eternal things. The doctrine of predestination captures the mind of the believer, takes it off this world and propels it toward the eternal.

### **Whom He Did Predestinate ... Them He Glorified**

Romans 8:30 is an amazing verse in the Bible. God, who is the great "I AM," the eternal now, who sees the end as well as the beginning, inspired Paul to write,

*"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. "*

The whole verse has past-tense verbs as if it had already taken place. In the mind of God, it has. God has that ability. He sees the end as the beginning. He sees the whole scope, not in realms of A.D. or B.C., but as active workings which are going on before his eyes. He simply inspired Paul to tell us about it as He views it, as a certainty. Those He foreknew (see our foreknowledge and election explanation), he predestinated; them He also justified (declared legally righteous as if they had never sinned), and whom He justified, them He also glorified. He saw them as if they were in their new bodies and already in heaven.

The Bible states that man's lifetime is like:

A story

A Vapor

A smoke

A night's sleep

Life is so short that God sees the sinner surrendering to the drawing of the Holy Spirit and calling upon the name of Jesus for salvation; and, in the mind of God, click: That believer is



predestinated, justified, and glorified. God purposed to do it. The plans are all made, it is just waiting for us.

### **Called To His Eternal Glory**

Predestination propels (projects) to the eternal. It takes the believer's mind, arrests it, and thrusts it toward the eternal. Notice how these truths have captured the mind and thinking of the Apostle Peter as he writes to other preachers and pastors in I Peter chapter 5:

"... and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:" verse 1

"... ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." verse 4.

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ .Iesus." verse 10.

"To him be **glory and dominion forever and ever.**" verse 11.

God had done a work in Peter. His mind is locked in on things above. He has caught the feeling that we are in the world but we are yet strangers and pilgrims. The old song writer wrote, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through." He realized that this life is really nothing. The main event is yet to come. Everything in this life is temporary. Everything in this life is designed to bring us to eternal glory and reward if we submit to God's purpose and plan.

### **The Old Missionary Who Felt Badly.**

A few years ago an American missionary returned home after many years of sacrificial service. He had endured many hardships and dangers. He was alone. He had buried his beloved helpmeet on foreign soil. He was in poor health himself. His boat docked the same morning as the boat carrying President Teddy Roosevelt, who was returning from a wild game hunt in Africa. Thousands had turned out to welcome President Roosevelt home. The huge

crowd had detained the lone delegate who was to meet the returning missionary. As the old missionary waited, the tempter attacked. He thought.

They have forgotten you! Here thousands have come to receive a man who has been on a pleasure trip and have given him a hero's welcome, but they have forgotten you. Do you think that is fair? You, who have been on the foreign field for over 30 years, who lost your wife and who lived in such forgotten, primitive conditions. And, now ...

"Wait just a minute, mister devil," the old missionary countered. "I am in the world, but I am not of the world. This world is not my home. This is not my home going. Wait until I land on that eternal shore. I am not home yet."

Peter is talking about receiving a crown of glory which fadeth not away. But, the expression I like best is, "called us unto his eternal glory." Did you get that? (. . . called to share the eternal glory of Jesus.)

### **Earthly Suffering Relates To Eternal Glory**

Whereas there is glory and bliss on that eternal shore, there are tears and heartaches on this earth of sin and sorrow. Job spoke of man's life and said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." Job 14:1.

Paul, who suffered much for Jesus referred to his suffering by saying, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." II Cor. 4:17. He further comforts the believer by uttering the famous words found in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Let us go back and examine the full content of I Peter 5:10, "But the God of all grace ... " How much grace is that? Surely it is

enough for any situation, trial or trouble which we may face.

" ... who has called us unto his eternal glory ... " (Glory which fadeth not away and which will never be diminished by time.)

After you have suffered awhile, a believer is not only saved for Jesus' sake, but it is ordained that a believer should suffer for His sake, Philippians 1:29. The sufferings or testings are designed to: perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you. God has designed that through testings and difficulties, the believer grows spiritually and becomes stronger in the Lord's work. Peter speaks of manifold temptations in I Peter 1:6. In verse 7 he states, "That the trial of your faith ... might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In these two verses he uses strong words to describe the trials or testings which the believer endures and suffers, but then he tells of the reason. They are designed for our spiritual growth and eternal good. "All things work together for good to them who love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose."

### **A Lesson From a Great Woman.**

During the 25 years which God permitted me to pastor, I had many outstanding workers and laymen. The most outstanding husband and wife laymen team, in my opinion, was Bill and Edna Oliver.

Bill was an engineer. Edna was a school teacher. Both were tremendous Bible students and Christians. Among many of their duties, they both taught and worked for me while I was president of Missionary Baptist College. I was their pastor and worked with them in training young Christian workers. I knew them well. The day came when our paths parted. Bill, who was one of the top men in the Interstate Highway Systems, was transferred. Years passed. Our paths grew further apart.

One day I was saddened to learn that Edna had terminal cancer. From time to time I heard of her intense suffering. I left the pastorate and entered full-time evangelistic work. We moved to

Texas. I heard through a friend that Bill had resigned his position and moved back to the old home place so Edna could die there. A friend told me that the doctors were mystified because few people ever suffered as acutely as Edna was suffering. There was no relief.

One day my phone rang. It was Bill Oliver. He was desperate! He told me that Edna was doubting; she was questioning God. He said, "Preacher, I know that if anyone can help her, you can. Will you come?" I felt compelled of God to go even though it was in another state and my finances were very limited.

I prayed all the way to the hospital and asked God for wisdom and grace to comfort and help Edna. I arrived at the hospital with confidence that God had sent me with a special message for her. But, I was totally unprepared to see the once beautiful lady of my age now completely white-haired. Her right arm was swollen two or three times its normal size. She was desperate. She said, "Why, Pastor Wilkins, why, why these years of suffering? What have I done? There is no relief. We have spent our life's savings. Why, Pastor? Why? You could see the intense suffering and the desperation in her face.

God gave me this answer: "Edna, remember when you taught for me at Missionary Baptist College?"

"Yes," she replied.

"God gave you some excellent students in your English and literature classes, didn't He?"

"Yes," she replied.

"You surely made it difficult on some of the better students. They came out of your classes crying the blues. The reason you graded with such a fine line and demanded almost perfection from those preacher boys is that you wanted them to become the best pastors

and Christian workers possible. You wanted them to be able to express themselves on paper; to write in such a way that would help them in their future years. You wanted them to do their best for the Lord. Isn't that right, Edna?"

"Yes, sir," came her weak reply.

"But in your classes you had two or three boys who could hardly spell their name. What did you do with them? You nursed them through the course. You encouraged them. You became their personal cheerleader. I have never known anyone who taught people as individuals as well as you did. The ones who were able to rise to the challenge, you gave extra homework and graded them by a strict, grammatical standard. Many times, as they struggled to make an 'A' they grumbled and complained. They griped, but when they finished the course they were proud of their accomplishment and newly acquired ability. I have heard them speak often since then of their sweet, wonderful teacher. I have heard them speak of how much they learned and how you helped them. But, the other dear boys who were in the same classes were dealt with completely differently. You almost overlooked their mistakes and were lenient in your grading. Why, Edna?"

She looked up at me with a thoughtful expression on her face as she remembered.

I continued by answering my own question.

"Everything you did for your students was for their good and benefit. It was done to develop each of them to his highest efficiency, wasn't it?"

She answered, "Yes sir, Dr. Wilkins, it was."

"Now, here you are in the process of dying and you are questioning God. You are saying, 'God, why am I suffering so? Why have you stripped us of all our money? Why have I been so

ill month after month in such tremendous pain? Others have died without almost any suffering and I have continued on and on!' Those are your questions, aren't they, Edna?"

"Yes, sir, I feel so ashamed, Dr. Wilkins, but those are my questions."

"Don't be ashamed, Edna. Listen to me very carefully because God has sent me to give you the answer to your questions. The Bible teaches that if we suffer with Him we will reign with Him. II Timothy 2:12. Paul stated that our light afflictions, which are but for a moment - compared to eternity, they are just for a moment - worketh for us a far more and eternal weight of glory. The trial of your faith worketh unto His honor and praise at the second coming.

"Now, Edna, here is what is happening. God looks down and says to the archangel, Gabriel, 'One of my favorite little girls, Edna Oliver, is about to graduate from life. Pastor Wilkins, one of my preachers, states she is one of the finest Christians and members he has ever known. In reviewing her life, I see she only needs another point or two in order to have a higher place in the millenium. It will qualify her to have a more distinctive role and honor for the whole 1,000-year reign. In order for her to achieve this, she must suffer a little more. My grace is sufficient. She never put upon her students more than they could bear. I will not put upon her more than she can bear. But by suffering a little more, she will have a better reward which will be unto eternal glory which fadeth not away.'"

As I spoke to Edna, the Holy Spirit bore witness to her soul. There was a peace which came over her. She lived another seven days and her suffering was very intense, but she was able to accept it with peace and anticipation of heaven. Bill called me when she died and said, "Preacher, what you told her was right. God honored it. Edna was able to accept it. I accept it, too."

Predestination propels to the eternal when we understand that God has predestined to make all things work together for good to them who love Him and are called according to His purpose. Any suffering for his sake adds to our eternal glory which will be revealed in the ages to come as we feast and fellowship with our heavenly Father and friends in His eternal kingdom.

### III PREDESTINATION PROMOTES SOUL-WINNING

As a climax to our subject, predestination promotes soul winning. Notice the following foundation truths.

#### **Saved For Eternity**

The doctrine of predestination deals with what God predetermined to give and do for those who receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Jesus states this truth in the Gospel of John, chapter 6, verses 39 and 40 which caused His enemies to murmur. He said,

*'~nd this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.'*

Now, that is security. Everyone who believes will be raised up from the dead. This passage states that those who were truly saved will never be lost. "I should lose nothing" (none of them). "Them he called, he glorified." Romans 8:30. He states that He will work all things for good to those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose. Hallelujah! Isn't that good? I am God's little boy. He has saved me for a purpose and gurantees that everything that happens to me will work out for my good. His overall predestination for me has to do with my sharing His eternal glory. This is security. This tremendous truth should cause one to submit himself to God and give Him his very best.

## **Saved For A Purpose**

We have seen that God has an eternal purpose and that He is working out His purpose according to His good pleasure. But, have you really accepted the fact that God saved you for a purpose? Paul wrote, "Who hath saved us and called us ... according to his own purpose and grace ... " II Timothy 1:9.

Ephesians 2:8,9 states that we are saved by grace. Verse 10 says, "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Paul challenges the believers to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Romans 12:2. What is that perfect will or purpose for your life?

## **What Is This Crazy, Mixed-Up Life All About?**

I have a message that I preach on the subject, "What Is This Crazy, Mixed-Up Life All About?" Why is man alive? Why is he on the earth? What will really turn man on and cause him to be fulfilled so he will live a life on earth and fulfill God's purpose for his existence?

The Book of Ecclesiastes was written to answer these questions. In Eccl. 1:13, Solomon recognized this same question. In Eccl. 2:3 he states that he gave his life to discover why man was placed on this earth. One by one he tried each of the major areas of life and discarded each, saying, "Vanity of vanities." He tried giving himself completely over to:

learning  
labor  
liquor  
laughter  
lust  
luxury

After each experiment, he concluded that there were certain merits or he would give comparisons. But he stated that was not the



purpose for man's existence upon the earth. After analysing all the areas which man majors on, he gave the summary of his experiment as to why God placed man on the earth by saying,

*"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." - Eccl. 12:13,14.*

In answering the question of why man was placed upon the earth, Solomon examined the realms of learning, labor, luxury, laughter, liquor and lust and concluded that the primary reason for man's creation was none of these. Then he stated that man was created for the Lord. Man was placed upon the earth to serve the Lord.

### **Saved To Imitate Jesus**

Since man was saved for a purpose, what is that purpose? John declared this purpose in his presentation of the great commission. He stated, "As my father hath sent me, even so, send I you." John 20:21. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. He came to save sinners. We are saved to imitate Jesus: "even so, send I you."

The primary purpose of the saved is to convert the lost. So, now we come to the heart of this message: Predestination Promotes Soul-Winning.

### **Predestination Promotes Soul-Winning: Saved To Win Souls**

The religious world does not understand that the primary purpose of the church is to win souls. This truth is hid from even the most fundamental churches. Most churches stress doctrine, separation, giving to their preferred colleges and mission project. And they work hard at the routine of having a church. They seem to be completely blind to the real purpose of having a church. They seem to be completely blind to the real purpose for the local church which is personal soul-winning.

Churches that stress doctrine and right division of the Word often quote II Timothy 2:15 with tremendous intensity and demand its observance. These same dear people have missed the purpose for "rightly dividing" the word. In II Timothy 2:14, Paul gave the purpose of right interpretation of the Word by saying, "To the subverting of the hearers."

Many of God's people have missed the purpose for the empowering and filling of the Holy Spirit completely. They spend much of their time talking about the gifts of the Spirit, but have missed the plain teaching of Acts 1:8. The empowering of the Spirit is to enable the believer to be a better witness so he can win souls. The human race has such a tendency to practice the outward forms of religion, but miss the real purpose for having a church. Jesus gave a complete, lengthy chapter to stress the real reason of Bible Christianity.

Luke chapter 15 begins with sinners crowding around Jesus in order to hear the Word of God. This caused the old, main-line religious crowd to turn up its nose and murmur about Jesus and His association with "sinners." verse 2. Their lack of understanding that Jesus came to save sinners caused Jesus to give the tremendous parable of this chapter. Note, the author said parable, not parables. Verse 3 states, "Jesus spake this parable." Chapter 15 contains one parable which stresses the principle that the saved are to seek sinners. It does not contain three separate parables - the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son - the way most people interpret this chapter. This interpretation and teaching is in error. Because the Pharisees and scribes did not understand why religious organizations existed, Jesus spoke this parable explaining what life and Christianity are all about.

The lost sheep pictures man's lost condition by nature. "All we like sheep have gone astray." The lost coin pictures man's lost condition by position. Through the act of another, the coin became lost. The lost boy pictures man's lost condition through choice. He chose to leave his father and sin against heaven.

We are not just adding our own opinion or viewpoint of what this chapter teaches. But we do reveal a truth which is hidden from most Bible expositors. Many Bible expositors are not personal soul-winners. Many other good men simply follow traditional interpretation of verses without careful consideration. Consider carefully, then, this parable which will reveal that the primary existence for a child of God is to get sinners saved.

The shepherd had to leave the herd of sheep in order to seek and to save the lost sheep. When he returned home, he called all his friends together so they could rejoice with him. He had made a long, hard trip which had presented many dangers. He had saved the sheep. It was a time to rejoice. Jesus made the application of this story to sinners when He gave the punch line in verse 7: "that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth ... "

Jesus also gives the forceful application to the meaning of the lost coin in verse 10 when He says, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

Jesus continues by stressing the sobering fact that He is not talking about the lost condition and need of some dumb animal or the misfortune of some girl who lost a coin. He is talking about the lost condition of some father's boy. He is talking about a boy who made a bad decision, who had wrecked his life, who was lonely and hurting. Note the clear statement of the boy's condition in verse 24: "For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." This wayward boy clearly represents a lost sinner.

The brother represents the reaction of many regular church members who are blind to the fact that the church's primary purpose is to win souls. He was an active member. He was in the field, verse 25. He was a faithful member who kept the commandments and served God faithfully for many years. verse 29. But he resented the way the father and everyone was taking on

over that sinner.

The old father reasoned with his elder son by saying, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found," verses 31,32. The father simply told his older boy, "Everything I have is yours. I thought this was what we were living for. I thought this is what we were praying for. I thought this is what would make life complete: your lost brother being saved. I thought this is what church was all about - seeing sinners come home."

The parable was given because the organized, religious groups of that day did not understand the purpose of Jesus's life; of loving, working with, and saving sinners. This elder brother is a perfect example of many church members who murmur over the way the pastor and those soul-winners carry on over those bus kids or those sinners. The elder brother is a perfect example of what many established members in the local church think. They inwardly reason, "We pay the bills, repair the church, bear the brunt of the work which enables us to have church, and what do we get out of it? Nothing! Then those long-haired hippies get saved and the pastor and everyone make a big deal over it."

It is the author's honest prayer that through this explanation of this chapter we will see the true meaning for having church and get back to the task of loving sinners, of seeking and saving sinners.

### **How Does Predestination Promote Soul-Winning?**

May we now be very specific about how predestination promotes soul-winning. Predestination is the act which God predetermined what He would do for and with the saints who voluntarily choose Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. God has predetermined to do some things for all who receive Christ. Some of the things He predestined to do are:

## **Raise Up Every Believer At The End Of The Age**

*"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."-John 6:39.*

## **Conform Every Believer To The Image Of His Son.**

*"For whom he did foreknow, he also did PREDESTINATE TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON. .."-Romans 8:29.*

## **Adopt And Change Every Believer's Old, Human Body And Make It Acceptable And Livable For Eternity.**

*"Haning PREDESTINATED us unto ADOPTION OF CHILDREN by Jesus Christ to himself ..."-Eph. 1:5.*

## **Offered All Of His Children Opportunities By Which They May Excel And Obtain Eternal Recognition And Rewards.**

*"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, WORKETH FOR US A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY."-II Cor. 4:17.*

Because this is not a complete study of predestination, our thoughts are limited to Predestination in the light of Soul-Winning.

Because the primary purpose of life for believers is to glorify God; since the Word of God declares the method of glorifying God is to bear much fruit (John 15:8); since the fruit of the saved or the righteous is reproducing oneself in winning others to Christ, we conclude that the child of God who wins more souls will more nearly fulfill his life's purpose and receive the greater reward.

## **God Has Predestinated Specific Rewards For Acts Of Visitation And Soul-Winning**

Although the general things which God has predetermined for all believers have been noted, He has singled out some special rewards for specific acts also.

### **He Has Predestinated That There Would Be Unending Joy Over Every Sinner Who Repents.**

Luke 15:7 and 10 says that there is joy in heaven over every sinner who repents. When the lost boy came home, the Scripture declared, "They began to be merry," verse 24. The old father in this parable represents God, the Father. In verses 7 and 10 we see rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God in heaven. In verse 22 and 24, we see the old father as the main participant of that joy. If you win a poor, lost soul resulting in all of heaven rejoicing, especially God the Father, then that should stimulate you to go SOUL-WINNING.

### **He Predestinated That He Would Reward Those Who Labor In Sowing And Watering.**

The Bible commands each believer to GO. The Bible teaches that each and every believer is responsible for telling the lost about their need of salvation. God told Ezekiel that he was a watchman who was to warn the lost. Ezekiel 3:17. Paul referred to himself as a debtor who owed the Gospel to the lost. Romans 1:14,15. We, the saved, have the awesome responsibility of witnessing to the lost, but we cannot make the sinner's decision for him. He, only, can do that. We can witness to him, pray for him and encourage him to be saved. Many people feel unworthy and useless when they cannot get their family and friends saved. They may go out visiting time after time without visible results. They may even get a decision or two, but not one that really sticks. Because of this, they may become discouraged. Through this sense of unworthiness and uselessness, they become discouraged to the extent that they letdown in their witnessing. In order to motivate this type of Christian, God predestinated a reward for faithful and continual

witnessing. In I Corinthians 3:5-9 He discusses this situation and states in verse 8,

*"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one and every man SHALL RECEIVE HIS OWN REWARD according to his own labour."*

In this passage of Scripture, Paul emphasizes God's method of soul-winning. He uses the example of a farmer who can only plant the seed and do the things which God ordained for the seed to come up and grow, but ONLY GOD CAN GIVE LIFE AND A HARVEST.

The Christian worker goes, gives the message of salvation, prays for the sinner, and does whatever he can to encourage his conversion, but only God can quicken and save the sinner.

God states that He is a partner with the Christian worker in verse 9. He will reward a faithful sower of the seed. This is what God predetermined to do and is forcefully confirmed by the Apostle Paul in order to encourage the sower of the Gospel seed. God predestinated the method which will produce a sure harvest:

one plants another

waters,

but God gives the increase.

He predestinated that those who follow that method will be rewarded according to his own labor. Predestination encourages soul-winning!

### **He Has Predestinated Rewards For Visiting The Sick.**

By this shall all men know that you are my disciples! How? Because you love one another. Love is the greatest stimuli which causes people to work. Christian people are to help each other.

They are to help their fellow man. The Bible has much to say about the church's responsibility to the poor, the sick, the elderly, and the unloved masses. In our modern-day life, most churches are not caring for these people as the Lord commanded. Most of the visitation to these unfortunate has been left up to the pastoral staff or a selected few. It is here, again, that the predeterminate counsel of God steps in, encourages, and motivates people to serve and win souls.

At the judgment of the nations, (Matthew 25:33-40) Jesus startled the people when he said, "I was sick and you visited me," verse 36. They countered by asking, "When saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" (verse 39) He answered, "In that you did it unto the least of these my brethren; you did it unto me."

God predetermined that any kindness, labor of love or visit to the sick would be considered by God as a personal visit to himself, and that He would remember and commend the VISITOR AT SOME FURTHER TIME. PREDESTINATION STIMULATES SOUL-WINNING.

### **He Predestinated That He Would Reward Any Christian Worker Who Endured Acts Of Hostility Which Stemmed From Soul-Winning.**

Many of God's children are intimidated from going visiting. They are afraid that someone will get mad or slam a door in their face. Because of this fear, they live a life of defeat and disobedience. Many of them follow the Lord for a while by attending the services and doing what the average church member does. Since they do not experience the joy and fulfillment which only comes through winning souls, they soon drop out or accept a routine role of a churchgoer. Again, the predeterminate counsel of God stepped in. To motivate and raise His children above this fear, God offers them rewards. He said, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake!" Why are they to be considered "Blessed" when they are persecuted for righteousness's sake? The verse continues by answering this question: "For theirs is the kingdom of



God." The kingdom referred to here is the 1,000-year kingdom in which Jesus and His saints shall rule. The clear teaching here is that any problems or trials a person suffers on this earth because of living for Christ and doing God's work, will promote him to a higher position in the millennial reign. Matthew 5:11,12 continues by promising great rewards to the believer who is persecuted, reviled or has evil spoken to or about him. Commit the following words to memory and allow them to give you greater courage in your Christian life:

*"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD in heaven."*

If one goes out visiting and is received coolly, Rejoice! If one goes out in a loving way to help some poor, lost sinner be saved, and has a door slammed in his face, REJOICE! If one is called a religious fanatic by his friends and family because he is always trying to get sinners saved, REJOICE! God's predeterminate counsel has already concluded that you will be rewarded for any service you do for Jesus which is met with hostility. PREDESTINATION STIMULATES SOUL-WINNING!

### **He Has Predestinated That There Will Be Super Stars Who Will Shine Throughout The Eternal Age.**

We live in a world of rising stars, stars and super stars. Men are constantly striving for accomplishment, for fulfillment, for greatness. Each great record becomes a goal for some future star to break.

Men are constantly responding to the challenge to do greater feats, to rise to greater heights, to set greater goals and establish greater records.

Man is teleological by nature. By teleological, we mean that man is goal-striving. He responds to the challenge of rising to greater

heights, to accomplish greater feats than anyone ever before him. This make-up, this teleological nature, when properly stimulated, brings out the best in man. God appeals to this disposition of man to motivate him to an all-out effort of service for Christ.

### **Paul Challenged the Corinthians.**

He explained to the Corinthian Christians that in order to win the Jews, he became a servant to the Jews. To those without law, he became as without law (being not without law to Christ) that he may win the Gentiles. To the weak, he became weak that he might win the weak. He became all things to all men that he might by all means save some.

He explains why he did it in I Corinthians 9:23 and then challenged the Corinthians to strive to be first, to strive for greatness in verses 24-25,

*"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."*

One receives the prize; one comes in first. Then Paul drives home the point by commanding them, "So run, that ye may obtain." He continues by referring to the sacrifices that an athletic champion makes in order to be a winner. He says, "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown." This is followed by Paul's punch line, "But we an incorruptible." This great apostle constantly motivated his disciples to strive for crowns and rewards which would be awarded to them at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

### **"I Press Toward The Mark"**

Paul, when an old man and a prisoner in jail, wrote to the Philippians, "I press toward the mark (literally 'goal') for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," Philippians 3:14.

In verse 11 he said, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul knew he was going to go up in the resurrection, either in the rapture as a transformed saint or as a saint whose body could be called from the grave. He wasn't concerned about becoming part of the resurrection. He was talking about attaining a high order or place in the resurrection. God had seized upon the teleological make-up of Paul to keep him highly motivated in service right up to the time of his martyrdom. Paul kept striving for the goal.

Paul knew that God had predestinated that there would be positions of eternal glory given to those who fulfilled their purpose on this earth. This was vividly on his mind as he constantly pressed for the goal, the prize which God set before him. It was the last thing he said before he was beheaded in Rome:

I have fought a good fight

I have finished my course

I have kept the faith

HENCEFORTH there is a CROWN laid up for me

By God's predestination, He purposed to offer great and eternal glories to those who completely separated themselves to God's will and work. Since soul-winning and developing people to win souls is the primary work of God, we conclude that predestination stimulates and inspires soul-winning.

We conclude that the greatest reward will be given to the ones who excel in their primary work of soul-winning. Therefore, in our temporal world of stars, rising stars and super stars, we conclude that God predestinated that the super stars of the eternal age will come from those who excel in getting men saved from hell.

**Predestination inspires soul-winning.**

*"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." - Daniel 12:3.*

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**Chapter Five**  
**THE MINISTRY OF PAUL IN THE LIGHT**  
**OF SOUL-WINNING**

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This is the final of four messages on the subject of Foreknowledge, Election, Predestination, and the Ministry of Paul in the Light of Soul-Winning. This series was prepared especially for the layman. We believe the Bible was written primarily for the common man. If it was written for the common man then he can understand it. The doctrines of foreknowledge, election, and predestination are Bible doctrines, therefore, we believe a diligent, prayerful study by the average dedicated layman will be rewarded. He can and will understand these sacred truths. Theologians have a tendency to complicate; but God simplifies. God even states that He will reveal His truths to babes. We must conclude that a prayerful desire on the part of the layman for the Holy Spirit illumination as he studies God's Word will bring about a proper understanding. Before going into the complete message of the Ministry of Paul in the Light of Soul- Winning, let us consider the following questions.

**1. WHY DID JESUS COME INTO THE WORLD?**

Note Dr. Luke's answer in Luke 19:10, "Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost."

**2. WHAT DID JESUS DO IN HIS DAILY LIFE?**

- Examination of his daily life reveals that Jesus was a soul-winner. He met and talked to them where they lived.
- He won the woman at the well. He won Nicodemus at night.
- He won Zacchaeus who was up a tree.
- He won and cleansed the leper in the wilderness.
- He won the Gadarene in the graveyard.
- He won the thief on the cross.

Jesus spoke to the heart of individuals. His life was involved in meeting people at their level, of loving and saving people from hell. He was open to all men and was known as, "a friend of sinners."

### **3. WHY DID JESUS DIE ON THE CROSS?**

Paul preached and wrote, "This is a faithful saying, ... that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." I Timothy 1:15.

### **4. WHAT DID JESUS COMMAND HIS DISCIPLES TO DO JUST BEFORE HE ASCENDED BACK INTO HEAVEN?**

*"Go ye therefore and teach all nations,"* Matthew 28:19.

*"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,"*  
- Mark 16:15.

*"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,"* - Luke 24:47.

*"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you,"* - John 20:21. *"Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth,"* - Acts 1:8.

Now, if everything Jesus did, if everything he taught revolved around getting people saved, then it would be logical to say that every doctrine in the Bible, when properly understood, would further the cause of soul-winning. The ministry of Paul, if it is in harmony with the ministry of Jesus, will be a ministry of soul-winning. We will present the "Ministry of Paul in the light of Soul-Winning" as follows:

- I. PAUL'S PEN
- II. PAUL'S PATTERN
- III. PAUL'S PHILOSOPHY
- IV. PAUL'S PRACTICE

## I. PAUL'S PEN

The Apostle Paul's pen may have been the mightiest pen ever used by man. There is only one other writer who could be considered on the same level as this great apostle. God used Moses in the Old Testament and Paul in the New Testament.

From the Apostle Paul's pen came the following books of the Holy Bible:

Romans	I Corinthians	II Corinthians
Galatians	Ephesians	Philippians
Colossians	I Thessalonians	II Thessalonians
I Timothy	II Timothy	Titus
Philemon	Hebrews	

There are 14 books in all. This is over one-half of the books of the entire New Testament. Every doctrine in the Bible receives strength and clarity from Paul's pen.

### **The Forceful Pen Of Paul**

Several hundred years ago there were a group of Baptists who were referred to as Paulicians. When people would ask them what they believed about a certain doctrine, they would answer, "Paul said," and quote a verse in answer. Again, one of their number would be asked, "What do you think about a certain doctrine?" They would answer, "In the book of Romans, Paul said ... "

### **They Were Called Paulicians**

They lived in a time and place in which there were state-supported churches. These Baptists aggravated the authorities by always answering, "Paul said." The Christians held that the Bible was the final authority over them and that they must, for conscience sake, obey God rather than man. This constant referral to "Paul said" led to their persecution and to their receiving a permanent nickname, Paulicians.

### **The Factual Pen of Paul**

The Bible is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. The Bible will thoroughly furnish a believer unto all good works. The Bible will equip a believer so he is perfect or mature. The Bible is the Book by which every believer will be judged when he stands before God.

America needs to get back to submitting to the Bible as the final authority.

When the people of Israel practiced the philosophy of every man doing what was right in his own eyes, they were a weak people. Their enemies ruled over them, their nation deteriorated. When Israel heard and submitted to "thus sayeth the Lord," and obeyed the Bible, they were a mighty people. Valiant men arose and were used of God to defeat their enemies; often against unbelievable odds.

### **Chapter and Verse, Please.**

America became a strong and powerful nation who commanded the respect and received the reverence from every nation WHEN SHE HEARD AND OBEYED THE BIBLE. She opened her assemblies with prayer and her coins were inscribed, "In God We Trust," as she pronounced her faith.

Today, our nation is weak and sick. Everything is relevant. There seems to be no absolutes. There is a constant gushy reference to "my gift" or "what the Spirit revealed to me" instead of having chapter and verse from the Bible. There is only one author of the Bible. That author is perfect; He has all-power. He is perfect in knowledge. His name is God, the Holy Spirit. He has written a Book which has no mistakes, no contradictions and is perfect in every detail. He has commanded us to study it, to hide it in our hearts, to teach it to our children, and to submit and to conform our lifestyle to its standards.

### **The Word Completely Furnishes To Every Good Work**

Our nation will become strong again when we begin to demand

chapter and verse, please, instead of accepting someone's feelings or interpretation. We must get back to reading after Paul's pen and giving the answer that "Paul said."

The Bible is the perfect, all-sufficient, God-breathed Book from heaven.

### **Paul said!**

*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," - II Timothy 3:16.*

We can have a proper understanding of God's Word. There is a proper way to interpret or divide every verse in the Bible.

### **Paul said,**

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,"-II Timothy 2:15.*

God help us preachers to teach our people how to read and study the Bible. If we will do this, we can rebuild the foundation in our home, churches and country. We must get back to the Bible as the final authority and NOT what some person, who claims to have a gift, feels or thinks. If the Bible will completely furnish the believer to every good work, then it isn't the Word AND spiritual gifts, the Word AND my inner feelings, the Word AND what I think. It is not the Word AND .. It is WHAT THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES, PERIOD!

### **The Foundation Pen Of Paul**

The writings of Paul serve as the foundation for almost every doctrine in the Bible. The doctrines of foreknowledge, election, and predestination certainly depend a great deal on Paul's pen for much of their exposure. In fact, there would not be any way to have a clear understanding of these subjects without the insight



gained from Paul's pen. His writings are the very corner stone upon which they rest. When one reads and applies Paul's writings to these subjects, he should consider the life and heartbeat of this great man as he considers and develops the interpretation of the verses. Always remember there are 14 books which came from his pen, not just a verse here, another verse there, which, when put together with a subtle explanation, could lead the reader to a twisted understanding of the doctrine. Keep in mind the life-style, the suffering, the heartbreak, the tears and the all-consuming passion of Paul for souls, as one considers a verse which makes reference to the doctrine of foreknowledge, election and predestination. The foundational truths for these doctrines come from the depths of Paul's soul before they come alive and are revealed from God's heart through Paul's pen.

## **II PAUL'S PATTERN**

May we consider a few thoughts on Paul as a pattern or example for Christians to follow.

### **Thoughts Toward Paul**

Most people view the Apostle Paul as some super man who is almost super human or divine. They may have read some of his inspired writings to learn some Bible truth. They may be able to quote from his writings in order to prove and substantiate some Bible principles, but they have never given much serious thought about Paul becoming their "example or pattern." They view Paul as some super Christian and feel dwarf-like by comparison.

### **Testimony Of Paul Concerning Why He Was Saved**

Paul states the purpose for his salvation in I Timothy 1:16  
*"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth alllongsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."*

### **For This Cause.**

Paul clearly testifies of the purpose for his salvation, He said, "For this cause I obtained mercy (was saved)." There is no doubt that

Paul is about to reveal a specific job or purpose which God saved him to do.

### **That In Me.**

Paul is not speaking in general terms. He makes it very clear that God saved him for a personal job by using the words, "that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth .... "

### **For A Pattern.**

Why did God save you, Paul? Paul answers, "God saved me to become a pattern."

The ladies know the importance and need for a pattern when they make a dress. With the proper following of the pattern, they can produce a garment which will receive many compliments and looks of admiration.

The husband understands the need for a blueprint in order for him to produce the cabinets for his wife's dream kitchen.

God certainly understood the need for a pattern for His children so they could transform their carnal and self-centered lives into something which would bring eternal glory and praise to God. So, He chose the man, Saul, and made him into the pattern, Paul. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy ... for a pattern."

### **A Pattern For Whom.**

Paul continues by saying, " ... to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." A pattern to whom? To those who should hereafter believe. This simply means that God saved Paul to become the believer's pattern.

### **Jesus Is The Believer's Example.**

I can hear someone object by saying, "I thought Jesus was the believer's example." HE IS! But Jesus knows how the average Christian thinks. The average believer reasons,

Jesus is so perfect; I am so imperfect.

Jesus is so divine; I am so human.

Jesus is so powerful; I am so weak.  
Jesus is so intelligent; I am so stupid.  
Jesus is so spiritual; I am so carnal.

God interrupts that reasoning by saying, "I'll fix your wagon!"  
(Now, one has to dig down into the Greek to get that expression.)

I will save my greatest enemy, a man who has warred against me and who has even killed some of my saints. I will save a man who has the same human passions and desires as his fellow man. I will save that man and demonstrate my grace by transforming him into the type of preacher and man that I want all my future children to be. I will save him so he can become a PATTERN to them who hereafter believe.

### III. PAUL'S PHILOSOPHY

The Bible declares, "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" That simply means that what a man is way down inside will dictate how he lives and acts. What made Paul tick? What caused him to act and live the way he did? What was the inner philosophy or heartbeat which caused this great man to live the way he lived?

Study Acts 20:17-38. These verses reveal a message from Paul to the pastors of the great church of Ephesus which proclaim his very heartbeat. Note some of the expressions from Paul's farewell address to these men of God.

He came serving the Lord, "*with all humility and many tears,*" verse 19.

He was a hard worker: "*how I kept back nothing which was profitable to you,*" verse 20.

He worked sincerely: "*I warned you night and day with tears for a space of three years,*" verse 31.

He was compelled to leave them. "*Behold I go bound in the spirit*

*to Jerusalem,"* verse 22.

He knew he was going to suffer and go to jail: *"that bonds and afflictions abide me,"* verse 23.

He wasn't working for money or looking forward to retirement. *"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel."* verse 33.

He wanted to finish his ministry and job with joy. *"I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry ... "* verse 24.

He openly declared that he didn't have any sinner's blood on his hands. *"I am pure from the blood of all men,"* verse 26.

After studying these expressions, one must conclude that the Apostle Paul felt a personal responsibility for the salvation of sinners. He felt that their salvation from sin and hell to heaven depended largely on his ability to convince them to repent. One can see the heartbeat of this great man which drove him on when it would mean bodily harm, discomfort, loneliness and eventual death. One can see that Paul believed that he was personally responsible for sinners and that if he didn't warn them, then he would have to answer to God for their blood.

What caused Paul to develop this conviction which drove him on even to the place of great bodily discomfort and harm? Where did he get this philosophy or driving conviction? We will conclude this section on Paul's philosophy by showing where Paul received this source of responsibility.

- A. He got it from Ezekiel.
- B. He got it from Jeremiah.
- C. He got it from David.
- D. He got it from Jesus.

### **He Got It From Ezekiel**

The author is well aware that it would be better to use the word, received, instead of the word, got. Paul "received it" from Ezekiel

sounds better grammatically than does "Paul GOT it from Ezekiel." The word, received, however, sounds rather passive to me. What Paul GOT was not passive at all. What GOT hold of Paul turned the world around, and what GOT a hold of Paul needs to get a hold of the preachers of this present generation. So, the word, GOT, is exercised here to emphasize a truth that we need to learn.

*"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." - Acts 20:26.*

Where did Paul get language like that, "I am pure from the blood of all men?" Pure from the blood ... what does he mean? There is something about that statement, "Pure from the blood," which causes my flesh to cringe. It is so sobering, "Pure from the blood of all men." Where did he learn language like that and what does it mean? Consider these words from the Prophet Ezekiel:

*"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity: but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." - Ezekiel 3:17-19.*

### **Hear The Word From My Mouth.**

In verse 17 God spoke directly to Ezekiel. He made him a spokesman for God, set him on the wall to warn the people of Israel and gave him the message to speak. If Ezekiel did not speak it, if he did not warn them, and the sinner died, then God would require that sinner's BLOOD from Ezekiel's hand. But Ezekiel could deliver himself of the possibility of having the sinner's blood on his hands by delivering the MESSAGE of God to the sinners.

Paul told the Ephesian pastors, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men!" Why are you free from the blood of all men, Paul? Paul continues on and explains why he is pure from the blood of all men in verse 27 by saying, "for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." That is, "I have given them the message which God gave me to give them. I have WARNED them," verse 31. Paul got his inner-gut philosophy from Ezekiel.

### **He Got It From Jeremiah**

In Jeremiah 2:31-35, we have pictured in Israel the exact condition which prevails in the lives of most preachers and churches in America today.

*"O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people. We are lords; we will come no more unto thee? Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number. Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways. Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these. Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. " - Jeremiah 2:31-36.*

### **A Spirit of Self-Sufficiency.**

"We are lords; we will come no more unto thee." This statement in verse 31 demonstrates a self-sufficient spirit. They were living a good life, the bills were being paid, and they were enjoying fellowship and the "good life."

God asks the question. "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?" A young lady who has an important date doesn't forget to put on her jewelry or make-up. She does everything

possible to make herself look her very best. A bride on her wedding day has worked and planned for months for this very special day. Yet, God charged. "My people have forgotten me days without number."

### **A Very Direct Question.**

God asks the Jews a very direct question, "Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love?" He asked, "Why are you compromising your ways to fulfillment or have a good time? Why are you trimming or changing thy ways to seek love. You are trying to have fun, to have a good time, to be "turned on" and really be happy. You are trying to find this Christian-type fellowship in bowling leagues, in Christian softball leagues, in all types of Christian social gatherings. Jesus came that you might have life and have it more abundantly. He has already promised to give you the desires of thy heart if you will delight thyself in the Lord. Why are you trimming, compromising and cutting away the main part of Christianity in order to find love and self-gratification when I have promised you the abundant life if you will serve me?"

### **A More Sobering Question.**

This direct question is followed by a more sobering question, "Hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways?" The stress of the Bible is for the saved to get the Gospel to the lost. The emphasis to the church is to preach the Gospel to every creature. These Jews were fellowshiping and trying to enjoy Christian activities but they had missed the primary purpose, teaching the wicked ones thy ways.

### **A Direct Charge.**

These disturbing questions were followed by a shattering, direct charge, "Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents." Please note the failure on the part of God's people to warn the lost is followed by the charge, "Their blood is found in your party skirts, in your fellowshiping skirts, in your ball uniform skirts. They were having church, but they were not soul-winning; they were not teaching the wicked ones thy ways.

## **God Rejected Their Arguments.**

The Jewish people begin to make rebuttal and argue with God.

*"Yet thou sayest, because I am innocent, surely his anger will turn from me." In saying, I have not sinned, the Jewish believer argued that they were free from committing fleshly vices but God countered by asking, "Have you taught the wicked, your ways? Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest I have not sinned."*

In our modern-day language they were making the following arguments which God rejected:

"I don't smoke." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

"I don't lie." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

"I don't drink." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

"I don't gossip." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

When the Jews said, "I am innocent," they were stating their conforming to the acceptable practices of their day. But again, God answered, "Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?" Today, most church members make the argument. They state their innocence by using our modern-day expressions. These statements of innocence are refuted by the question: have you taught the unbelievers thy ways?

"I go to Sunday School." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

"I tithe." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

"I sing in the choir." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?



"I attend a Christian school." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

"I am faithful to my wife." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

"I pay my honest debts." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

"I help my neighbors." - Have you taught the wicked ones thy ways?

In verses 36 and 37 it is evident that God was not impressed and that He did not accept their arguments. The plain teaching in this passage is that the children of Israel were charged by God with the blood of the souls of poor innocents, because they failed to warn and teach them God's ways. Paul got his inner-gut philosophy from Jeremiah.

### **He Got It From David**

It is one thing for a prophet to be forcefully warned by God that if he doesn't preach to the sinners and they die in their sin, he will be charged with their blood. It is another thing for God to say, "I have found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents in your skirts," to a nation who failed to teach the wicked ones about salvation. But, for a father to stand weeping over the lifeless form of his son and realize that his boy is suffering eternal torment in hell and that he has the blood of that boy on his hands, is one of the most devastating experiences that a human can ever experience. Such was King David's tragic experience.

### **Everyone Knows About David's Sin.**

When he should have been in front of his army in time of war, he backslid. He stayed home, LUSTED, LIED, and as a result, LIVED the rest of his life under a cloud of shame and remorse.

### **Everyone Knows Of His Heartbreaking Prayer.**

The prayer of repentance prayed by David in Psalm 51 is one of the best-known passages in the Bible. He pleaded,

*"Purge me, wash me (verse 7),*

*"hide thy face from my sins, blot out all mine iniquities (verse 9),*

*"create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me (verse 10),*

*"restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit (verse 12).*

He said, "God, if you will forgive me, restore the joy of salvation, and help me ... THEN I will go back to doing what you saved me to do."

"What is that, David? What will you do if God forgives and restores you?"

One would expect David to answer, "I will go back to being a good king, governing over your people."

David did not say that.

"I'll go out to the field of battle and be a courageous general, and lead the Lord's army to greater victories."

No, David did not say that either.

Read the promise David made to God in Psalm 51:13:

*"Then will I teach transgressors thy way; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."*

David said, "God, if you will forgive me and restore the joy of thy

salvation, then I will get back to the purpose for which you saved me. I will get back to helping backsliders get right with you and to the work of winning sinners. I will get back to my soul-winning."

### **Everyone Ought To Know Of David's Agonizing Guilt.**

Read the heartbreaking plea David made to God in Psalm 51:14, "Deliver me from BLOODGUILTINESS, Oh God." Look at the word, BLOOD ... What? BLOODGUILTINESS. There was no answer from God, because David was asking the impossible. He lived the rest of his life under the cloud of unanswered prayer. He lived under this sentence, waiting, dreading the day. He knew it would come.

It came! The word came that his rebel son, Absalom, was dead. When David received word of Absalom's death, he wept uncontrollably. He cried out, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! " (II Samuel 18:33). The boy was in hell and David had his blood on his hands. He was suffering the agony of BLOODGUILTINESS!

Someone may object and say, "Dr. Wilkins, you are reading too much into that text. How can you be so emphatic in your declaration that Absalom went to hell and David had the blood of his son on his hands?"

Compare the reaction of David when his little son died. David had fasted and prayed for seven days, hoping that God would spare the baby. When the baby died, David arose from the ground, bathed, worshipped God and ate dinner. His servants were mystified. They could not understand David's reaction. While the baby lived, he fasted and pleaded for the baby's life. When the baby died, he was composed, comforted and acted like his old self again. They questioned David, and David replied,

*"While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may li*

*ve? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." - II Samuel 12:22-23.*

"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David was comforted because the baby was in paradise and he would see him again. IT WAS NOT SO with Absalom. "Absalom is in hell. I have his blood on my hands. Oh Absalom, my son, my son! Would God I had died for thee, oh Absalom, my son, my son!"

Paul got his inner-gut philosophy from King David.

### **He Got It From Jesus**

Paul's philosophy of a feeling of a personal responsibility for the welfare of the sinner stemmed from the heart and teaching of Jesus. John recorded this philosophy in John 20:21-23,

*"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."*

John presented Jesus as the Son of God and, as the Son of God, Jesus had the responsibility of dying on the cross to redeem sinners.

### **The Same Purpose**

Paul interpreted the great commission according to John, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," to mean that he was to do the same things Jesus did. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. The "SO send I you" caused Paul to GIVE his life to the seeking after sinners.

### **The Power To Forgive Sin.**

The statement, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," shows the serious position and responsibility of the church. Today, many believers and preachers leave the impression by the

way they live that if one witnesses to the lost, that's nice; that's a plus. But, if they do not, then it is a very small consequence. They can always invite someone to church next week. There is no urgency. There is no real feeling of personal responsibility for the need and well-being of the lost. The attitude seems to be, "If I do witness to the lost, then that is good. If I do not, ... well, ... "

The great commission according to John shows the important part the believer has in the sinner's salvation. He has power to either forgive the sin or to retain the sin.

### **How Does The Believer Have Power To Forgive Sin?**

As the believer goes, weeps over the sinner, presents the plan of salvation, persuades the sinner he is lost and in danger of eternal hell fire, and leads the sinner to call upon the name of Jesus for forgiveness, then the sinner's sins are remitted. They go under the blood and the sinner is free of condemnation and is born again.

### **How Does The Believer Have Power To Retain Sin?**

Many believers play church, enjoy Christian friends, live their moral lives, but never go soul-winning. They do not feel personal responsibility for the sinner. They never witness to, weep over, or persuade the sinner to call upon the name of the Lord for salvation. The lost sinner dies with his sins still unconfessed. HIS sins are retained for eternity as he suffers the pains of a condemned soul, separated from his Creator, in hell forever.

The same situation is recorded in Isaiah 5:12,14. God told the Jews, "You have a well-planned worship service. Outwardly, it looks great. Inwardly, you are all dried up. The services are cold. your people are taken captive by habit and formalism. Therefore, or because of this dried-up, formal, non-spiritual condition, HELL HAS enlarged itself and their glory (God's people), their multitude (God's people) shall descend into it."

Paul concluded that if he went, wept over the lost, and persuaded them to be saved, then their sins were remitted and he had

delivered his hands of their blood.

**Paul Persuaded Sinners.**

*"Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," - II Corinthians 5:11.*

Paul Did Everything In His Power To Persuade Sinners.

He concluded a discourse on his personal involvement to get sinners saved by saying, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some," I Corinthians 9:22.

**Paul Worked Night And Day To Persuade Sinners.**

He told the Ephesian pastor that he worked night and day, with tears, warning the SINNERS. Acts 20:31.

**Paul Was Willing To Suffer To Persuade Sinners.**

He refers to suffering trouble, "even as an evil doer, even unto bonds (or jail)," II Timothy 2:9. In verse 10 he explains why he willingly endured all the pain and difficulties. Please listen to this great man explain why he gave up everything to seek after sinners. He said,

*"I endure all things for the elect's sake, THAT THEY MAY ALSO OBTAIN THE SALVATION which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. "*

Why did you take those five beatings of 39 lashes, Paul? "So the elect could hear the Gospel and have their sins remitted."

Why did you suffer being beaten with rods three times, Paul? "So people could hear the Gospel and have their sins remitted."

Why did you live in constant dangers?

Why did you get so physically worn out and tired? Why did you fast so often?

Why did you go hungry?

Why did you allow yourself to become cold and be without proper clothing?

Why did you constantly live under the pressures, cares and problems of all the churches? Please, Paul, tell us why you sacrificed your life and finally died in prison at Rome? Hear once again his humble explanation, "I did it so people could hear about Jesus and have their sins remitted."

*"I TAKE YOU TO RECORD THIS DA Y. .. I AM PURE FROM THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN. FOR I HA VE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE UNTO YOU ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD," - Acts 20:26,27.*

Paul got his inner-gut philosophy from Jesus.

#### **IV. PAUL'S PRACTICE**

##### **What Paul Practiced Manifested His True Convictions.**

It is not enough to have the right religious convictions; nor is it enough to embrace the right doctrines, or have the right philosophy. Bible Christianity is not a philosophy. It is a WAY OF LIFE! IT IS ACTION! IT IS SERVICE! IT IS MINISTERING! The proper names of the first five books of the New Testament are not Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and then the book of philosophy; the fifth book is named, the Book of Acts.

Jesus called the Pharisees a bunch of hypocrites because they "SAY and DO NOT." John admonished his followers to love not in word and thought, but to love in DEED and in TRUTH. James said, "Be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only."

Jesus taught the apostles that if a man was going to be chief or great among the brethren, then, "let him be your servant," Matthew 20:27. If a man is going to become chief or a leader among the brethren, then let him work harder and serve more. That is the heart of the Bible. Paul manifested his true theology by the life he

lived; by the' doctrines he practiced.

We teach a LITTLE by what we say.

We teach MORE by what we do.

We teach MOST by what we are.

What Paul was and what Paul believed thunders out through what Paul did in his daily life .

### **What Paul Practiced In His Daily Soul-Winning.**

To examine Paul's practices in his personal, daily soul-winning, let us first establish that Paul witnessed and won souls by following his daily routine as recorded in Acts 16:13 through Acts 17:5.

Lydia, a wealthy business woman, heard Paul's testimony and was saved down by the riverside. She was baptized along with the members of her household staff and family which also indicates that they, too, were won to the Lord. Verses 16 and 18 reveal the account of the cleansing and saving of "a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination." Because of this act of mercy, Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into jail. While in jail, with their backs bleeding and their feet in stocks, they witnessed. The Bible says, "... the prisoners heard them." There is much more involved than just hearing the voices of these preachers. They experienced what Jesus said in John 5:24, "... He that heareth my Word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life ..." This caused Paul and Silas to pray and sing praises to God. Because God had other souls for them to win, He caused a great earthquake, which brought the jailor running to see about his prisoners. When he saw what had happened, he was struck down with conviction and was saved. The jailor took the preachers home with him and the entire family was saved and baptized (Acts 16:32-34). Paul and Silas left Ephesus the next day and started witnessing in the synagogue at Thessalonica and had quite a number saved there.



Now, retrace Paul's steps in his daily witnessing. Look at who and where the following people were saved.

1. Lydia - down by the river.
2. Lydia's household - at Lydia's house.
3. The spiritualist - in the street.
4. The prisoners - in their cells.
5. The jailor - outside the jail.
6. The jailor's family - in his home.
7. Many Jews - in the synagogue.

### **Paul Was Highly Educated.**

He was raised by the strictest educational and religious standard. He was a Pharisee, of the tribe of Benjamin, and was trained by the greatest tutors of his day. Paul told the Corinthian's church that he spoke in more languages, "than ye aLL" I Corinthians 14:18. He was highly trained and schooled both in the secular and religious realms.

### **Paul Was Highly Sensitive To The Sinner's Capability.**

Paul understood that according to John 3:3 a sinner could not see or understand spiritual things.

Paul knew that the sinner could not receive spiritual things. Paul declared, "that the natural man (lost man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit, ... neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Corinthians 2:14. Based upon this knowledge, the Apostle Paul declared that when he went out soul-winning, "he determined not to know anything, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." I Corinthians 2:1. Paul followed the pattern of Jesus of first stating the spiritual principle and then using some secular fact that the sinner could understand to illustrate the spiritual truth. This would enable the Holy Spirit to illuminate the sinner's mind so he could understand the spiritual principle and be saved.

Paul determined to limit himself to a positive stating of the Gospel

(Jesus Christ and Him crucified) when he witnessed to the lost. Because the sinner had no spiritual discernment, Paul avoided and did not answer the sinner's questions. He did not rely on rebuttals or depend upon his educational or psychological knowledge. He witnessed with fear and trembling, depending upon the Holy Spirit to empower his testimony. Thus, a genuine conversion with the sinner's faith in the power of God resulted. Paul clearly states the principle which directed his personal soul-winning in I Corinthians 2:1-5.

### **Paul Was Not A Professional Preacher.**

Today, one of the things which hinders soul-winning in the local churches is the tendency of professionalism in the ministry. Many pastors resemble a business man or a highly-trained administrator rather than following the Apostle Paul's pattern.

### **Paul Did Not Pastor From The Church Office.**

The author has spent 25 of his 33 years of full-time Christian work as a pastor. He is well aware of the complexity of managing and leading a local church in this modern day. He is aware that many pastors would almost be offended at the thought of accepting the philosophy and life-style of the Apostle Paul. But brethren, be reminded that the man who has the largest Sunday School in America today, and who is head of one of America's leading Christian colleges, still has time to WIN SOULS in his daily schedule.

I hear someone object by saying, "I'm no Paul." No, brother, you are not. And I am no Paul, either. But remember this one fact: Paul is the pattern that God gave us to imitate. He is the one that we are to press our lives down over and conform to his example. How are we measuring up?

### **What Paul Practiced In Soul-Winning Training.**

Paul was one of the key leaders of a group of men who literally turned their world upside down for Christ. How did they do it? What did they do then, which we are NOT doing now? They were

able to go into a total non-Christian community which was hostile as well as religious, and in a few short months evangelized it. They would leave a good, solid, soul-winning church of several thousand members behind. They did not do it just once or twice. They did it, according to Paul, until every creature under heaven heard the Word of the Gospel. (Colossians 1:23) What was the key, or keys, to their ministry of multiplication? One of the principles I would like for you to consider is Paul's method of involving the masses in soul-winning and discipling.

### **Jesus' Literal Instruction To The Church.**

Let us first examine what Jesus told the church to do. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus instructed the church to go and literally DISCIPLE ALL NATIONS. By disciple, He meant much more than merely winning them to Christ. To disciple a person, the sinner must first be won to Christ. That is the first thing, but it is not the end.

Note what Jesus actually said in verse 20, "Teaching them to observe all things."

He did not say what many preachers are saying today. Many are quoting Matthew 28:19,20 to say, "Win souls, baptize them and then teach them; meaning indoctrinate them." That is wrong.

Jesus said, "Disciple them," verse 19. Disciple them well enough that they can, "observe or do all things whatsoever I have commanded you," verse 20. Notice the goal or the object that the church is to obtain or strive to accomplish: disciple them to the point where they can observe or do the things which Jesus commanded.

### **Jesus' Literal Instruction To Preachers.**

Let us examine Ephesians 4:11 and what He called full-time workers to do. Five full-time ministerial gifts are listed. Paul ordered them as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Today, we still have evangelists, pastors and teachers (full-time, back-up ministers).

In verse 12, we find the reason God called men into full-time ministry, "For the perfecting of the saints."

By saints, who does Paul mean? Saints are the born-again ones - the believers, the members of the local church, the brotherhood or laymen.

What does he mean by perfecting the saints? He means making them perfect or thoroughly trained or equipped. Bring them to a high level of performance. The believers are to be developed to do what they were saved to do and accomplish it with the greatest efficiency.

*" .. for the perfecting of the saints,  
for the work of the ministry ... "*

Note what the preachers are to perfect the saints to do: the work of the ministry. What is the work of the ministry or church? Jesus told the church to develop the people they won so they could also observe and do whatsoever He commanded them. (1) He commanded them to win souls. (2) He commanded them to disciple those they won to the degree that they could, in turn, train their own converts to win souls and disciple them.

Please visualize that the church is to develop the converts they win, to the state of training where each one can also win souls and disciple them.

God called preachers to perfect or train the membership so they will be highly skilled in the work of the ministry, namely, soul-winning and discipling.

How can this be done? How can the church train their new converts to that point? How can the evangelists, pastors, and teachers perfect their people in soul-winning and discipling?

### **Paul's 20/20 Vision.**

The method of soul-winning training which Paul used to train the soul-winners armies that evangelized their generation is found in Acts 20:20.

### **PAUL WAS FULLY COMMITTED TO HIS TRAINING PROGRAM.**

He said, "How I kept nothing which was profitable to you." He did not place the outreach program of the church on the same level as all the lesser activities of the church. It was primary.

### **PAUL SHOWED THEM AND TAUGHT THEM PUBLICLY.**

This simply means that Paul both told and demonstrated how to win a soul. He would get a member to play the role of a sinner. He would explain how to make the approach to the sinner, then demonstrate what he told them. He explained how to make the sinner aware of the fact that he was a sinner, then demonstrate to members in a public service by going through that point with the roleplayer. He would demonstrate, as he taught them why and how in public services: " ... have showed and taught publicly."

### **FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.**

Notice the expression, "from house to house." He literally showed them and taught them from house to house, giving them on-the-job training. He not only taught them the principle of soul-winning and discipling in the regular church services, but demonstrated what he taught publicly. To reinforce his teaching and vividly reveal the soul-winning principles, Paul walked through the whole process to show them so they might clearly see what he was teaching. Then in order to perfect them as highly- skilled soul-winners, he would take them out and give them first- hand experience. The soul-winning visits became training sessions which were designed to perfect the workers.

Paul worked with a man until the man was trained well enough to become a soul-winner trainer. Paul would promote the trainee to trainer status and place a trainee under him. Paul would then begin

the process all over again.

### **Visualize The Rapid Growth.**

Paul never traveled by himself. The one exception was in Acts 17 when he was on Mars Hill. Most people think the evangelistic teams consisted of Paul and Barnabas, or Paul and Silas along with Dr. Luke. But a closer study reveals that the number in his party often was nearer to 10 or 12. Note the names of those accompanying Paul, Silas, and Dr. Luke in Acts 20:4:

*"And there accompanied him into Asia So pater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tgchicus and Trophimus."*

Visualize these 10 highly-trained workers going into a city. After they won people they immediately disciplined them. They trained by:

- a. Showing and teaching publicly.
- b. Showing and teaching them through on-the-job training from house to house with the goal of perfecting them.

Within a week or 10 days, each of these 10 men may have an average of 10 trainees each. Within two or three months, some of their trainees would develop to the level of trainers. There would be 100 teams in training. Three months later there would be 200 teams training. Three months after that there would be 400 teams in training. This, along with the street preaching, the souls won in public services, plus individual soul-winning done by these new converts in their daily lives accounted for the success of the early churches. The success in these churches was first described as additions. It later developed into multiplication.

Let us demonstrate the type of workers who went into the city to begin the church and train new converts: In order to illustrate the quality of workers who traveled with Paul, may we suggest that names of modern-day workers be substituted. Can you then imagine what the following 10 men might do in 12 months if they

went into one of America's largest cities and followed Paul's training method.

Paul- Paul  
Silas - Silas  
Luke - Dr. Luke  
Sopater - D. L. Moody  
Aristarchus - John R. Rice  
Secundus - J. Frank Norris  
Gaius - L. R. Scarborough  
Timotheus - R. A. Torrey  
Tychicus - Charles G. Finney  
Trophimus - R. G. Lee

Jesus trained 12 men who were charged with the task of perfecting the saints to do the work of the ministry. Following this method of disciplining them well enough to do the work of the church - soul-winning and discipling - the Jerusalem Church had the following growth:

3,000 additions on the day of Pentecost - Acts 2:41  
Daily additions for five years - Acts 2:47  
5,000 men added - Acts 4:4  
Multitudes (plural) both men and women added - Acts 5:14

THEN LOOK WHAT HAPPENED:

They multiplied - Acts 6:1  
They multiplied greatly - Acts 6:7  
The enemies accused, "You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine" - Acts 5:28  
They multiplied in Judea, Samaria and Galilee - Acts 9:31  
So on it went until they had reached their generation and the Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians,

*"and be not moved away from hope of the gospel, which ye HA VE HEARD, and which was PREACHED TO EVERY CREATURE WHICH IS UNDER HEA VEN."* - Colossians 1:23.

The soul-winning training program which Jesus implemented and placed in the local church and which Paul practiced, WORKED! It worked so well that the early disciples had preached the Gospel to every creature in their generation. This was done without the aid of radio, television, the bus ministry, the printed page, or any of the other aids which the modern church may have today. It worked then, and the soul-winning training program which Paul PRACTICED will WORK TODAY!

### **What Paul Practiced Is The Mightiest The Mighty Pen Of Paul.**

Paul's pen was mighty. He wrote 14 of the 27 New Testament books. Paul's pen was great! God used him to clarify and establish many of the precious doctrines which serve as the foundation of theology and successful Christian living. Paul's pen was mighty, but, Praise God, his life was mightier!

### **The Mighty Pattern of Paul**

Paul was saved to serve as a pattern. He is your pattern! He is my pattern! I am going to be judged by Paul. My flesh will be measured up against his flesh someday.

My, what a sobering thought! What a dreadful thought! That thought should drive us to our knees. That thought should drive us out to the highways and hedges. That thought should drive us to forsake the trivial matters of the ministry. That thought should drive us to lose our lives in the services of God.

### **The Mighty Practice Of Paul**

Paul's successful practice allowed him to proclaim, "I am pure from the blood of all men."

Why, Paul?

I have been on the wall warning people and preaching the Gospel. I have been about my Master's business. I have been showing and telling publicly. I have been showing and telling from house to



house. I have kept back nothing that was profitable.  
Paul's pen was mighty, but Paul's life spoke mightier. Paul was a  
mighty writer, but PAUL'S PRACTICE WAS MIGHTIER.

*'7 have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept  
the faith: HENCEFORTH (OR BECAUSE OF THAT) THERE IS  
LAID UP FOR ME A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ... "*

Then, almost as a trailing thought ... to those to whom were left  
behind ... to those whom Paul was saved to become their example  
or pattern, he concluded,

*"And NOT TO ME ONLY but unto ALL THEM also that LOVE  
HIS APPEARING ... " - II Timothy 4:7-8.*

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## Chapter Six A COMMON MAN'S CONCLUSION

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If everything Jesus did and everything He commanded the church to do, if His suffering and death was the main emphasis of His life - all for the sole purpose of getting the Gospel to the lost and save people from hell - then why isn't there more personal soul-winning being done today?

From the apostolic days until the present time, there have been periods of revival and soul-winning followed by periods of apostasy. The Book of Judges graphically illustrates what has happened on this earth during the past 1,900 years. Under Joshua, there was a tremendous surge of revival and spiritual awakening. When the old leaders died off, the new generations of leaders became complacent, and apostasy followed. The next generation could not bear the dominating sin and oppression upon their lives, so they repented and cried out to God. God heard their prayers, raised up a new judge, and deliverance followed. This cycle of revival, which was followed by complacency that developed into formal religion and apostasy, occurred over and over again.

The prophets, priests and spiritual shepherds were primarily to blame for this apostasy or falling away. A careful study of the different periods of apostasy in the Old Testament reveals God's sharp criticism of the spiritual shepherd or preachers. When there was revival and victories, one will find a prophet or judge obeying the Word of God and in the forefront of things.

### **Preachers Are To Blame Today**

Throughout the Bible, people are referred to as sheep. Sheep are animals, which by nature, are completely defenseless and dependent upon the watchful, protective care of the shepherd. The well-being and fruitfulness of sheep depends upon the attention received from the shepherd. This perfectly illustrates why

there is no more soul-winning done than there is in the churches today.

### **Pastors Are Not Doing It.**

The average pastor is not stressing personal, individual responsibility of the Child of God toward witnessing and winning souls because they are not doing it themselves. When pastors and staff do not win souls, it is rare that a layworker will be a soul-winner.

### **It Is One Of Many Announcements.**

If a church has a regularly scheduled time for the members to go soul-winning, the event receives only nominal attention from the pulpit. It is announced with the many other announcements. Somewhere among the baby showers, ball games, girls' meetings, etc., one will hear a routine announcement concerning visitation. Because announcements are a part of the normal program of the church service, members pay little attention to them.

### **There Are Some Extreme Opposites**

The above nominal treatment of the church's primary work is true of the average church today. However the exact opposites may be found in some pulpits:

Soul-winning has top billing.

Soul-winning comes first, second and third. Soul-winning is everything.

Because people have the same nature as sheep, they must be led, not driven. These pastors are winning souls but in the main they are attempting to force their members to win souls through strong, forceful preaching. Their motives and desires toward their members' growth are right. They want their people to have the joy of winning souls, but most are failing to accomplish their goals because they pressure their people all the time. While some layworkers do turn out to be good soul-winners under this type of authoritarian rule, the average layworker will burn-out or drop-

out, taking an edge of joy off their victories. Most of these dear pastors have not seen the Biblical principle of giving the members compassionate leadership in soul-winning.

As a father, or a gentle shepherd, the pastor is to follow Paul's example of training soul-winners. He is to patiently demonstrate how to win a soul by going through the process of winning a soul step-by in a public service, explaining as he goes as to what, why, and how to win people to Christ. After this public demonstration, he works individually with members, perfecting them in the art of soul-winning by giving them on-the-job training from house to house. Acts 20:20. Instead of depending upon forceful preaching the pastor leads in the joy of accomplishment and the thrill of seeing precious people saved, thus motivating laymen toward obedient service. The pastor trains his people to the level where they become efficient enough in soul-winning to not only win people to Christ, personally, but to train others to win souls.

This is the major cause for the lack of soul-winning in churches today. They have not seen the simple method of perfecting the saints in the work of personal soul-winning.

A fuller, amplified explanation is given under the following headings.

- I. PREACHERS GET CONSTANT ATTACKS
- II. PREACHERS GET SIDETRACKED
- III. PREACHERS GET STALEMATED
- IV. PREACHERS JUSTIFY THEM FAILURES
- V. PREACHERS GET THEIR GREATEST EXAMPLE IN PAUL
- VI. PREACHERS GET TO QUESTION PAUL

### **I. PREACHERS GET CONSTANT ATTACKS**

The main business of the church is to win souls. The main business of the devil is to hinder the church from winning souls. He knows that if he can hinder or sidetrack the pastor from his main purpose

then he can greatly hinder or stop the soul-winning of the church.

In Ephesians 6:11, Paul admonishes the Christian soldier to put on the whole armour of God in order to withstand the wiles of the devil. The word wiles means methods of tricky, subtle devices. The devil has several methods of attack which is constantly used on God's people.

### **Unknown Attackers**

The devil's basic method to war against the preacher is through the preacher's mind. He is a master in this nerve warfare. Many times, the individual does not realize he is under attack. He blames himself for his thoughts and judges himself to be a weak or carnal Christian.

### **The Devil Fights From Obscurity.**

In Ephesians 6:16, Paul instructs the Christian soldier to, "Above all take the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." This leaves the impression that the wicked referred to here could be a wicked environment or a person. A closer study reveals that the wicked one doing the shooting is the devil. He is shooting fiery darts or arrows into the person's mind. Most people do not realize this fact and blame themselves for their thoughts of doubt, lust or rebellion. The devil is firing away at them and they are not aware they are under attack. From his obscure position the devil must laugh for glee as he sees a person lamenting or blaming himself for his weakness or lustful thoughts when all the time the devil is the attacker.

### **The Devil's Basic Strategy - To Distract.**

The American Indian soon learned that white man cannot fight Indian and fire at the same time. So the Indian would shoot flaming arrows into the fort or wagon train. The fires which these arrows started demanded immediate attention. They distracted, giving the attackers tremendous advantage. If the devil can get one's mind distracted toward other things then it will be taken off soul-winning. Listen to the command of Paul: "take the shield of

faith and quench all the fiery darts." Believe God's Word - not one's own thoughts. Take the shield (all the promises) of God's Word and stop or knock down all the fiery thoughts which war against you and God's work. By faith, obey the Bible and DO WHAT THE BIBLE teaches instead of listening to all the thoughts (fiery darts of the attacker) which the devil sends into one's mind to distract from doing what the Bible commands.

### **Unknown Source of Fear**

The greatest cause preventing most pastors from soul-winning is fear. The fear of the unknown, of what could happen, of questions which may develop have stopped many from going. Most, when confronted by this fear, will associate it to themselves and reason that they are sub-par, or weak. They reason that soul-winning is for the gifted or more out-going person and not for them. Many categorize and place themselves into a higher calling than being just a "soul-winner" and that is their rational thought. But the real reason which stops them is :**FEAR**.

### **Where Does This Fear Originate?**

Most people never ask themselves where this fear originates because they accept it as a personality trait. They think:

"I'm just scared."

"It's me."

"I just can't handle it."

"I'm just not cut out to be a soul-winner."

"Other people do not have this problem."

This is their reasoning, but they are wrong. They can handle it. They are cut out, or designed, to win souls. Jesus said, "I have chosen you to go and bring forth fruit." John 15:16. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he that winneth souls is wise."

Proverbs 11:30. This overwhelming fear can be controlled. Everyone has a problem with fear until they understand its source and learn how to control it.

### **The Source of Fear.**

In I Peter 5:8, Peter reveals the source of fear when he admonishes the saints to be sober minded and watchful because "your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." Note the expression, "roaring lion." The roar of the lion is for only one purpose, to send terror through its victim. A healthy lion does not roar as he stalks its victim. It is only an old lion which has lost much of its mobility and strength which roars. He will lie quietly in a concealed area until an unsuspecting victim comes along. This victim is terrified and rendered completely immobile by the blood-curdling roar which suddenly burst from nowhere. This is the devil's surest wile or method of stopping people from witnessing. The fear originates and is stimulated by the devil. The roar alone would not hurt the animal. The old lion could not catch him. He has lost his strength so he must rely upon injecting fear and confusion. A monkey is literally paralyzed by fear. He just stands there trembling, unable to move. A deer is so terrified that he loses all sense of direction and may run right into a tree, knocking himself out. The overwhelming fear a person experiences is from the outside and can be controlled. One of the first elements in controlling this fear is recognizing its source. The devil, like an old lion, roars out at its victim in order to create fear and confusion so people will not go soul-winning.

### **Unseen Strongholds**

In considering the wiles or methods of the devil's attacks to distract the pastor and defeat him in soul-winning, we must consider the subtle method of attack in II Corinthians 10:4-5.

### **Weapons Are Not Carnal.**

Paul reminds the believers that although they walk in the flesh as human beings, they are not to war after the flesh. The believer's weapons of warfare are not carnal or fleshly (human) but mighty

through God (spiritual) to the pulling down of strong holds. In the day in which this letter was written to the Corinthian Church, people lived in walled cities. Many of these cities had protecting walls which completely encircled the city and were several hundred feet high. Some of these walls were wide enough that our modern freeways could have encircled the city. On top of these high walls, a secondary line of defense called strongholds was built. These strongholds towered several hundred feet above the walls. The walls alone would be an almost insurmountable task to climb, but with soldiers on top of these huge walls to beat back the attackers, their positions reinforced with additional strongholds, it is no wonder that many thought cities like Babylon would never be overthrown or captured.

Paul said that the spiritual weapon of the believer was mighty through God to the pulling down of these indestructible strongholds.

WHERE ARE THESE STRONGHOLDS? When a person reads IT Corinthians 10:4 he wonders, "Where are these strongholds?" "What are these strongholds?" Paul clearly reveals where and what these impossible strongholds are as he continues in Verse 5.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Casting down, what? Imaginations! You mean these strongholds, these impossible, intimidating obstacles are in one's mind? Paul answers, "imagination and every high thing that exalteth except against the knowledge of God." He said, "bring every THOUGHT to the obedience of Christ." These boogers, these scarey, impossible situations are built in one's mind by the devil. This is the method he used in the Old Testament to defeat the ministry of Moses. He built giants in the minds of the people of Israel (and their leaders) which were so real that they rebelled against God and Moses. The devil attacks the pastors by building up the problems while at the same time tearing down the self-respect - destroying the self-image



- increasing the inferiority complex until it is almost useless to even try. He reasons:

"The board wouldn't go for it."

"What would my preacher brethren think?" "That's pretty good for a church our size." "He isn't interested."

"It wouldn't do any good to witness to him." "I'm too uneducated to talk to him."

"Our little church ... "

"You really can't expect people to ... "

The devil builds up strongholds and intimidates the preachers in a painless way and thus neutralizes his ministry without him realizing that he is under attack. The unseen strongholds are not there. Many a pastor has a small, ineffective ministry and is held prisoner by the unseen stronghold, which is only seen in his mind. Oh, he has talked to his preacher buddy and his buddy has seen them, too. The sad fact about these strongholds, these impossible and hopeless obstacles is that the whole denomination sees them. We even learned about them in Bible college.

Oh, dear brother, pull down those strongholds by believing the faith-building Word of God which still tells us about a miracle-working God who has not lost His power. I John 4:4. "Ye are of God, little children and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

## **II. PREACHERS GET SIDE TRACKED**

It is easy to visualize preachers being distracted from soul-winning when one considers the method of attack which is made upon them by the devil. Paul said, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood."

He distracts by shooting flaming arrows into their mind. He roars

to intimidate and inject fear.

He builds up towers or strongholds in their mind to destroy their self image and enlarge their inferiority complex.

### **How About John?**

Jesus spent 3 ½ years establishing and training his disciples. The time came when he had to go back to heaven. Before ascending back to the Father he must hand pick and give the first pastoral charge to the first undershepherd or pastor. We have the account of Jesus choosing the first pastor, Peter in John 21:15-17. Before giving the charge he ask Peter, "Peter, loveth thou me?" Upon his affirmative answer Jesus' first words to the first pastor were, "Feed my lambs" or new converts. Again, he asked Peter if he loved him. Again, Peter affirms his love. This is followed by a second charge, "Feed my sheep". The word for sheep denotes one who is injured, undernourished or with some difficulty.

Peter was troubled when Jesus ask him the third time if he loved Him. For the third time, Peter answers and for the third time Jesus gives a command, "Feed my sheep" (mature, healthy sheep).

It was right here, when Jesus was laying the heavy responsibility upon Peter of feeding and caring for the flock of God, that the devil let loose his first arrow of distraction. He shot it into Peter's mind and it came right out of Peter's mouth. Jesus finished his pastoral commission to Peter by saying, "Follow me," and Peter was distracted by seeing another preacher, John. Peter blurted out, "Lord, and what shall this man do?"

### **This Is Primary.**

In this first pastoral commission we see several important truths which pertain to preachers.

**The primary work of the pastor.** He is to feed the flock.

**The primary method of feeding.** One does not feed a baby in the

same way and with the same food as he does a sick member of the family or the working man. One takes the milk to the baby.

**The primary motive for preaching.** It is love for the Saviour. It is not love for the Word, for the brethren, for the denomination. But it is love for the Saviour which will keep a man in the ministry.

The primary way the devil distracts the preacher. Distractions come primarily through the actions of another preacher, "What shall this man do?"

### **How About Today's John?**

As today's preachers settle in on their ministry, they are constantly distracted by, "Lord, what shall this man do?" Many times it is, "Lord, look what that man is doing." This most modern, up-to-date distraction is, "what camp are you in?" One almost has to get into one camp or the other. The devil has distracted some pastors and has gotten them completely away from their main work of soul-winning by getting their eyes upon another preacher. Their church is drying up as they feel called to tell the world about, "What this other preacher did." The devil is very subtle as he causes them to worry and warn others of what this man's ministry will lead to in the future.

### **What The Brethren Think.**

There are many pastors who are governed more by what other preachers will accept and think than by what the Bible teaches. The Holy Spirit is quenched and grieved through this choice. Jesus said, "You cannot serve two masters." Many times Jesus is cast aside when the choice lies between the Will of God and what the denomination or preacher brethren will accept. One can hear the lion's roar which results in the fear of the brethren.

### **Climbing the Ladder.**

Consider one of the devil's favorite distractions used to hinder the pastor's soul-winning. A preacher knows what one of the "big preachers" believes and wants to hear. Armed with this knowledge,

he will write or say something against one of the "big preacher's" opponents. In doing this in the name of truth, he believes this will bring him into greater favor with the "big preacher". When a larger church in the fellowship becomes vacant and it needs a pastor, then the "big preacher" is sure to remember his friend. Thus, he hopes to climb the denominational ladder.

### **You Have Not Because You Ask Not.**

James lists seven reasons why prayer is not answered in James 4:1-12. Preachers often preach on this subject. One of the reasons prayer is not answered is that, "Ye have not because you ask not." Another reason is, "you ask amiss," or you ask for selfish reasons. But one of the major causes which hinders God from answering prayer is, "speaking evil of one another." This one practice of speaking wrongfully about another preacher brother greatly hinders the Spirit's ability to fully bless that preacher's ministry. This one area is where many good men greatly weaken their own ministry. They speak evil of another brother.

### **Jesus Holds His Preachers In His Hands**

Revelation 2 and 3 dramatically portrays Jesus walking among his churches. Revelation 1:20 says he holds His preachers (angels-messengers) in His hands. King David (one of God's anointed) wrote, "touch not my anointed." David, a man after God's own heart, wept after he had cut off the hem of Saul's (another of God's anointed) garment. Preachers are to keep their hands off of another preacher brother. When Peter asked, "Lord, what shall this man do?" Jesus emphatically told Peter that it was none of his business. Jesus said, "What if I will that he live forever?" (That is none of your business.) You do what I told you to do. "Follow thou, me!" He did not say, "Follow the denomination or what the brethren will accept. He said, "Follow thou me."

### **I'm The Father.**

My dad was an old-fashioned father who was the head of his house and believed in loving discipline. God blessed he and my mother with nine boys and two girls. I used to enjoy making people blink

when I told them about my eight brothers. They would say in astonishment, "nine boys in one family ... Do you have any sisters?" I would reply, "there are nine boys and each of them have two sisters." May I add that all of the children turned out to be fine Christians with five of us boys full-time preachers.

On one occasions, the older boys were sailing rocks across a vacant field toward a vacant house. My dad heard what they were doing and voiced his disappointment toward the older boys, warning that if it happened again he would use his old-fashioned razor strap at the proper place. The next day, my little brother, Jack, was out in the yard with his sling shot. He was arching his shot across the vacant field at the house. Again, they were falling far short of the house. As an older brother, I went out to correct my little brother. He didn't like the way I was ordering him around and resisted my authority. WE GOT INTO A FIGHT. My dad came out and gave us both a good whipping. One of the things which we brothers were totally forbidden to do was fight one another. Through my sobs I reminded my dad that he told my brothers the day before about throwing rocks at the house. I sobbed out, "And dad, I was straightening Jack out."

I will never forget what my dad said. It has meant more to me in the ministry than any thing else he ever told me. He said, "Yes, Jim, I know. I was watching through the window. I know that you did not throw any rocks at the house. I know that you were attempting to correct Jack, but son, remember this one thing. I AM HIS FATHER. It is my job to straighten him out. I didn't whip you for throwing rocks. I whipped you for fighting with your brother."

God looks down from heaven and watches his preacher boys. He is very capable of straightening them out. Too many times, when one preacher begins to straighten his brother out they get into a fight. Before the fight is finished much harm has been done to the cause of Christ. They both get a whipping for fighting and everyone ends up the loser.

### **A Question to D. L. Moody.**

Many years ago, D. L. Moody was asked what he thought about a certain preacher. Mr. Moody replied, "Oh, he is a great preacher. He has done many wonderful things for the cause of Christ."

A startled bystander interrupted Mr. Moody's fine recommendation of a fellow pastor by exclaiming, "Mr. Moody, Mr. Moody, don't you know that pastor is one of your chief critics, that he has written slanderous things about you and your evangelism?"

Mr. Moody calmly replied, "Yes, I am aware of what he has said about me. I thought the question was what I thought about him; not what he thinks about me."

### **A Mark Of Maturity.**

Jesus taught his preacher boys about the mark of spiritual maturity. He said, "blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." - Matthew 5:9. The word translated children in this verse is the word used for mature, full-grown sons. According to Jesus, the mark of spiritual maturity and of being strong in the faith is not fighting and pointing out the faults in the lives of other preachers. Someone in the Corinthian Church forced brethren to take sides between Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. Paul said they were carnal and acting like a bunch of babies. Those who are considered big preachers should realize that they may be great men and have had a great ministry for the Lord. But there is no big preacher bigger than the Bible. The big preacher should obey the plain teaching of the Bible, too. The fighting and bickering among God's preachers should stop. If as much time was spent in praying for a brother as there is in talking about or criticizing a brother there would be very few preachers who would need correction. If we refused to speak evil of our brother, prayed earnestly that God would open his eyes to his fault, TRUST THE LORD TO straighten him out, then occupy ourselves with our own ministry, there would be amazing results.

Prayer would be answered for some and they would straighten out.

Others may not need to straighten out; "it is only in the eye of the beholder." God could simply lift the rebel up into heaven since he already holds His preachers in His hand.

There is probably nothing which hinders the cause of Christ any more than the distraction and problems caused by, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" May we hear the answer of Jesus and apply it to our own ministry. Jesus saith unto him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." - John 21:22.

## **PREACHERS BECOME STALEMATED**

When preachers get sidetracked from their main purpose of soul-winning it leads to a stalemated ministry.

### **The Fact Of Stalematation**

Praise the Lord for some churches which are experiencing revival and spiritual growth, but these churches are in the minority. The average church is making little progress in obeying the command for world evangelization. In fact, many are having real difficulty holding their own.

### **Travel And You Can See It**

During the past seven years of constant traveling as an evangelist I have observed that most churches and pastors are stalemated. They are averaging about the same, over all, as they did in previous years. Abortion, crime, homosexuality and pornography testify to the powerless conditions which prevail as a result of a stalemated ministry.

### **We Can Have National Revival**

Even though there is very little evidence of any real, nation-changing revival going on in this country right now the author believes we can have another spiritual awakening which would bring America, the backslidden nation, back to God.

### **The Cause For This Stalemated Ministry**

When one is distracted from the purpose of his ministry and begins to worry about what John is doing, it quenches the Holy Spirit's

working in his life.

When one tries to please some moderator, college president or president of his group instead of pleasing God then it grieves the Holy Spirit.

When one speaks evil of some brother it grieves the Holy Spirit.

When one is intimidated by the strongholds or by the lion's roar and does not lead his people in soul-winning it grieves God. There will be further discussion on the lack of soul-winning later in this writing but the author wishes to point out the two main reasons for a stalemated ministry.

### **The Grieving And Quenching Of The Holy Spirit Leads To A Stalemated Ministry.**

We are in a spiritual struggle. It takes the Holy Spirit's leading and power to have a growing church and produce a permanent work for God. When men do things which grieves the Holy Spirit and He no longer empowers and uses that man then that man will produce but a token of what he could have done with the blessings of God upon his life. There are many well-trained, good, honest, Biblical preachers who must rely upon man's promotions for the majority of their results because they are going the human-reasoning, denominational route instead of being God's man.

### **The Failure To Follow God's Designed Plan.**

God designed and placed into operation a method which will produce results. The Bible clearly and plainly commands the pastor to win souls.

The plain command is to go.

The plain example of the life of Jesus is TO GO.

The plain example of the life of Paul is - TO GO.



The plain example of the early preachers and members said, to GO.

This is the plan which God promised to bless.

When one refuses and does not practice the method which will produce victory and success then he must settle for what is left – stalemate.

### **The Fruit Of Stalemate**

God created man to succeed. Jesus stated that he came that man could have life and have it more abundantly. John 10:10. God created man to have dominion over the earth. When man, who was created to succeed, suffers failure and becomes stalemated in his life it leads to frustration. This frustration which comes from a stalemated ministry manifests itself in several ways.

### **Failure Does Not Pay Well, So, We'll Go Into Business.**

If the church is not growing, the finances are generally limited. The pastor and his family can be content with a sacrificial lifestyle if the church is growing. They can be delightfully happy and hardly realize the difficulties if - oh, that BIG IF - they are making suitable progress. But, the pastor must have that feeling of succeeding. A pastor loves his family and longs for the best for his wife and children. If the church is not growing and the finances are limited it will not be long before the pastor will be doing something in addition to his work for the Lord. He will find satisfaction through another job or through providing a better living for his family. He will establish a life-style of finding satisfaction through another job which he should have received through the ministry. Later in life, he may pastor a larger church that fully supports him, but the pattern has been set. He will dab in this a little while, then he will go to something else for a little while. He may even become a tremendous success and head up a giant corporation. But barring some life-changing experience he will join the thousands of pastors who live out their lives in a mediocre service to God in a stalemated ministry. This divided

loyalty is a tremendous hindrance to soul-winning.

### **Failure Does Not Bring Joy, So We'll Become A Legalist.**

There must be some reason our church is not growing. Other churches are enjoying continuous growth.

There is a reason.

We are preaching the WHOLE COUNSEL of God while THEY ARE COMPROMISING. We take a stand against sin and insist on doctrinal purity.

If these pastors who spend so much time fighting sin and insisting on the right division of God's Word would make an honest investigation of some of the churches who are growing, they would find that church's standard of separation (from the world) higher. Often they would find a Scriptural teaching of God's Word. It is not their Bible stand which causes them to remain small. It is their attitude. If someone violates a standard, the axe of judgment falls. This legalistic air develops because they have no joy. They have strict standards with no toleration for mistakes. This develops because there must be some means to justify the lack of success in a stalemated, no-growing ministry. They justify their small number by reasoning, we are too Bible orientated for these folks in these last days of apostasy!

This legalistic attitude hinders soul-winning.

### **Failure Does Not Quiet Frustration, So We'll Torment The Brethren.**

Have you every noticed that the fellow who doesn't have any children is the one who is the expert on raising kids? The same is true in the ministry. The preacher who has never built a congregation is the one who is always, "keeping the brethren straight."

Continued failure brings tremendous frustration. If one wins part of the time he can live in hope. But when one continually loses he begins to live within a shell and has to cover up the disappointments and hurts. It is not long before he begins to strike back at his hurts and disappointments. He vents his frustration which come as a result of a stalemated ministry toward the preacher brethren. He receives his satisfaction from the attention he receives by always being vocal on some issue. Some institution or ministry is always recipient of his ire. Since he does not receive the satisfaction from winning souls and building a work, he will by becoming a champion of "the cause." He does not picture himself as a "trouble maker," but most of his time is spent minding another preacher's business.

This is a great hindrance to the cause of soul-winning.

**Failure Does Not Satisfy, So We'll Become A Scholar.**

Again, the reader is reminded that one of the basic needs of man is recognition. If man does not get this basic need met in one area he will receive it from somewhere else. God speaks of the joy which soul-winning brings:

Sow in tears - reap in joy  
Doubtless come again with rejoicing  
Joy shall be in heaven ...  
I have meat to eat ...

If a preacher does not obtain this joy or deep satisfaction in the way the Father ordained (ordained the Believer to go and bring forth fruit, John 15:16) then he will become a specialist in some field. He will be looked up to and admired as a champion in:

**The Field Of Prophecy.** He will literally spend hours, years in the study of the signs. He will become deep or a master in spiritualizing the Scriptures.

**The Doctrines of Grace.** If he doesn't specialize in the signs, he

can quote from the writing of the ancients. He can meet any man's argument and will be known as "a real Bible scholar."

**The Policies and Procedures of Our Beloved Denomination.** If the Scriptures are not mastered in some particular realm, he will become one of the "in" men in the denominational operation. Most never quite have the satisfaction they long for and will manifest a cool, defensive attitude toward soul-winning.

The author is not trying to imply that some men who go these routes are not good, Godly men and many build good works. But the comparison to the work they could have built by putting souls first, and the capability which each worker possessed will be revealed when all of us preachers and Christian workers stand at the Judgment Seat. Achieving personal gratification from some source other than the way God ordained hinders soul-winning.

**Failure Does Not Bring Numerical Growth So We'll Accept Our Fate Of Mediocrity.**

Jesus came that man can have life and have it more abundantly. God created man to have dominion over all of his vast creation. God's grace is sufficient. He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly more than we think or ask. God did not create man to fail or live a life of defeatism. But when man does not follow the principles which will bring about success he will ultimately fail. After a period of failing, man loses his drive and begins to just go through the motion. He reaches a point where he does not believe he can win. He analyzes himself concluding that he is just an average preacher with little hope of success. He develops a failing attitude, succumbs to the pain of living out his life in a mediocre ministry. This mediocre ministry has no spiritual drawing power or appeal to the lost. This average, tasteless religion becomes a real hindrance to the cause of soul-winning.

**Failure Does Not Satisfy The Ego, So We'll Have A Little Love Affair.** When a pastor loses hope and vision in the ministry because he is not succeeding, he falls into a dangerous condition.

His inner self or ego must be fed. He must possess some sense of fulfillment. He is not a vacuum. Without a sense of fulfillment or accomplishment he becomes bored with life. He is likely to spice up his life a little bit by accepting the attention from one of his women parishers. He will first have a little flirtation. He doesn't mean to let it get out of hand. But forbidden fruit is pleasant. In someone's eyes he becomes a champion and that feels so good. He may not get out of line but one time. The time he is caught. He is probably a good man. He loves the Lord and his family. The guilt is shattering. He can't even remember how it all got started. The fruit of a stalemated ministry manifests itself in many ways. This is one of the most tragic. A modern-day David and Bathsheba has the same devastating and wounding effect toward soul-winning and the cause of Christ as did the original.

### **Failure Is Tasteless, So We'll Liven Things Up Through Entertainment.**

If a little boy cannot get attention and recognition from his parents by being good and excelling, then he will get it another way. But he will get their attention. In some churches one would almost think the pastor, staff members, or evangelist was a comic or entertainer instead of a man of God. The foolish jokes, jesting, and horseplay holds people's interest and offsets an otherwise routine service. But it does little to add to the spirituality of the people.

At other times, they parade singers, celebrities, and special events in order to break out of the ordinary and liven things up a little bit. Again, this is a result of a stalemated ministry and is a very poor substitute for the excitement and spiritual electricity which is generated through a genuine, Book-of-Acts soul-winning ministry. This collection of fourth-rate jokes and amateurish entertainment hinders soul-winning.

### **Failure Does Not Feed Faith, So We'll Quit.**

Most young preachers are impatient. Their prayer is, "Lord give me patience and give it to me right now." God knows the virtue of patience well and has designed a procedure which will produce

patience and spiritual growth in a preacher. "Tribulations or difficulties worketh patience," (Romans 5:3) so God works a few trials and tests into the young man's life. This generally begins during the first year of Bible college. These testings are a must if the worker ever reaches his full maturity and capability in the Lord's work. Peter told the pastors in I Peter 5:10 that a man would only become settled, strong, and mature after he had suffered awhile. He prefaced this sad news (to a carnal Christian) of future suffering by saying, "the God of all grace who has called you to eternal glory." I Peter 5:10 is the preacher's verse. He should master it and live by it.

But alas, so many do not realize that verse is in the Bible. When the first waves of testing come many draw back and quit. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance so they cannot stay idle. They begin again, only to find the testings and difficulties soon will re-appear. Many times good men never realize the real and full blessings of God because they learn not to "trouble the waters" or "rock the boat." They will go to a point then ease off or compromise when it looks like they are going to have some trouble. The end result of a compromising ministry is stalemate. The young man who first quits in Bible college never masters the ability of trusting the Lord fully enough to succeed. So with this history of giving up or compromising when difficulties keep coming, he has programmed himself to quit. Most of the time, he quits JUST before he wins the battle. He quits right on the very verge of victory, shattering those who believe in and were helping him. Instead of victory, there's defeat! What a hindrance to the cause of soul-winning.

### **Failure Does Not Ease The Pressure, So We'll Have a Burn-Out.**

Failure causes many to work harder. If a sailor's boat is sinking and he believes he can keep it afloat by bailing water then he works even harder. So it is with a preacher, but if a man is not using methods which will bring about success, working harder will not help. He will sink. He will become fatigued through hard, extra

hours. A pastor's spiritual capability suffers when he is worn out physically. He may stay on this difficult schedule for years, but when he comes to a place of exhaustion, he has nothing else to give. He suffers from what the secular world calls, "a burn-out." Generally, the preacher's family becomes spiritual casualties, too. Another good man and his family go down because they were not properly trained in the methods which will produce results and victory.

### **The Bitter Fruits Of A Stalemated Ministry**

It is not the last days which is causing some preachers to fail. Nor is it the perilous times in which we are living. The Bible teaches that this whole grace age could be a period of tremendous victory and soul-winning. God announced this precious truth through the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost. "It shall come to pass in the last days saith God." - Acts 2:17. Notice the complete announcement of the duration of this victory and Holy Spirit power for soul-winning and revival. The end of the period will be, "Until the sun became black ... the moon became as blood" and the great and notable day of the Lord comes. This happens at the end of the tribulation and is recorded in Revelation 6:12. The church-age saints will be raptured before the tribulation. That is not the point which we are considering. We speak not about when the rapture will take place. Instead, we point out that the days of Holy Spirit power, the days of great revival, the days of soul-winning are still in effect today.

Men are not the victims of time; born when they cannot have a great ministry in these last days or perilous times. Men are victims of a stalemated ministry. God programmed man to succeed. God called men into his ministry to succeed. Inwardly, when a man is called he knows he is called to greatness. He has a vision. He has an inner longing for greatness which God placed within him. There are almost five billion souls on this earth which need to hear the Gospel. This is a big world. We serve a big God. But when man learns everything about the ministry except the methods which will insure his success in the ministry the bitter fruits of a stalemated

ministry are sure to come.

The frustration presented to a preacher, who is called to greatness and must live in a stalemated atmosphere, produces the bitter fruits described above. God can heal and revive. He spoke to Jonah a second time. When Jesus arose from the dead He sent a special message to the backslidden Peter. He still longs to revive and transform lives.

### **The Cure Of A Stalemated Ministry**

The cure of a stalemated ministry is simple. Put the things which Jesus put first, **FIRST IN YOUR LIFE**. Take whatever time you need, spend whatever money it costs to learn how to win souls well enough to train others to win souls. Learn how to disciple new converts and develop them so they can help you build an exciting, growing, Book-of-Acts-type ministry.

The fruits of a stalemated ministry are unbearable!

The fruits of a perfected ministry are unbelievable!

The fruit you choose is up to you.

Jesus came so you could live the abundant life. God called you to His eternal glory.

Why settle for anything else?

### **IV. PREACHERS JUSTIFY THEIR FAILURES**

Preachers are like everyone else when they have a problem or suffer a set back. If they feel they are partly to blame they will find a way to justify that failure. The only difference between a preacher and some other man is the method of justifying his failure. The preacher will generally turn to the Word of God and find an answer.

### **Lord, Will You At This Time Restore The Kingdom**



When a preacher is not receiving satisfaction in the ministry because he is not winning souls, he will turn to another source of fulfillment. He has an inner hunger for knowledge about God and the eternal. This is the area in which he generally turns to find an answer. It is natural for him to turn to the Bible in order to personally justify his lack of fulfillment.

### **The Apostles' Minds Were On Theology And The Eternal.**

When one reads about the events which took place during the post resurrectional period, it is easy to see that Jesus had two things on his heart.

### **First, His Heart was Heavily Burdened For World Evangelization.**

In the five accounts of the great commission - in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the Book of Acts, the Lord personally told the apostles that He wanted them to get the Gospel to every man, woman, boy, and girl on the earth. Mark said, every creature in the world, while Luke broke down the geographical fields and listed them: Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world.

### **Second on Jesus' Heart, Was That The Apostles Be Properly Empowered To Accomplish This Seemingly Impossible Task of World Evangelization.**

They needed to be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

It was during one of the periods when Jesus instructed the apostles in their need of Holy Spirit power that they asked a question reflecting the very nature of preachers. These preachers had been together. Their minds were not on world evangelization or their need of divine power. They thought on theology and eschatology. They were just seeking opportunity to ask the Lord a question and perhaps receive a long discourse which would increase their spiritual understanding.

The apostles' instruction concerning their need of spiritual power is

found in Acts 1:4-5. It seems they didn't hear a word He spoke. Their minds were on other things. Read and hear their question, "Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom of Israel?" There is nothing wrong with their question, but their timing. The question was good, but it was not asked at the right time. It was not time for Bible study. It was time for the apostles to get to WORK!

### **They Are Startled By The Answer.**

I am sure that they felt Jesus would be pleased at such a pertinent question, but the answer they received was, "that is none of your business." He said, "it is not for you to know," then proceeded to discuss the two great needs which they had. Please study the exact answer of Jesus in Acts 1:7-8.

"It is not for you to know the times or the season which the Father hath put in His own power." He is literally saying, that is none of your business. That is the Father's business. **HERE IS YOUR BUSINESS!!**

You need God's power to successfully do what I have trained you to do. After you receive that power **GET TO WORK!!**

### **The Very Nature Of Preachers.**

In this episode, we see the tendency of most preachers. It is difficult for them to see the plain and obvious work which they can and should be doing (now) because their minds are distracted by the eternal.

Dr. Martin Canavan, a preacher friend, said it this way:

"It is difficult for the average preacher to come to gripes with the nasty **now and now** because of his involvement with the **sweet by and by.**"

There is a time for Bible study!

There is a time to work!

The time had come for the apostles to get to the upper room for their final preparation which would enable them to accomplish their work.

### **Three Hundred Years Behind.**

Many Bible colleges and seminaries have programs which are very similar to other well-fitted programs during the great reformation days of Luther and Calvin. When they had no radio, television, cassette tapes, almost no books, and just a few Bibles, many years of intense training in theology may have been necessary. Now, when there are scores of books, tapes, audio tapes on almost every subject and with almost five billion souls which need the Gospel, there should be a return to the principles of training that produces workers.

Consider what happens to many humble, dedicated, zealous, young men who go off to Bible college and seminary.

Seven years later, most have lost their humility. The zeal has been tempered.

The compassion for souls is gone.

If a pastor hires one of them as a staff member, he will most likely have to train him personally.

### **It Would Make More Sense.**

Wouldn't it make more sense to get back to the training methods which Jesus implanted and Paul perpetuated?

Show and tell them publicly.

Show and tell them from house-to-house until the worker is perfected.

This worker, in turn, could multiply himself by following the same

procedure in training others.

## **God Is Not Electing Many Today**

### **I Don't Want To Sound Critical.**

The best people in the world are preachers. I love them and praise God for them and their families. As you read these pages I hope I am not coming across in a critical way. There is not a preacher who can really understand the subtle enemy which wars against God's men.

The devil was wise enough to out-fox and check-mate the wisest man who ever lived, Solomon.

The devil was crafty enough to trap the man after God's own heart and disgrace him, David.

The devil was strong enough to bind, blind, and enslave the strongest man who ever lived, Samson.

The devil was able to get the chief apostle and preacher of his day to curse and deny his Lord, Peter.

My friends, I do not attempt criticism when I pen these words, but I do want you to see where we are, how we got here, then hopefully help some to become better soul-winners and leaders.

### **It Demonstrates The Reasoning Of Some.**

One of the fine, young preacher boys which God allowed me to know, and who is now a great preacher, demonstrates the reasoning of some on this subject of election.

I was his pastor. He had been saved and baptized under my ministry. He was already showing the quality of character and work which he now demonstrates as a mature leader in God's work. But he was having trouble winning souls. I was working

with him but he was not progressing and receiving the recognition he felt he deserved. Another pastor in our city began to entice this young preacher away by telling him how great he was and what a tremendous future he had. He also implied that I, his present pastor, was selfish and retarding his development in the ministry. The crowning blow came when this fellow pastor offered this young preacher a fancy title (no money) and asked him to join his staff. The young preacher, out of the will of God, and still unable to succeed in the ministry, soon became discouraged.

There were two churches in our area which taught extreme election. One of these pastors was skilled at proselyting. He soon had my young friend in his church. It was not long until my young preacher friend swallowed the whole bit. The sovereign God of heaven unconditionally elected some to be saved and some to be lost before the foundation of the world. Whoever the elect were would respond to the irresistible grace of God and be saved regardless. The non-elect could not be saved even if he wanted to.

Things rocked on ...

But the honest heart of a young preacher was not satisfied. He began to look around ...

There were two churches which preached these doctrines in our area. However, one had a visitation program while the church where he was a member did not.

He began to notice ... God was electing more people at the church which had a visitation program than in his church.

He kept observing ...

Yes, there was a trend ...

God was electing more people to be saved at the other church ...  
There was no doubt about it.

And do you know ... It seems that the basis of this election is related to the number of visits which the other church is making ...

Very interesting ...

He reasoned further. "I'd sure like to discuss this discovery with someone ... But who? I can't go to my pastor. I can't go to the other pastor who is my pastor's best friend ... "

Then he heard that his old pastor, Dr. Wilkins, and church were doing crazy things. They were having an all-night prayer meeting, praying for sinners.

He thought, "Dare I approach Bro. Jim about this matter and discuss my new discovery? It won't hurt for me to ask if I can come to his prayer meeting ... "

The phone rang, "It is good to hear from you .. Sure, you would be welcome ... "

About 1:30 a.m. he arrived and after a few minutes of prayer he was preparing to leave. He left the prayer area and went into the fellowship hall where we had coffee and refreshments. It was here that he ventured to expose his discovery.

"Dr. Wilkins, God is electing more people over at Pastor C \_\_\_\_\_'s church who has a visitation program than he is at our church which does not have a visitation program. And it seems to be in proportion to the number of visits that they make. What do you think about that? Could there be some connection?"

I remembered how well the pastor friend had done his job of alienating my young preacher from me. I remember the tremendous character of my young friend, so I answered, "That is very interesting. What do you know about that? Keep me informed about what final deduction you make. I will tell you what I will do.

I will continue to pray for you as you search this thing out."

A few days later the phone rang again ... "Dr. Wilkins, can we come home?"

As I said before, he and his wife are very prominent workers for God now. But he is an exception - most, when they go into that error, never have the ability to recover.

THE PUNCH LINE. The punch line of this story is to show the reasoning of some who embrace this error. God is electing more in one place than he is in another.

But, may I add ... they are too involved in their deep studies to figure out why he is electing more in one place than He is in another.

### **God Programmed This Thing To Fail**

There is not a preacher alive that will make that statement audible but there are literally thousands of them which inwardly believe it. This is the rational conclusion which they have come. It fits their theology and explains the small results of their ministry.

### **They Misapply Scripture.**

This deduction that God has programmed this thing to fail is based upon their misinterpretation of the end times.

### **In The Days of Noah.**

They are greatly involved in prophecy. They make improper analysis between the days of Noah and the days in which we live. They make much of the statements, "eating and drinking" and "marrying and giving in marriage." They say that these are prophetic statements which are being fulfilled before our very eyes.

According to them, eating and drinking refer to the fast living and party going which we experience in this age.

Marrying and giving in marriage show the moral breakdown in our homes and the awful divorce rate and re-marriage which is plaguing our nation today. They then throw in a few choice signs from II Timothy 3:1-8 so everyone can know that the Coming of the Lord is near and that we are living in those PERILOUS LAST DAYS. Their intent is to stimulate people to live a more zealous life for Christ and be ready for his Second Coming. What actually happens has the opposite effect upon people. This type preaching undermines and decreases people's faith and expectancy and programs them for a life of little results and defeatism.

The people reason, if all these things are predestined to happen then they are bound to happen. There is little I can do about it. Why pray? Why make sacrifices if everything is programmed to fall away. Why go through the empty motion of praying. There is no hope of revival. Things, according to my teachers, are going to get worse and worse until Jesus comes. When people are convinced of this, then they can never have the faith and zeal to attempt to do much for God.

### **What These Expressions Really Mean.**

These expressions, "eating and drinking ... marrying and given in marriage" are found in Matthew 24:38. In Verse 36 Jesus tells the disciples that no man knows the hour of the Second Coming of Christ, not even the angels in heaven. Then, He illustrates that the flood caught all the earth's inhabitants off guard because it came unexpectedly. People were eating and drinking. They were in normal living. People have to eat and drink to live. The flood caught them in the middle of making plans for their physical lives. They were marrying and giving in marriage and suddenly, without warning, it was all over. The flood came and "took them all away." Notice the punch line as Verse 39 continues, "so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be!" The word so comes from a word which means, in the manner previously illustrated. Literally, the flood interrupted the routine acts of life and caught everyone by surprise; so shall the Second Coming catch everyone by surprise. Jesus continues this point in Verses 40-41. He said, there will be



two in the field - one will be suddenly caught away while the other will be left behind. There will be two working at the mill. One will have his work interrupted and be caught away while the other works on. Note the punch line in Verse 42, "watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

### **The Coming Is Imminent.**

The Bible teaches that the Second Coming is imminent. He could come back at any time. Preachers should motivate their members to look for the Second Coming - to be ready for the Second Coming - to have all their friends, and neighbors saved because the Lord is coming back and it could be today. The saved will be raptured or caught up, the lost will be left behind.

### **Look For The Son - Not Signs.**

The preacher should preach about the imminent return of Christ, but he should not preach about the signs of His Second Coming in order to prove that the Coming of the Lord is near. The Second Coming of Jesus is in two phases. He will come suddenly, as a thief, for His saints who will meet Him in the air before the tribulation period. He will come as King of Kings with His saints to the earth after the seven-year tribulation period. There are events which will take place in the tribulation period before the coming of King Jesus to the earth. But Jesus did not give a bunch of signs which reveal His coming in the air. He will first come as a thief in the night - steal in and slip out with His precious jewels, His saints.

### **Like An Easter Egg Hunt.**

The devil again distracts the minds of people by having a lot of God's preachers looking for signs like a bunch of kids on an Easter egg hunt. Everything to them is a sign. They spend all their time looking and preaching about signs and do very little or no personal soul-winning. After spending all that time on all those signs, which show how bad things must become before the Lord can come back; surely, the only conclusion one could make is that **GOD PROGRAMMED THIS THING TO FAIL**. If this is so and in their reasoning, it is, they have successfully justified their lack of

fruitfulness and soul-winning.

WHAT A DISTRACTION FROM SOUL-WINNING!!

## **V. PREACHERS GET THEIR GREATEST EXAMPLE - PAUL**

Paul was a preacher. Paul loved preachers. Paul understood preachers and he was saved to become a pattern for preachers to emulate. Hear, again, the testimony of this great preacher as he reveals why he was saved. "For this cause (purpose) I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, FOR A PATTERN TO THEM which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." I Timothy 1:16.

### **Paul's Understanding Of Life's Purpose**

Although Paul wrote 14 of the inspired books of the New Testament and is considered a great theologian and scholar, he had a simple lifestyle. He had a simple, clear-cut understanding of life which dictated how he lived.

### **He Was Saved By Grace.**

He was saved by God's grace apart from any personal righteousness or merit which he possessed. Paul had testified and warred against God's people and caused some to be put to death. He deserved to go to hell! But God, in His mercy, spared his life and saved him.

### **He Was Given A Job To Do.**

Paul speaks of the job which God saved him to do, several places in the Scriptures. He was saved by grace unto good works which God had before ordained for him to do. - Ephesians 2:8-10.

### **He Would Be Rewarded For Completing His Job.**

He was given eternal life when he was saved. He did not have to work for eternal life because it was a free gift. The reward promised to him was a position in the Messianic Kingdom. He would be a joint heir with Christ and rule and reign with Him for

1,000 years. He taught the Corinthian believers that all the saved were laboring together with God but that "every man shall receive his own rewards according to his own labour." - I Corinthians 3:8.

### **He Preached That There Would Be Differences In Rewards.**

He used the different kinds of flesh - men, animals, fish and birds along with the different glory of the heavenly bodies - sun, moon, stars, and brighter stars to illustrate this point. The punch line is in I Corinthians 15:42 where he said, "so also is the resurrection of the dead." There are many other places where the principle of degrees of rewards for the saved is taught in the Scriptures. Paul believed and taught it.

### **He Wanted To Come In First.**

He taught that there would be one who would win the greatest reward and he wanted to be that one. Good, clean competition motivates and brings out the best in everyone. "I press toward the mark (goal) of the high (upward) calling of God in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 3:14.

### **He Believed He Could Make Shipwreck Of His Ministry.**

In I Corinthians 9:27 he states that "he constantly kept his body under subjection lest by any means, I, myself, become a castaway." The word castaway comes from the trade of pot making. When the potter found a flaw in a pot which was too bad for future use he simply had to cast it aside and it became unuseable, or a castaway.

### **Paul Believed He Would Have To Answer For The Souls Of Men.**

In Acts Chapter 20 we find one of the tenderest scenes recorded in the Bible. Paul is bidding the pastoral staff of the Ephesian church and his close friends a final good-bye. With tears they embrace and are parted. In Verse 26 Paul reminds them that he is "pure from the blood of all men." This demonstrates his belief that he was responsible for the souls of men. The reason he was pure or innocent of the blood of all men is stated in Verse 27, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

### **He Believed He Would Suffer Reproach And Loss # He Did Not Finish His Job.**

"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel" I Corinthians 9:16, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss." I Corinthians 3:15.

### **Add It All Up And It Equals Simplicity.**

He was saved for a particular job. He would be rewarded for doing that job. He wanted to be first or do his best. He could fail and disgrace himself. He must give account for the souls of men. He must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ and give account as to how well he fulfilled the purpose for his salvation. This simple understanding and acceptance of his purpose caused him to sacrifice his whole life in the service of Christ.

### **Paul's Commitment To Life's Purpose.**

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21. Paul not only had a simple understanding of life's purpose but he made a full commitment to that life's purpose.

### **He told the Romans,**

"... as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." Romans 1:15. He told the Ephesian pastors, "How I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you;" Acts 20:20. "By the space of three years, I cease not to warn every man night and day with tears," Acts 20:31. He became weary and tired, often. He longed to die, to go on and be with the Lord on different occasions. On one of these difficult occasions he said, "nevertheless to abide in the flesh (or live) is more needful for you." Philippians 1:24. At times, no man stood with him and he had to stand alone but the love of Christ and welfare of others drove him on night and day with tears.

### **He Glorified Christ.**

Not only was Paul a worker, but he worked for the proper reason. His motives were right. Paul told the Corinthians, "Whether ye eat

or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the GLORY OF GOD." I Corinthians 10:31. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." I Corinthians 1:31.

### **He Gave Thanks.**

He told the Thessalonian saints, "In everything give thanks." I Thessalonians 5:18. This command followed a discussion about the persecution of the church in Thessalonica and the death of some of their family members.

From a prison cell in Philippi he wrote, "Be careful (or anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving ... " - Philippians 4:6.

If the problem turned out good, humanly speaking, and he won or had a great revival, he praised the Lord for the souls and the victory!! But if the problem turned out badly and he was beaten or thrown into jail - He could say, "Hallelujah!!" Why? Because, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more and exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" II Corinthians 4:17.

Paul's attitude was very similar to a young soldier boy who was waiting surgery with less than 70 percent chance of surviving. He was cheerful and happy although in unbearable pain. Finally, one of the surgical team asked him why he was so cheerful and happy while facing almost certain death. He asked the young soldier, "Son, don't you realize the seriousness of the surgery?"

The soldier boy weakly replied, "Yes sir, I do. But you see, sir, my mother is being flown here to my bedside and if I live, when I awake I will see her. If I do not wake, I will see Jesus. Either way sir, I'm in for a real treat."

If Paul won - praise the Lord. If Paul lost - praise the Lord.

### **He Was Confident.**

He was called to God's eternal glory. I Peter 5:10.

He was an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. Romans 8:17.

He was on a course which led home.

He had the personal promise of Jesus, "I'll never leave thee or forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5.

He knew there was nothing which could separate him from the love of God. Romans 8:35-39.

In fact, in the Father's hands who had created everything and by whom all things were held together, Paul was content to make his way through this life as a pilgrim and stranger. He knew that his Father was going to make everything which happened to him work together for his good. Romans 8:28.

He Worked!  
He Glorified God!  
He Gave Thanks!  
He Was Confident and  
He Was On His Way Home!

### **Paul, A Perfect Example For Life's Journey**

Based upon Paul's understanding of life's purpose and his commitment to that purpose he became a perfect example for us to follow.

### **Saved To Become A Pattern.**

The author has stressed the reference in I Timothy 1:16 previously. Here, the author visualizes Paul telling the world, "for this reason I was saved, to become a pattern to the believers who travel down life's way so they will be able to understand life's purpose.

### **Suffered To Fulfill Life's Purpose.**

Very few men suffered as much as did the Apostle Paul. A partial list of those sufferings is given in II Corinthians 11:24-28. He did this gladly for the Gospel's sake.

Paul stated that, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," which simply means, the men who God selects for the ministry must give themselves to the work of the ministry because God is not going to change His mind. If one is called to preach or to a special service then he is called. He will always be called. He will never be satisfied doing anything else. If the purpose for which one is saved was determined before the foundation of the world (II Timothy 1:9) the preacher will not be able to talk God out of it down here in time. The reasonable deduction is to surrender to that purpose.

The ministry is a call to suffering as well as a call to a specific service. "It is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Philippians 1:29. God has a recipe for developing men to a state of maturity and ability which will bring them to a future state of sharing in Christ's eternal glory. This recipe is found in I Peter 5:10 and is based on two great pillars: The first pillar is,

God is the God of all grace.

The second pillar is,  
He loves his preachers and wants them to share His eternal glory.

NOTE: The simple steps which God has ordained for a man to share His eternal glory are as follows:

All grace for all problems is available to him.

He has problems which are designed for his own personal, spiritual growth and settling. Romans 5:3-5

He suffers.

He grows.

He overcomes.

He fulfills his calling.

He shares in the eternal glory.

## **Rejoice Because Of His Accomplishments.**

Paul could talk about being called because he was called. God revealed the purpose and the suffering which Paul would experience when he called him. God made His grace available and encouraged Paul as he fulfilled his ministry. As Paul neared the end of his earthly journey he sensed that he was on course. He knew he was, with the help and grace of God, completing each task which he had been given to do. The sufferings seemed to give him greater joy because it brought him into a special fellowship with Christ. It brought him into a better acquaintance with Christ and into the "fellowship of his sufferings." Philippians 3:10. With his eye toward the Second Coming of Christ (Philippians 3:20-21) he endured the sufferings with joy. When his life was taken from him and he died a martyr he seemed to almost shout as he talked about his departure (coming death). Many Christians have thrilled at his immortal words.

I have fought a good fight  
I have finished my course

I have kept the faith and the next step ... Glory!!!

The next face I see will be the face of Jesus.

The next stop is home. II Timothy 4:6-8.

Dear preacher friends, they name children after Paul. They name cities, churches, colleges, and all types of charitable institutions and causes after Paul. He wrote 14 books of the Holy Bible and scholars and educators quote Paul. They are doing all this now, in this life with the Judgment Seat and the eternal ages yet to come. What joy and eternal rewards await this humble man who gave his life away in the cause of Christ. **DON'T YOU THINK WE HAD BETTER PAY CLOSER ATTENTION TO OUR PATTERN AND DO THE THINGS** which brought him such happiness and success? Don't you think we had better adopt the lifestyle which will produce eternal benefits and in the end merit our heavenly



Father's eternal approval?

## **VI. PREACHERS GET TO QUESTION PAUL**

In discussing a passage of Scripture with some preachers one of them said, "I'd sure like to call the Apostle Paul up on the phone and ask him personally what he meant, wouldn't you?" All the pastors agreed they would and so the discussion ended.

In our final section, let us use our imagination and pretend that we have the power to call Paul on the phone. Your author will serve as host, allowing five preachers to present one question which they would ask this great man of God, if they had the chance.

One may object, "You are going to ask him loaded questions and give the answers which favor your position."

Let me quickly acknowledge, that is my intent. But I believe this is the best way to illustrate the truths which need to be stated on these subjects. The answers given will have Paul's written words to demonstrate his beliefs concerning these questions.

### **Paul, Do You Believe In Unconditional Election?**

There are some theologians who believe that God, being sovereign elected whomever he pleased to be saved. This meant that those which He did not elect would not have any chance of being saved. They believe this election was made without any regard to the actions, faith or works of believers; and without regard to any means whatsoever. They believe that God arbitrarily chose some to be saved and some to be lost.

Our first pastor's question to you, Paul, with our kindest regards, is, "Paul, do you believe in the unconditional election of the sinner by God?"

"Sir, when you consider my whole life, the suffering I endured, the inconveniences which I placed myself, and the way I drove myself in order to become 'all things to all men that I might by all means

save some' then the answer to this question should be obvious. Men, without any regards to my life and to my total comments on this subject have tried to say that I believe this doctrine, but I do not. Please note ¶ Thessalonians 2:13.

*'... God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation THROUGH sanctification (or setting apart) of the Spirit and belief of the truth.'*

The Holy Spirit worked with the sinner, the sinner had to hear the truth before he could believe it. Verse 14 adds that the sinner was called by the Gospel.

These verses clearly show that the election of the sinner was based on his hearing the Gospel and believing it. The Holy Spirit worked with the sinner in convicting him, illuminating his mind so he could understand, then quickening him when he believed. He was sealed or set apart when he believed the message and received Christ as his Saviour. God does not elect unconditionally but He elects according to His foreknowledge by which He sees the means which brings the sinner to the point of receiving Christ and salvation.

### **Paul, Do You Believe In The Doctrine Of Irresistible Grace?**

Irresistible grace is a doctrine taught by some who say that a sinner who is one of the elect will be saved, regardless. If he is not one of the elect he cannot be saved even if he wanted to be. Some say, those who are predestined by God cannot resist or say no to the Holy Spirit even if they tried to.

"Paul, our second question is, 'Do you believe the doctrine of the irresistible grace?' "

"When you consider my ministry of pain, of tears, of persuading men, of working so hard in order to be pure from the blood of all men; after all that, may I reply by asking a question? Would I have lived the way I did if all my intense effort would not affect man

either way? I believe the grace of God has been extended to all men, but that man has power to resist or surrender to that extended grace. I gave my life to the sole purpose of trying to persuade men to receive the grace and gift of God!"

**Paul, What Was Your Greatest Concern Or Worry?**

"Dr. Wilkins, before I ask Paul my questions, may I preface it with a few remarks?" Upon receiving an affirmative answer he continues.

"Today, we have so many pastors who seem to be worried about what some other preacher or group is doing.

"Others seem to be constantly occupied with the doctrines of what they call 'grace' or 'who the elect are.' Still others preach all the time about the 'signs' of His Coming. Paul, I was wondering, What was your greatest concern or worry during your ministry?"

"Let me say, first, that those three things which you mention held little or no concern for me.

"I was not concerned about what Peter and the brethren thought about me, my methods or ministry.

"I have never thought for one second about any "signs" which might reveal that the Second Coming of Christ may be near. I looked every day for His coming. I longed for His coming. I looked for the Son. I did not look for signs.

"I did have one thing which was constantly on my mind. It bore more heavily on my soul as I drew older in the ministry, especially as I realized my natural life was coming to an end. I worried about finishing the course which my Lord saved me to do. 'Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry,' Acts 20:24. Later, I told another group who were tearfully warning me of certain bondage or death, 'What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? For I am not ready to be

bound only, but also to die.' Both statements were made because the thing on my mind most, **was finishing the job which God saved me to do.**"

Other references which demonstrate that Paul's chief concern was finishing the job which God saved him to do are Philippians 3:10-14, Acts 26:12-19, II Timothy 4:6-8.

### **Paul, What Is The Greatest Need In The Churches Of This Generation?**

Another pastor speaks these words before asking his question.

"Paul, as you look down and observe the churches today, what is the greatest need you see?"

"There is a tremendous need for the preachers to quit fussing with each other.

"There is a tremendous need for preachers to make their voice like a trumpet and cry out against sin. We need old-fashioned Holy Ghost preachers back in the pulpit but the greatest need is for the preachers to get back to the original way of training workers. If the churches had properly trained workers in the field of personal soul-winning and discipling their new converts, most of the other problems would be dissolved.

"The method of training soul-winners worked/ during our ministry

"The Jerusalem Church evangelized their city in five years. The apostles, along with 120 dedicated members, first experienced 3,000 additions on the day of Pentecost. This was followed by daily additions (Acts 2:46) then 5,000 men were saved. Acts 4:4. The description of church growth which followed was described in Acts 5:14 as 'multitudes, both men and women.' The disciples began to multiply in Acts 6:1 and the multiplying was later termed as, 'Multiplied greatly' in Acts 6:7. The enemies of the Church confessed the method of soul-winning and training had filled

Jerusalem with Christians in five short years. Acts 5:28.

"We were able to evangelize the City of Ephesus and the Providence of Asia in two years. Acts 19:20.

"Using the method of discipling our converts, we were able to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven in our generation. Colossians 1:23.

"The greatest need in the churches would be solved by practicing the principles found in Acts 20:20 once again. The early preachers were commanded to perfect workers, not instruct philosophers. One produces workers in soul-winning the same way one produces workers in any other realm. One must explain how to do the job and then show them how to do it in a public service. This is followed by giving them personal on-the-job training until the workers become skilled.

"We showed them how to win souls publicly (by walking through the soul-winning demonstration procedures).

"We taught them how to win souls publicly (by explaining what and why we were doing it that way).

"We showed them how to win souls from house to house (by on-the-job training).

"We taught them how to win souls from house to house (by perfecting them so they would know how to train others).

"The method first produced additions to the churches. As new workers were developed and began to win souls, our training produced enough workers to cause the additions to become multiplications.

"That simple method of developing workers well enough to give others on-the-job training in winning souls will **STILL WORK**

**TODAY!** And it would solve most of the problems in the churches and bring national revival."

**Paul, What Is Your Advice To Young Preachers?**

"Our final question to you, Paul, is from a young minister." His question, "Sir, what advice would you give a young man who is just starting in the ministry or pastorate?"

"My advice to you, young man, which would constantly keep you fresh in the ministry and help you become another Timothy is this. **Develop the right motivation and keep your priorities straight.**

"The motivation for being a good preacher is, 'to love Jesus.' When Jesus called Peter to become the first pastor, he asked him three different times.

"Peter, loveth thou me?"

"Work at keeping yourself in love with Jesus by developing the right spiritual habits in your prayer life and Bible study. Develop a love for the Lord which will be far greater than your concern for 'What the brethren think' or your concern for your own personal desires.

"In addition to developing this love ... **KEEP YOUR EYE UPON THE LORD AND THE SUPREME PURPOSE FOR WHICH YOU WERE CALLED.** Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. He said, 'As my father sent me, even so send I you.' John 20:21. Put world-wide evangelism first by keeping your eye upon the Lord, perfecting soul-winners and **NEVER** let yourself get sidetracked on lesser issues. The Holy Spirit gave tremendous instructions in Hebrews 12:1-2.

*"WHEREFORE seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, **LOOKING UNTO JESUS THE author***

*and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the righthand of the throne of God.'*

"KEEP YOUR EYES UPON JESUS. REMEMBER WHAT YOU WERE CALLED TO DO AND GIVE YOURSELF COMPLETELY TO THE TASK OF DOING IT."

In summary, read the above paragraph over and over again. That is tremendous advice to all of us believers.

In Jesus, we have ETERNAL LIFE.

Through Jesus, we have a PLACE IN THE RAPTURE and will receive a Glorified body.

Through Jesus, we have a MANSION waiting for us in heaven.

Through Jesus, we will WALK the street of gold and ENJOY paradise throughout the ages to come.

THEREFORE, BASED UPON THESE PRECIOUS TRUTHS, let us submit ourselves to the purpose for which WE WERE ELECTED and lose our lives in our efforts to preach the Gospel to every creature in our FOUR BILLION SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND **GENERATION**.

PRAYER,

Dear Lord,

Touch our hearts and make us sensitive to the needs of the lost and dying as if they were our own family. Help us realize that they are lost and without hope and will never know the tender love of Jesus and the assurance of eternal life, unless we tell them. Help us realize that we must give account for the souls of men.

Help us lose our lives in training workers who will give our generation the Gospel.

In Jesus' Name,  
Amen.



### FROM THE AUTHOR

**GOD MUST HAVE IMPLEMENTED A WAY TO MOTIVATE MAN** to forsake this world and all its allurements and give himself completely **TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE AND PLAN OF GOD.**

If God had a purpose for man. . .

If God had a plan for man. . .

Then common sense and logic dictates that God must have a way to motivate man to fulfill that purpose and plan.

The three doctrines which God placed in the Bible to give this motivation are the doctrines of:

#### **FOREKNOWLEDGE • ELECTION • PREDESTINATION**

**BY HIS FOREKNOWLEDGE** He reveals tremendous future events and rewards which will be given to those who overcome and fulfill God's plan and purpose for their life.

**BY HIS ELECTION,** God reveals his plan and purpose through individuals.

**THROUGH THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION,** God propels the believer's mind to the eternal. This makes the believer perfectly willing to forsake the trivial matters of this life in order to accomplish God's eternal purpose and will in his life.

**THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF PAUL,** we see a man who has a perfect knowledge of these three doctrines and the consuming effect it has on his life.

It is no wonder that the **DEVIL WORKS CONSTANTLY TO BLIND THE MINDS OF MEN** in order to keep these three doctrines **IN OBSCURITY.**

**THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN FOR THE COMMON MAN.** The Doctrines of Foreknowledge, Election, and Predestination are no more complex and difficult to understand than the other precious doctrines of the Bible. **THE DEVIL HAS WORKED HARDER TO DISTORT AND CONFUSE** in these areas because he knows that if they are clearly understood they will produce the zeal, separation from the world, and dedication that was demonstrated by the first generation of believers.

In this book the Author shows how these three precious doctrines harmonize and **FURTHER THE WORK OF PERSONAL SOUL-WINNING.**

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Dr. Wilkins was ordained and became a full-time Pastor at the age of 20. He pastored as he spent seven years in Bible College and Seminary. He completed his work and received his doctorate in Theology by writing a 50,000 word thesis on the theme of Soul-winning in 1961. He has worked in the field of evangelism and home-missions as well as education and the pastorate. He has taught 18 years in four Bible Colleges, authored 22 books or booklets. His courses in soul-winning training and discipleship are acclaimed as "The best" by many. His wife, Louella, has been a constant help and blessing to his ministry for almost 35 years.