

Will The Circle Be Unbroken?

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"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

"I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world." (John 17: 1 - 12,24).

First, I believe that God has a great circle with reference to election. Second, I believe that God is progressively forming this circle. Third, I believe that it is impossible for this circle to be broken.

GOD HAS A GREAT CIRCLE

I believe that in this circle are all of God's people that He foreknew before the foundation of the world.

They are His, first of all, **by sovereign election.**

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Ephesians 1:4,5).

"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts 13 :48) .

"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that, they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (II Timothy 2: 10) .

"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." (I Thessalonians 1:4).

I believe that God's people are His by sovereign election. There is not a person in Christ that God ever chose on the basis of foreseen faith. That would make the actions of a sovereign God contingent upon the actions of depraved humanity, and that is contrary to the Word of God. Faith is a gift of God. (Eph. 2:8).

I believe, second, that they are not only His by sovereign election, but they are His **by divine protection**. I believe in election so strongly that I believe God will actually protect His elect, even before they are saved by the grace of God. I believe there is a grace that precedes even saving grace which reaches the hearts of men today.

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14).

Spurgeon referred to this grace as "prevenient grace."

I believe that God has the angels of Heaven watching over some unsaved people who are His elect that will be saved later than even this hour. Perhaps there may be one in this group listening as I stand preaching to you today.

They are His by sovereign election. They are His by divine protection. One day they will be His by **sudden collection**.

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matthew 24:31).

There is coming a day when the Lord Jesus, in Almighty power through His angels, is going to suddenly collect His elect together, and for the first time all of them will be together. Talk about a hallelujah time on the hills of glory! God's people are going to have it when they are suddenly collected to the bosom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

GOD IS PROGRESSIVELY FORMING THIS CIRCLE

This circle is incomplete today, looking at it from the human standpoint. All of the elect have not yet been saved, but the circle is being progressively formed. Looking at it through our eyes, every time one of the elect is saved, more of God's circle which cannot be broken is being formed.

I believe that God forms this circle, first of all, **by the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ**. There is nothing that will break a sinner's heart any quicker than the preaching of the gospel of the Son of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (I Corinthians 1:16).

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (I Corinthians 1:21).

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Thessalonians 2:13,14).

I thank God for every true God-called gospel preacher in this world who is preaching the gospel of the Son of God which can still break the hearts of lost humanity today.

I believe He not only works through the preaching of the gospel, but through **the power of the Holy Spirit.**

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more: of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16:7-11).

Now here is what I believe the Holy Spirit does today: I believe the Holy Spirit, first of all, uses the Bible, which is the Sword of the Spirit, and convicts sinners of one particular sin, and that is the sin of unbelief. I believe the Holy Spirit convinces men of righteousness - not their own righteousness, because they don't have any - but the righteousness of the Son of God. The Holy Spirit shows the righteousness of Christ to lost humanity. This is what the Bible teaches today. .

Then He also convinces men of judgment which is to come. We hear much about the love of God in our modernistic, liberalistic day. I want to tell you that the God who tells us about Heaven in the Bible, has for more to say about Hell than He has to say about Heaven. The God who is a God of love is a God of wrath, and there needs to be a return to Baptist pulpits of not only preaching the love of God, but the preaching of the wrath of God.

Not long ago one of these sophisticated female flappers walked out of the church building, after hearing a strong message on the wrath of God, and said that she thought the preacher ought to preach more on love. The next Sunday morning he preached on **"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."**

The next Sunday morning he preached on **"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."**

The next Sunday morning he preached on **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."**

Then she walked out of the church building and said, " Pastor, give us some more of that old-fashioned Hell-fire and damnation."

I believe the God who loves people is also angry with people, and is a God of wrath, and Baptist preachers ought to get away from sentimentalism and start preaching the wrath of God.

God forms this circle not only by the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Spirit of God, but I believe that **His providence** enters into it. I am glad that I do not relegate the works of God to a cold, impersonal fate. I believe God's providence works in this world, and I believe that God's works are being carried out - not behind time or ahead of time, but on schedule.

I believe that men ought to recognize the providence of God in every move they make in this old sinful world today. Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt and he later revealed himself to them and they were afraid that Joseph would not forgive them. (Let me deviate long enough, to say that Christian living is made up of two things; namely giving and forgiving, and we ought to remember that today). They wondered if Joseph would forgive them. Joseph forgave them and looked them in the face and said, **"Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."** (Gen 50:20).

I am glad that God forms this circle by the preaching of the gospel, and the power of the Holy Spirit, and by His providence which works throughout the face of this earth today. I believe that God is forming this circle, and I am glad to be among a group of people this morning who make up a part of God's elect. How wonderful it is to sit together with God's people who think alike and who love the Word of God and, above all, love the Lord Jesus, and beyond that ascribe to Him all the credit and the glory for the salvation of their souls.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THIS CIRCLE TO BE BROKEN

I do not believe that Jesus Christ died in vain. I believe it is impossible for the circle of God's elect to be broken. I believe it is impossible, first of all, because **His power cannot be penetrated.**

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (I Peter 1:5).

God's power is unlimited. There is no power as great as the power of God. The atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb, and all the nuclear bombs put together cannot equal the power of God. Not one thing that man or the Devil does to us can penetrate the power of God to break the circle of God's elect today. This is wonderful! It is an occasion of rejoicing in the heart of every person who has been born of the Spirit of God. You cannot break down the power of God.

The circle cannot be broken for a second reason - because His will and His compassion and His mercy are sovereign, and they cannot be nullified.

"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." (Romans 9:15,16-18).

"And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (John 6:65, 66).

If you get around a group of Baptists who are about 98 percent Arminian and 2 percent television and

preach to them the sovereignty of God and election, you scare the daylights out of them. They need it! I believe that God's mercy, God's compassion, and God's will are sovereign and mankind cannot nullify them, therefore, this circle will not be broken.

This circle will not be broken for a third reason: because His promise that He has given to His people will never be denied. He has never broken any promise spoken. He will keep all His promises to the end.

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

I am so glad amidst all of our unfaithfulness and our shortcomings that there is a God who will never turn His back on His children. He promised to keep us forever, and His election and His purposes must stand.

Not too long ago, I read about a little boy who picked up his granddaddy's Bible, and in turning through it he noticed beside several verses of Scripture the letters "T" and "P". He looked at his granddaddy and said, "Granddaddy, what do those letters 'T' and 'P' mean?"

The Christian granddaddy patted his little grandson on the head and the tears began to roll down his cheeks as he tried to instruct his little grandchild, and he said, "Listen to Granddaddy. Everywhere you see 'T' and 'P', that is a promise of God, and it means that Granddaddy has **tried** them and that God has **proven** that He will not break any of these promises."

God's promises are tried and proven, and that is the reason the circle of His elect will never be broken.

There is a fourth reason: the circle cannot be broken because **His purpose**, being eternal, cannot be thwarted. Men may make plans, but God overrules their plans and their plans have to be changed. I do not believe that one purpose of God has ever had to be changed. I believe God's purposes are eternal, and His purpose to save a people for His name was an eternal purpose. I am glad that the purpose of God in the election of His people cannot be thwarted by any power or people within this world.

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (II Timothy 1:9).

"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." (Romans 8:29).

That word "**predestinate**" in the Greek carries with it the idea of "mark them off" or "fence around them." Let me tell you something. God's elect couldn't .go to Hell if they wanted to. God's elect are surely going to walk the streets of Glory.

"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 8:30). This is God's eternal purpose.

I have always been told that a chain is just as strong as its weakest link. I believe election was in eternity by God, and I do not believe that you can break a link in that chain today. I believe that predestination is another link in the chain and cannot be broken. I believe that those whom He elected and predestinated, He called, and here is another link that cannot be broken: "**But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**" (John 10:26, 27).

I am glad God's sheep are eternally secure because of election, predestination, calling, and justification.

I heard a preacher say one time that justification is like a pardon. Well, that is not so. I had my heart broken three years ago when a person in my church embezzled \$130,000 from one of our local banks. She got five years; she served fourteen months and she is out today. You could walk up to her and say, "You are a bank embezzler," and she would stick the pardon in your face and say, "No, I have a pardon." I say to you, even though she might have a pardon from the penitentiary, she will always bear the marks that she was guilty of being an embezzler.

I am glad Jesus does more than pardon people when He saves them by the grace of God. A man may have pardon and still be guilty, but justification carries with it the idea that man is as though he had never sinned. In the eyes of God, a justified sinner stands perfect in Jesus Christ. Justification is wonderful. Our sins are cared for - past, present and future under the blood!

God's sovereignty is seen in **foreordination, predestination, calling, justification**, and then **glorification**. I am glad that one day all five links in this chain are coming together. One day every one of God's elect is going to be together in that great circle because the One who did foreknow, the One who did predestinate, the One who called, and the One who justified, is going to glorify all of His people. It will be wonderful when God's elect all get together for the first time in the glory world.

As I said, this circle cannot be broken because God's power cannot be penetrated, God's promises cannot be broken. God's purpose cannot be nullified, and because God's will and compassion cannot be done away with by all the power of mankind. The glorification of the elect of God is going to be the greatest thing that ever transpired in the history of this world. I believe we are living close to the end of time, and I long for the second coming of our Lord and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Not too long ago I buried one of the best friends I ever had - a Baptist deacon - one of God's truly beloved. He was one of God's elect, one of God's great men, one of God's noblemen. I thought of this man when I wrote about him in the last chapter of my book, "TAPS FOR ETERNITY," in the sermon, "Gone, But Not Forgotten." He believed the doctrine of election and would weep and rejoice while I preached it.

At first, I could not understand, humanly speaking, how a man forty-two years of age, who was at the zenith of his life, standing for God's Word and serving God devotedly, was so suddenly snatched from this world. However, I accepted Romans 8:28 because I believe it applies in all things. I preached his funeral in a suit he gave me. We were deer hunting buddies, we were fishing buddies, and above all, we were buddies and brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I worried about his family very much because of their great loss. I waited until the marker was placed on his grave before I went back to the cemetery. I prayed constantly that God would reveal to his wife the doctrine of glorification as related to the doctrine of election. One day she came to me and said, "Brother Harold, if you like to see the marker that I placed for J.C., it is ready." So I went out to the cemetery and I stood by the grave of my best friend and I saw written on his tombstone these words:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28).

When I read this, I knew my prayers were answered.

Let me close by saying, "I ain't what I want to be; I ain't what I'm gonna be; but praise God, I ain't what I was."

God has a circle which is being progressively formed, and it cannot be broken. Will His circle ever be broken? No! No! Ten thousand times no!