

# The Sovereign Grace Messenger

*A Publication Of The Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship*

**“THE LORD HATH PREPARED HIS THRONE IN THE HEAVENS;  
AND HIS KINGDOM RULETH OVER ALL.”**

Psalm 103:19

Issue 17

Spring 2007

*“That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the  
LORD, that he might be glorified.”*      **Isaiah 61:3b**

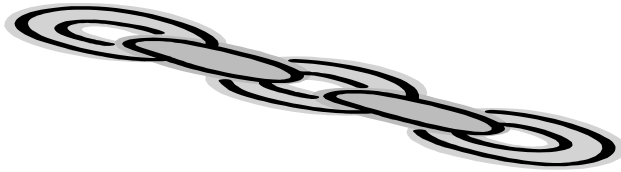


# The Plan Of Salvation

Robert Haldane

(1764-1842)

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified them he also glorified.”* (Romans 8:28-30)



“Glorification is spoken of as having already taken place, because what God has determined to do may be said to be already done. *‘He calls those things that be not as though they were.’* The Apostle does not say that those whom God predestinates He calls, and that those whom He justifies He glorifies; but, speaking in the past time, he says that those whom God did predestinate, them He hath also called, and justified, and glorified. By this he expresses the certainty of the counsel of God. In the same way, in the Old Testament, things future were spoken of as already accomplished, on account of the infallibility of the promises of God; so that before Jesus Christ came into the world, it was said, *‘Unto us a child is born, unto us as son is given.’* And He Himself speaks of what is future as already accomplished. *‘I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.’ ‘Now I am no more in the world,’* John xvii 4, 11. In like manner the Apostle speaks here of glory as already come, to show how certain it is that those who are called and justified shall be glorified. And this is in accordance with the object he has in view, which is to console the believer amidst his afflictions. For when he thus suffers, and all things appear to conspire for his ruin, and to be opposed to his eternal salvation, he is represented as already glorified by God, and during the combat as having already received the crown of life.

The plan of salvation is here set before us in its commencement, in the intermediate steps of its progress, and in its consummation. Its commencement is laid in the eternal purpose of God, and its consummation is the eternal glory of the elect. He calls those whom He predestinated to faith in Christ, to repentance and to a new life. He justifies by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ those whom He hath called; and finally He will glorify those whom He hath justified...

...In looking back on this passage, we should observe that, in all that is stated, man acts no part, but is passive, and all is done by God. He is elected, and predestined, and called, and justified, and glorified by God. The Apostle was here concluding all that he had said before in enumerating topics of consolation to believers, and is now going on to show that God is *‘for us’*, or on the part of His people. Could anything, then, be more consolatory to those who love God, than to be in this manner assured that the great concern of their salvation is not left in their own keeping? God, even their covenant God, hath taken the whole upon Himself. He hath undertaken for them. There is no room, then, for chance or change: He will perfect that which concerneth them.”

(From “An Exposition Of Romans”)

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## Special Acknowledgements

To the writers who have given of themselves to produce the excellent articles in this magazine, who do so only as a “*labour of love*”, we thank you and pray that God would bless all of your labors to His eternal glory and the good of souls.

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A special word of thanks is in order to Tom Ehlers. Some of the pictures in this as well as past issues of *The Sovereign Grace Messenger* have been used by his permission. His excellent photography has added considerably to the overall effect of the magazine. With his permission, we hope to be using many more of his photos in the issues to come.

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To the contributors, whom God has enabled to supply the needed funds for this endeavor, we thank you and are aware that this work continues by your God-given concern for the Gospel and your generosity.

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The front cover, “Almond Trilogy By Julio C.”, is used by permission from the artist. A special word of thanks to Daniel Kobb who acquired the rendition, the permission, and added the illustration.

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Some objects and pictures in this publication are from:  
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**The Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship officially began on that solemn day of tragedy for our country, September 11, 2001. It was held at Bible Baptist Church of St. Louis, Missouri.**

**The next annual meeting of The Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship is scheduled to be held again on September 11 of this year, 2007, at Bible Baptist Church.**

**Look for more detailed information concerning this year’s annual meeting in the next issue of *The Sovereign Grace Messenger*.**

# SALVATION: *PURPOSED*

Ron Staley

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*“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2nd Timothy 1:8-10*“

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When brought under a convicting work of God’s Holy Spirit, and made conscious not only of sin but of sin against the God who is infinitely holy; when made to feel the guilt that merits only judgment, and convinced that there is a hell where sin meets its just reward; when made in some way to cry “What shall I do to be saved”, why did this happen? Then when this fear that grips will not let go, and the soul finds no rest; when all self-effort is exhausted, and the consciousness that sin is still in control causes you in some way to cry “*unclean, unclean!*” how is this fear relieved? Oh, you may say, “I heard the best news that ever I could hear!” You might continue, “It wasn’t what I could do, or ever do, that enabled me to come to God, but God whose word showed me that my sin could only be forgiven and I could only be received by Him if I came to believe and trust His Son, Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice alone was sufficient for my complete forgiveness, whose wounds alone could heal my sinful soul, and by whom alone I could come to God.” God had sent His Son to save sinners, and that was you. And you knew that you must turn from all self-effort and put your trust in Christ alone, or else you must die in your sins. In hearing you believed, and in believing you trusted your very self to Christ and wanted no longer to be your own but His, who died for you and rose again. The following of Christ in baptism and desire to be a part of those who also confessed faith in Jesus Christ was but a matter of course. Now you can sing with understanding, “Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.”

## GRACE SAVES

If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, where did that faith come from? Did God’s grace come to you because you believed, or do you believe because of God’s grace? If you are among those of us who consider ourselves “sovereign grace”, convinced from Scripture that the grace that saves proceeds only from God’s will and independent of any other factor, then you believe that this grace is bestowed only



Ron Staley

Pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Mechanicsville, Virginia and Editor of *The Sovereign Grace Messenger*.

because it is “*of God*” and only “*of God*”. Paul described this “*so great salvation*” in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, chapter 1 and verse 9: “*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.*” Without exception, grace is never presented in Scripture as simply a provisional means but as the positive cause of salvation. Paul’s “*by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast*”, in Ephesians 2:8-9, leaves absolutely no room for any other cause of true faith in Christ except “*grace*”. Faith is not a merit that brings grace; for earned grace would not be grace but merit indeed. Faith comes because of grace, just as was said of those in Achaia that they “*had believed through grace*”. (Acts 18:27) Here is the blessed beginning in time of the outworking of God’s purposed grace. Here you can sing with Brother Newton, “Amazing grace – how sweet the sound – that saved a wretch like me!”

But is this grace that brings faith, that brings the blessed standing of “*justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*”, the whole scope of grace in salvation? Or does this same divine grace, this grace purposed, have a much larger design?

## ONE PURPOSE: ONE SALVATION

We may look at a tree—for our purpose, a fruit-bearing tree—the seed of which was planted in the ground. Eventually, with the proper nourishment, it will push through the sod and begin its upward growth. As the trunk begins to develop, it grows ever taller and larger in circumference. Limbs begin to push their way out of the trunk—still part of the same tree—and leaves bud forth until they reach their designed maturity. Then the tree shows just what variety it is when a particular kind of fruit springs forth and matures on its branches. With all of its development, with all of its many parts, it is still one tree. Every element that would be in that full-grown tree was contained in a single seed. All that was needful for it to grow and bear fruit were the right conditions and the process of time. The purpose of the tree lay hidden in its seed all the time. With all of its multiple parts, each one bearing an essential relationship to the whole, its divine Designer made it to be one tree out of one purpose.

In Isaiah 61, verses 1-3, the purpose of God in His salvation is given and it is likened to a tree. For those who hear the “*good tidings*”, whose hearts were broken by sin but have now been bound up and healed; those who have been liberated from the bondage of sin, who now exchange comfort and joy for their mourning, etc.; the purpose behind it all is made known. And it is given in the language of similitude: “*that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified.*” (Isaiah 61:3b).

The purpose of God is one—multifaceted, but yet one. We must often change our purpose or at least alter it due to unforeseen circumstances. But unlike us, God is never taken by surprise. Without exception, there is no power able to prevent His bringing to pass everything that He has purposed. And though in the most comprehensive sense this involves all that takes

place in time, as Paul declares in Ephesians 1:11, “according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will”, it is still in the context of the salvation of those chosen by Him who have been “predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”(Ephesians 1:11) And just like those divinely planted trees of Isaiah 61:3, the highest purpose is “That we should be to the praise of His glory.”(Ephesians 1:12a) God never has a plan B, because plan A never fails! “For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, (singular) and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” (Isaiah 14:27)

God’s purposed salvation does not stop when the sinner is “justified by the faith of Christ.” (Galatians 2:16) The soul that is truly justified, freely and forever by faith in Jesus Christ, was purposed by God to be brought to a certain end. Too many stop short when quoting Romans 8, verse 28 when they repeat, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” The rest of the sentence, which says, “Who are the called according to His purpose”, qualifies the intent of that precious promise. What purpose? The one clearly given in the next verse! “For whom (not what, but 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.”(Ro.8:29)

God’s salvation comprehends all that takes place from the moment the regenerate soul believes in Jesus Christ. It includes all the progress in the soul of the same as he follows “on to know the Lord” (Hosea 6:3), and shall only be consummated “in the day of Jesus Christ”. God never begins a work of His grace in one but that He oversees everything in the course of that new life and shall bring it to the end purpose, “which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”. This is why Paul could sit in a Roman prison, write to a church that had been founded about a decade before and who had greatly suffered for their faith in Jesus Christ, and be assured that though he was not present, God was and would bring them to the end purpose of His salvation. “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6). Those who are indeed saved are **being** saved and **shall be** saved. As a matter of fact, in the New Testament salvation often looks ahead to the day of Jesus Christ. We are to be “Looking unto

Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2a), and looking for Him to accomplish, in finality, this purposed salvation (Hebrews 9:28). “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Ro.13:11). The tree that is planted is of God’s planting, and His whole purpose shall be accomplished in it.

## ALL OF GRACE

John Newton expressed well his understanding of the comprehensive nature of salvation when he wrote, “Thro’ many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come; ‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home”. Grace is just as much involved in the holiness we are to pursue as in the faith with which we began. It is not a different grace that teaches us to “live godly in Christ Jesus”. The very same grace that brought the wondrous gift of salvation in Christ to begin with “will lead me home”. This is even emphasized by Paul in Titus that it is the very “grace of God that bringeth salvation” that teaches us to deny ungodliness and to live “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12).

That word, “teaching”, is from a Greek word with the meaning of “to train, to instruct, to educate, to discipline, and even to

chasten.” Christ is not only our Saviour but He is also our Teacher. And so effective a Teacher is He that He shall not have a single student to fail of graduation.

What God purposed in eternity He works out in time, so that in the end, the whole of what He purposed could be written in big letters, “AND IT CAME TO PASS.” This is a measureless subject and a vast theme for this issue of *The Sovereign Grace Messenger*. This writer keenly feels his severe limitations in dealing with it. The other writers have, in various ways, expressed the same sentiment. But even with the sense of limitation strongly felt, there is still something that needs to be said.

## PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

God has entrusted His Gospel to us. What a tremendous responsibility is ours then to preach it, testify concerning it, and pray for “the God of all grace” to give ears to hear and a heart to receive His divine Son, the Christ revealed therein! God has not made

His truth known, even the truth of His absolute sovereignty, as an excuse for us to nurture the unscriptural attitude that, “God will save His elect so that we need do nothing”. That would be a total misunderstanding of His Word. If anything, those who know that “salvation is of the Lord” should be foremost and most fervent in the proclamation of the Gospel. God, who chose an “innumerable multitude” to save from this perishing world, also chose the means by which they would be saved, for “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21b). The Gospel, by which means God saves His elect, is not addressed to the elect. The Gospel is addressed to sinners. We do not know who the elect are, but we do know that all men are responsible to believe and repent. If we are part of His Bride, the true church, then we are to be the voice used of the Spirit of God to say to “whosoever will”, “come” (Re.22:17). Men are only justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Election is the reason why those who hear and believe do so. But there is no salvation apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

Then you who do believe, who trust in Christ alone, who rest in Him and His finished work of redemption, remember that the work is not finished in you. It is indeed finished **for you** but His work will continue **in you** until the day of Jesus Christ. His call is for you to take up your cross and follow Him. His gracious provision, all the means appointed for your spiritual progress, is to be taken and diligently used.

What a blessed thing, more than can ever be fully comprehended by you, when Christ adds you to His church because you have been made a part of His body. Know well that the church is there for your progress. Acts 2:47 shows a present and continuing salvation to those whom God adds to His true churches, and should inform us that the church is the means of our spiritual growth and progress. Berry’s Interlinear translates Acts 2:47b, “and the Lord added those who were being saved daily to the assembly”. This is a matter of God’s sovereign grace as well. How the church suffers when the zeal is for numbers rather than for saints! There you are to worship with the people of God; as a body, you are to learn to serve God and one another. In His churches, God has gifted men to teach and instruct you, and has given them as a divine gift to you. (Ephesians 4:11-13) Those who confess that God is sovereign, that His grace is sovereign, and that He in Christ is Ruler over all should be the most faithful and fervent in gathering themselves together in His name.

# EDITORIAL: The Doctrine Of Salvation

Without contradiction, the theme of salvation is one of the most important doctrines in the Bible. The mission that Jesus came to accomplish was announced prior to his birth, when an angel told Joseph, *“Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins”* (Matt. 1:21). Likewise, the Apostle Paul declared, *“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”* (1 Tim. 1:15).

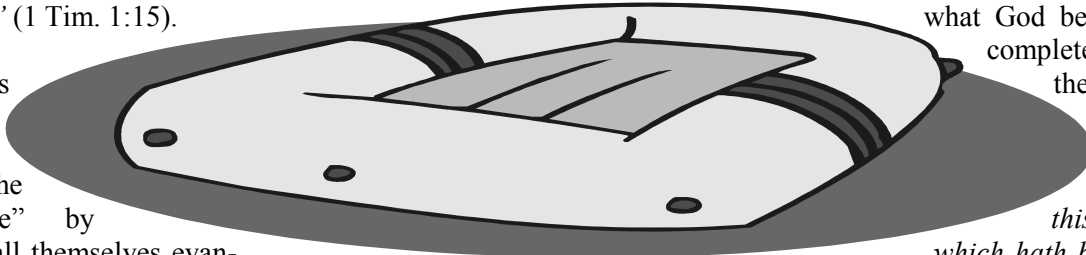
Yet there has been a trend away from the use of the word “save” by some who call themselves evangelical in this day and age. It is a word that is rarely spoken in some churches. I suppose people are embarrassed by it; after all, those who need saving are a wretched lot. So because men don’t like to see themselves as vile sinners in need of salvation, preachers turn to softer expressions. They talk about being committed, deciding for Christ, or joining the church, but not about being saved.

However, we should never hesitate to use the language of the Scriptures. Our forefathers in the faith were not so disillusioned as to use substituted terms that were not offensive to carnal men. The word “save” in its various forms is used hundreds of times in both the Old and New Testaments, and it should be at the center of our Gospel preaching. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,”* is our message (Acts 16:31).

Men need saving, of course, because they are poor lost sinners. The need exists because sin exists. Sin damns us to hell, but the cross work of Jesus Christ delivers us from the wrath to come. Although man has cut himself off from God by his sin, *“the LORD’S*

*hand is not shortened that it cannot save”* (Isa. 59:1). Even though we are guilty and liable to punishment because of sin, God shows mercy and by His sovereign power saves lost sinners from sin through the Lord Jesus Christ.

God sent His only begotten Son into the world to rescue fallen man from the sin that ruined his soul. Jesus Christ is



the focus of God’s saving work. Jesus said He came in order *“to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Luke 19:10). Jesus came to die, not as a noble martyr in order to win our affections, but as a substitute in order to satisfy God’s Law. Christ saves us through His perfect obedience to the will of His Father. He obeyed all the demands of the Law and He suffered the penalty on behalf of those who had broken it.

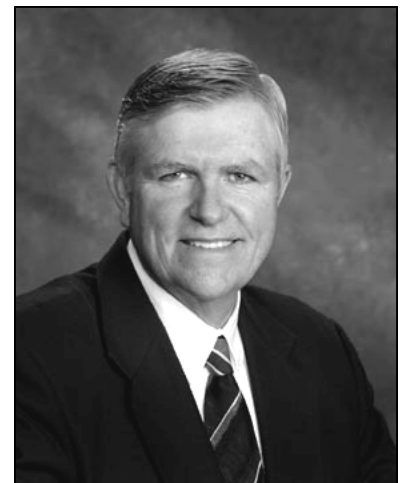
According to the Scriptures, the initiative to save is God’s (*“salvation is of the Lord”*); the Savior that delivers us from sin is Christ (*“the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world”*); and the instrumental means of salvation is faith (*“by grace are ye saved through faith”*). None are saved but those who believe in Jesus Christ. The duty of Gospel preachers is to call sinners to believe in Christ and be saved. It is our high and holy privilege to announce, *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (Rom. 10:13).

God alone can save. This wondrous salvation is all of grace, all accomplished by Christ in His one eternal

sacrifice for sin, all applied by the work of the Holy Spirit, and shall all issue to the eternal glory of God. But, as is the theme of this issue of the Sovereign Grace Messenger, this *“of God”* salvation is one salvation with a past, a present and a future aspect. That which God out of His purposed grace begins in time He shall only consummate in eternity. And it is certain that what God begins, He shall surely complete. As in the case of the Philipians, so in the case of every redeemed soul, you may be *“confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”* (Phil. 1:6).

May God be pleased to save many by the preaching of the Gospel of salvation in our day. Thus, we proclaim with Isaac Watts:

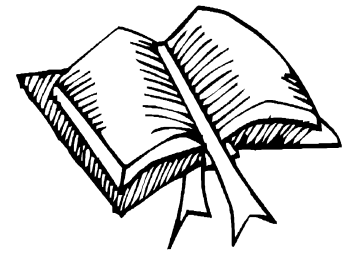
*But there’s a voice of sovereign grace  
Sounds from the sacred Word—  
Ho! ye despairing sinners, come,  
And trust upon the Lord.*



**Dean Olive, Guest Editorialist**

Dean Olive is pastor of Grace Baptist Church of Madison, Alabama and has been an active member of The Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship from its beginning.

# *Sovereign Grace Bible Conferences*



APRIL 17 - 19, 2007

**Bible Baptist Church, St. Louis, Missouri**  
**Holmes Moore, Pastor**  
**Tom Henry, Assistant Pastor**

The annual Spring Sovereign Grace Bible Conference, hosted by Bible Baptist Church of St. Louis, Missouri, is scheduled for April 17, 18 and 19, 2007. Twelve speakers are on the schedule, below listed.

**Tuesday, April 17**

**Morning**

10:00 AM - Kyle White  
11:00 AM - David King

**Evening**

7:00 PM - Dean Olive  
8:00 PM - Gene Breed

**Wednesday, April 18**

**Morning**

10:00 AM - Al Garard  
11:00 AM - Terry Worthan

**Evening**

7:00 PM - Jim Gables  
8:00 PM - Mark Webb

**Thursday, April 19**

**Morning**

10:00 AM - Larry Dean  
11:00 AM - Ron Staley

**Evening**

7:00 PM - Don Johnson  
8:00 PM - Conrad Murrell

David King will be speaking on April 15, before the Conference. Ken White will be speaking on April 22 in the services of Bible Baptist.

Two meals a day, each day of the Conference, are provided by Bible Baptist Church for all who attend. Lunch follows the morning sessions. Dinner is served before the evening services at 5:30 PM.

For information on accommodations in the St. Louis area, contact the church office at:  
(314) 645-4248

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**JUNE 19 - 21, 2007**

**Calvary Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, Arkansas**  
**Warner Worthan, Pastor**

The annual Pine Bluff Sovereign Grace Bible Conference is scheduled to be held this year from June 19-21. For Conference information, contact Pastor Worthan. Phone: (870) 534-9125, Email: [wrworthan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wrworthan@sbcglobal.net)

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**This Year's Speaker**

Pastor Don Theobald,  
Hamilton Ontario, Canada

**JULY 23 - 27, 2007**

**Summer Youth Camp**  
Steve Long, Director

**Contact Information**

Phone: (417) 369-1092  
Email: [sovereigngrace@juno.com](mailto:sovereigngrace@juno.com)

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**OCTOBER 22-26, 2007**

**Grace Baptist Church, West Milton, Pennsylvania**  
**David King, Pastor**

Pastor David King has announced the dates for the Sovereign Grace Bible Conference at Grace Baptist Church of West Milton, PA as Monday evening through Friday morning, October 22-26, 2007. For further information, contact Pastor King at: (570) 742-8915.

# SALVATION: BEGUN IN THE SOUL

Holmes Moore

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*“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John 3:36*

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Salvation is a comprehensive term that includes all God has done, is doing and shall yet do for us and in us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. We often use the terms “saved” and “salvation” to reference the beginning of God’s work in the soul. Someone may ask us, “Are you saved?” by which they intend, “Are you a Christian?” “Have you exercised personal faith in Jesus Christ so as to have your sins forgiven and to possess God’s salvation?”

At times I have answered this question in order to make a point, and have replied, “In some respects I **am** saved, yet in other respects, I am **not yet** saved, but I am **being** saved. In respect to my divine calling, my regeneration (new birth), my justification, and my adoption into the family of God, I **am** saved. Regarding all these, my salvation is ‘a done deal!’ In these aspects of salvation, I will not be more saved when I have been in heaven ten thousand years than I am now.”

“Yet in other respects my salvation is not complete, and I am still **being** saved. When it comes to my conversion, my sanctification, and all that is included in my glorification (the resurrection from the dead, the receiving of a new glorious body like the one Christ has now), and my translation to my heavenly Home, I have **not yet** experienced any of these, though they are all sure to me by the purchase of Christ, and the promise of God.”

By this example, I hope it becomes clear that salvation is “a many splendored thing!” One of its many component parts, as it were, is **regeneration**—that instantaneous and mysterious communication of the Life of God to the human soul. It is not the implanting of a new substance, but the infusion of a new life principle into the individual soul. (Rom. 8:9-11) It is an act of God’s sovereign will, with no contingency on the sinner’s part. (James 1:18)

As a consequence of regeneration, every grace will eventually spring forth. The first among these will be **repentance** and **faith**. (Eph. 2:8-9) Repentance is our coming to a new mind-set, in which we hate the sin we once loved and in genuine contrition, we turn from it. Faith is our coming to a heart-reliance and a soul-trust in the God of Revelation, Who has made promise in His Word, and we now trust that promise and hold it close to our hearts.



Holmes Moore

Pastor of Bible Baptist Church, St. Louis, Missouri and President of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Seminary. Brother Moore served as the first Chairman of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship.

**Conversion** is the result of regeneration, as regeneration is the result of the Divine call (Rom. 8:30) and consists of the entire course of the soul’s turning to God. Unlike regeneration, conversion is **always** a process, and it often has its definite stages. (Luke 22:32) While it must have a definite beginning, conversion is the work of a lifetime. Faith has its foundation laid in regeneration, but is manifested in its workings through conversion. By faith, we work out the various aspects of the Holy

Life, ever remembering that “*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*” (Rom. 14:23b) We also must ever keep before our eyes the stern reality that “*without (holiness) no man shall see the Lord.*” (Heb. 12:14b) It is between these two boundaries that we walk as we “*live by faith*” and “*work out (our) own salvation with fear and trembling,*” knowing that “*it is God which worketh in (us) both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*” (Rom. 1:17b; Phil. 2:12b, 13).

## The Divine Calling

With this brief summary of the doctrine of salvation in mind, let us take a closer look at some of these points that we have barely mentioned. First, we will look at the **Divine calling**, of which the Apostle Paul made mention in Romans 8:30 saying, “*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them He also called...*” To the ordinary believers at Corinth, he further explained, “*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*” (1 Cor. 1:26-31)

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must **come** to the Lord Jesus Christ. This “coming” does not involve a necessary physical movement, however. It is a

matter of the inner man, and is an act of faith. We further believe that no sinner either can or will come to Christ unless he is led to do so, by the Holy Spirit. (John 6:44) Thus, our Church Covenant, along with most Baptist Church Covenants, begins with the words, "Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour..."

The doctrine of the effectual call of the Holy Spirit is well established in the Scriptures. Therefore, the terminology that we use in discussing it is largely Scriptural terminology, taken from such texts as Romans 8:30b, "...And whom **He called, them He also justified...**" and 1 Corinthians 1:26, "*For ye see **your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men... are called.***"

Not only is the doctrine of the effectual call well established in the Scriptures, it is amply witnessed to by historic Christianity. Its definition is clearly given in historic Christian Confessions: "The effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel." (*Shorter Catechism, Westminster Confession*)

In summary, we say the effectual calling is that work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and conscience of a man that actually regenerates and brings to saving faith in Christ.

### **The Necessity Of The Effectual Call**

The Biblical truth of the effectual calling recognizes a distinction between the general influence of the Gospel and mere moral persuasion, and the special call of the Holy Spirit made to those who are the heirs of salvation. The Gospel does not produce the same response in all who hear it. Some repent and are saved. Others are moved to conviction, but refuse it. Still others are hardened by it. What makes this difference? Is it a difference merely accounted for by human nature? Or can it be traceable to Divine activity? The Bible

clearly ascribes this difference to the working of God in the heart. His effectual call explains why sinners react so differently to the Gospel. (1 Cor. 4:7)

Why is it that the effectual call of the Holy Spirit is so essential? The condition of mankind demands it! (Eph. 2:1-5) The Bible teaches that before regeneration, we were spiritually dead in sins. Our hearts loved sin. Our wills were in rebellion against God. Without an omnipotent Divine operation, the Gospel would have no more power to save than the Law does.

Furthermore, the sacrifice of Christ, which has as its design the salvation of sinners

**"We say the effectual calling is that work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and conscience of a man that actually regenerates and brings to saving faith in Christ."**

(Psa. 2:7-9; Isa. 53:10-11), demands the effectual call. Without it, Christ would have died in vain! Effectual calling is that Divine chain that binds together Christ's death and man's salvation.

### **The Work Wrought In The Soul By Effectual Calling**

There are many Scriptural designations for this work of God in the soul:

- It is called a regeneration. (Titus 3:5)
- It is referred to as a spiritual resurrection with Christ. (Eph. 1:19-20)
- It is a calling out of darkness into light (1 Pet. 2:9)
- It is a passing from death unto life. (John 5:24)
- It is described as a new birth. (John 3:3)
- It is a spiritual quickening. (Col. 2:13)
- It is the impartation of a new heart. (Ezek. 11:19)
- It is the constituting of a new creature. (11 Cor. 5:17)

In this work, the Holy Spirit is active while the sinner is passive. This fact should be obvious from the terms used. One must be passive in birth, resurrection, surgery, and creation! It is said of the doctor who tries to treat himself that he has a fool for a physician and a fool for a patient! But the case would be far worse if a **sinner** would and could participate in *saving himself*.

This is absolutely impossible for a number of reasons. The work performed is supernatural and, therefore, is of God alone. The sinner's heart is changed. His character is transformed. His will is subdued and renewed. Logically, regeneration precedes and produces repentance and faith. A renewed sinner is able to exercise the powers of the new life God has deposited in him; but he can have no part in obtaining these powers.

To man's consciousness, it is **his** work, when, in actuality, **all is of God**. The work, though effectual, is not forceful. The term "irresistible grace" is sometimes misleading and misunderstood. It is meant to distinguish between "common grace", which may be resisted, and "efficacious grace", which cannot be resisted. All men, even the very elect of God, at one time or another, **do resist** the common grace of God. When we say that no man may resist the special, or efficacious grace of God, we intend that no elect person may resist it ultimately or finally, so as to be lost and damned forever.

God works to make us willing, so that "*whosoever will may come.*" It holds true what was spoken to the Messiah by the Spirit of Prophecy, "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth.*" (Psalm 110:3)

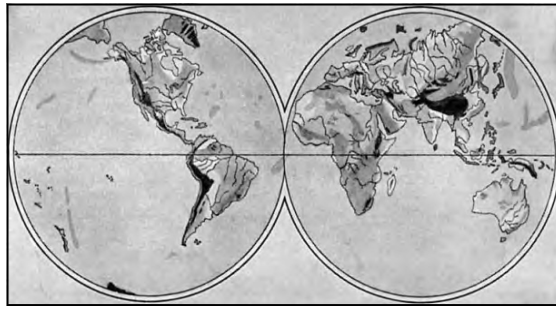
The decision to accept Christ is truly and freely ours, though we are led to it by God's sweet and almighty Spirit.

*Christ's Sheep*

**"They are His by God the Father's gift, - His by redemption and purchase, - His by calling and choosing, - His by feeding, keeping, and preserving, - and His by their own consent and will. They are His peculiar property."**

**J. C. Ryle**

# World Missions:



# News & Updates

## The Home Going And Continuing Legacy Of Bill Keathley

Fellow laborer in the Gospel and director of Gospel Light Foundation for the Blind, Bill Keathley, went home to be with the Lord on December 20, 2006.



Bill Keathley

Brother Bill leaves behind 24 years of dedicated and fruitful ministry to the blind and deaf-blind. He was an ardent teacher and preacher of the doctrines of grace. Bill lost his sight in his twenties. After his conversion, he said in his testimony, "I had a burning desire to begin reading and studying the Bible for myself, but by then I was legally blind and confined to a wheelchair due to my rheumatoid arthritic condition. As I continued to read and study my Braille Bible, God began to reveal more and more of the precious truths of Scripture to me. I became burdened with a desire to serve the Lord in spite of my physical disabilities."

The Lord gave Bill that special opportunity in September 1982 when Bill and his wife, Barbara, began Gospel Light Foundation for the Blind.

The Keathleys soon found that it was very rare for churches to have any kind of ministry or outreach to the blind. Becoming more and more impressed with the spiritual needs of the blind, they purposed to make churches aware of this much neglected mission field and to provide them with the specialized knowledge and assistance that it takes to reach the blind with "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ."

Today, Gospel Light Foundation for the Blind seeks to be an extension of the local church by providing the materials to the blind that most local churches are unable to provide themselves. The GLFB ministry is dedicated to proclaiming the historic doctrines of

the Christian faith. More than 3,000 recorded messages by doctrines of grace preachers and Bible teachers are sent to the blind absolutely free on a read-and-return basis. GLFB also has a number of Christian books recorded by volunteer readers.

Gospel Light offers to the blind anywhere in the world three Braille Bible correspondence courses. The first course, *Right with God*, consists of thirteen lesson booklets each of which concludes with ten objective questions. This course is evangelistic, dealing with the fall of man and explains that God's plan of redemption is all of grace. The second course, *Knowing*

*and Serving God*, consists of sixteen lesson booklets. This study begins with the doctrine of salvation but continues on to spiritual growth and maturity in the Christian's life. The third course, *The Doctrines of Grace*, expounds the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel and is an in-depth study of the five points of Calvinism. These Bible study booklets are embossed on a computer-driven Braille printer and are bound together with plastic comb binders by a punch and bind machine.

Hundreds of students throughout the world, including countries such as the United States, Canada, England, Cuba, India, Brazil, China, West Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Malawi, and Kenya are enrolled in these Bible stud

One very important ministry of Gospel Light Foundation for the Blind is the counsel to the blind by phone, Braille, or cassette tape. Also, GLFB sponsors a Bible study for the blind in Rockledge, Florida, which has continued since the

Keathleys began it approximately ten years ago.

The blind throughout the United States are eligible to receive upon request a free talking book machine, which currently is a cassette tape player. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handi-

capped, producer of these machines, is in the process of switching tens of thousands of recorded books from cassette tape to digital format. In order to keep up with this new technology GLFB will need to be able to loan out the same kind of digital books used by the NLS. Already the GLFB ministry has begun transferring recorded

