

The Intersection of Election & Rejection

Hebrews 4:3

July 29, 2018

INTRO: VIDEO – *Election #1 “10 Reflections on Election”*

- **There’s a blast from our past... 2011**
- How’s the whole heaven/hell thing work?
- Who does what & how do you know?

- Today we shift from “10 Reflections/Election” to *“The Intersection of Election & Rejection”*

- We’ll answer:
 - Who goes where? How? Why/why not?

CONTEXT:

- Hebrews & Christological exhortation
- 5 Warnings of Hebrews
- Warning #2... *Don’t Disconnect!*
 - Hebrews 3
 - Hebrews 4:1-2

TEXT:

Hebrews 4:3

*For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall NOT enter my rest,’” **although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.***

John 6:29 = **the work of God is our belief!!!!**

Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

BIG IDEA: *Biblical-belief (a.k.a. saving faith) is THE Gospel's gracious gift from God*

*the LORD added to their numbers
those who were being saved*

PREVIEW:

1. Your **Selection**
2. Your **Surrender**
3. Your **Separation**
4. Your **Salvation**
5. Your **Sanctification**
6. Your **Sabbath**
7. Your **Security**

T/S: *See the PLAN...PROMISE...PERSON & people of election!*

I. Your Selection

Jeremiah 1:5

*"Before I formed you **in the womb I knew you**, and before you were born I consecrated you; **I appointed you a prophet to the nations.**"*

Ephesians 1:5 & 11

*He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to **the kind intention of His will...** also we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined according to His purpose...***

Psalm 65:4

*How blessed is the one whom **You choose** & bring near to You*

Titus 1:1

Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God...

VIDEO: *Election #3*

2 Thessalonians 2:13

God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

II. Your Surrender

Jesus is LORD! & John 6:44... the miracle of being drawn!

VIDEO: *Election #2*

III. Your Separation

Romans 8:28-30

*And we know that **God causes ALL things** to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

Belief and unbelief are very serious things... belief with NOTHING else will save us; ...unbelief with EVERYTHING else will condemn us. – MacArthur

- i. Lost vs. Found.... Sheep vs. Goats...
- ii. Wheat vs. Weeds.... Walkers vs. Talkers...
- iii. Phonies vs. Faithful...
- iv. Those who **stumble** over Christ...
- v. Those who **STAND ON** Christ...

VIDEO: *Election #4*

IV. Your Salvation (mMm)

- a. Ephesians 2:8-9
- b. Ephesians 2:10
- c. **BEWARE...** Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Corinthians 13:5

V. Your Sanctification

God's work IN us... generates God's work thru us!

- a. Your **Spiritual-fruit**/sanctity
- b. Your **Spiritual-gifts**/strengths
- c. Your **Spiritual-warfare**/struggles
 - i. Satan's Sifting...
 - ii. Sorrows & Sickness

Works are neither the root nor substitute for faith... No! There is no such thing as "saving works" - that's gospel-defying & gospel denying heresy! Instead, the Bible is abundantly clear... your God-honoring work is the fruit of your faith. - JDP

"...work out your Salvation with fear & trembling"

John 19:28-30

28After this, **Jesus, knowing that all was now finished**, said (to fulfill the Scripture), **"I thirst."** 29A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a **hyssop branch** and held it to his mouth. 30When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, **"It is finished,"** and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

VIDEO: *"It Is Finished finale"* (Gospel of John 2014)

2 Timothy 2:9-10 = (BOTH/and TENSION)

*I suffer to the extent of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God cannot be chained! For this reason I endure all things for the sake of the **elect**, so that they too **may obtain** the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.*

VI. Your Sabbath/rest

**** Rest in the chain of your grace-based salvation & Sabbath!*

***** Rest in the Compatiblist Position *****

Next week we will unpack *“The Rest of the Rest”*

VII. Your Security

- “He who the Son sets free is FREE indeed”
- “Eternal life” means never-ending!
- “I promise you...”
- “No one can snatch out of My hand...”

1 Peter 1:3-5

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

VIDEO: *Election #5*

CLOSE:

Ephesians 1:3-11

***3**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **4**For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5**he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **6**to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves...*

***11**In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will...*

Let's Pray

(twice)

VIDEO: *Election #6*

STUDY/RESEARCH NOTES:

Hebrews 4:1-3 (NASB)

¹ *Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. ² For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.*

³ *For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

Verse 3. *For we which have believed do enter into rest.* That is, **it is a certain fact that believers will enter into rest.** **That promise is made to "believers;"** and as we have evidence that we come under the denomination of believers, it will follow that we have the offer of rest as well as they. That this is **so the apostle proceeds to prove;** that is, he proceeds to show, **from the Old Testament, that there was a promise to "believers" that they would enter into rest.**

Since there was such a promise, and since there was danger that by unbelief that "rest" might be lost, he

*proceeds to show them the danger,
and to warn them of it.*

As he said, etc. See [Hebrews 3:11](#).

The meaning of this passage is this:—"God made a promise of rest to those who believe. They to whom the offer was first made failed, and did not enter in. It must follow, therefore, that the offer extended to others, since God designed that *some* should enter in, or that it should not be provided in vain. To them it was a solemn declaration, that *unbelievers* should not enter in - and this implied that *believers* would. As we now, "says he, "sustain the character of *believers*, it follows that to us the promise of rest is now made, and we may partake of it."

If they shall enter, etc. That is, they shall *not* enter in. See [Hebrews 3:11](#).

The "rest" here spoken of, as reserved for Christians, must be different from that of the promised land. It is something that pertains to Christians now, and it must, therefore, refer to the "rest" that remains in heaven.

Although the works were finished, etc.
This is a difficult expression. **What works are referred to?**

it may be asked. **How does this bear on the subject under discussion?**

How can it be a proof that there remains a "*rest*" to those who believe now?

This was the point to be demonstrated; and this passage was designed clearly to bear on that point.

As it is in our translation, the passage seems to make no sense whatever. Tindal renders it, "And that spake he verily long after that the works were made from the foundation of the world laid," which makes much better sense than our translation.

Doddridge explains it as meaning, *"And this may lead us further to reflect on what is elsewhere said concerning his works as they were finished from the foundation of the world."*

But it is difficult to see why they should reflect on his works just then, and how this would bear on the case in hand.

Prof. Stuart supposes that the word "rest" must be understood here before "works," and translates it, "Shall not enter into my rest-to wit, rest from the works which were performed when the world was founded."

Prof. Robinson (Lex.) explains it as meaning, "The rest here spoken of, 'MY rest,' could not have been God's resting from his works, ([Genesis 2:2](#),) for this rest, the Sabbath, had already existed from the creation of the world."

Dr. J.P. Wilson (MSS. Notes) renders it, "For we who have believed do enter into rest (or a cessation) indeed (καίτοι) of the works done (among men) from the beginning of the world."

Amidst this variety of interpretation it is difficult to determine the true sense.

But **perhaps the main thought may be collected from the following remarks.**

- (1.) The Jews, as the people of God, had a rest promised them in the land of Canaan. Of that they failed by their unbelief.
- (2.) **The purpose of the apostle was to prove that there was a similar promise made to the people of God long subsequent to that, and to which all his people were invited.**
- (3.) ***That rest was not that of the promised land, it was such as God had himself* when he had finished the work of creation. **That was peculiarly his rest - the rest of God, without toil or****

weariness, and after his whole *work* was finished.

- (4.) His people were invited to the same *rest* - the rest of God - to partake of his felicity; to enter into that bliss which *he* enjoyed when he had finished the work of creation. The happiness of the saints was to be *like* that. It was to be, in their case, also a rest from toil-to be enjoyed at the end of all that they had to do. **To prove that Christians were to attain to *such* a rest was the purpose which the apostle had in view - showing that it was a general doctrine pertaining to believers in every age, that there was a promise of rest for them.** I would, then, regard the middle clause of this verse as a parenthesis, and render the whole, "For we who are believers shall enter into rest-[the rest] indeed which occurred when the works were finished at the foundation of the world-as he said [in one place] as I have sworn in my wrath they shall not enter into *my* rest." That was the true rest-such rest or repose as *God* had when he finished the work of creation-such as he has now in heaven. *This gives the highest possible idea of the dignity and desirableness of that "rest" to which we look forward-for it is to be such as God enjoys, and is to elevate us more and*

more to him. What more exalted idea can there be of happiness than to participate in the calmness, the peace, the repose, the freedom from raging passions, from wearisome toil, and from agitating cares, which God enjoys? Who, torn with conflicting passions here, wearied with toil, and distracted with care, ought not to feel it a privilege to look forward to that rest?

Of this rest the Sabbath and the promised land were emblems.

They to whom the promise was made did not enter in; but some shall enter in, and the promise therefore pertains to us.

(* "he said" [Psalms 95:11](#))

- Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.

Confirms the Privileges of Those Who Believe, and the Misery of Those Who Continue in Unbelief

[4:3-10](#)

V. The apostle confirms the happiness of all those who truly believe the gospel; and this he does,

1. By asserting so positively the truth of it, from the experience of himself and others: "We, who have believed, do enter into rest, [v. 3](#). We enter into a blessed union with Christ, and into a communion with God through Christ; in this state we actually enjoy many sweet communications of pardon of sin, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace and earnestness of glory, resting from the servitude of sin, and reposing ourselves in God till we are prepared to rest with him in heaven."

2. He illustrates and confirms it that those who believe are thus happy, and do enter into rest.

(1.) From God's finishing his work of creation, and so entering into his rest ([v. 3,4](#)), appointing our first parents to rest the seventh day, to rest in God. Now as God finished his work, and then rested from it, and acquiesced in it, so he will cause those who believe to finish their work, and then to enjoy their rest.

(2.) From God's continuing the observance of the sabbath, after the fall, and the revelation of a Redeemer. They were to keep the seventh day a holy sabbath to the Lord, therein praising him who had raised them up out of nothing by creating power, and praying to him that he would create them anew by his Spirit of grace, and direct their faith to the promised Redeemer and restorer of all things, by which faith they find rest in their souls.

(3.) **From God's proposing Canaan as a typical rest for the Jews who believed: and as those who did believe, Caleb and Joshua, did actually enter**

into Canaan; so those who now believe shall enter into rest.

(4.) From the certainty of another rest besides that seventh day of rest instituted and observed both before and after the fall, and besides that typical Canaan-rest which most of the Jews fell short of by unbelief; for the Psalmist has spoken of another day and another rest, whence it is evident that there is a more spiritual and excellent sabbath remaining for the people of God than that into which Joshua led the Jews ([v. 6-9](#)), and this rest remaining,

[1.] A rest of grace, and comfort, and holiness, in the gospel state. This is the rest wherewith the Lord Jesus, our Joshua, causes weary souls and awakened consciences to rest, and this is the refreshing.

[2.] A rest in glory, the everlasting sabbatism of heaven, which is the repose and perfection of nature and grace too, where the people of God shall enjoy the end of their faith and the object of all their desires.

(5.) This is further proved from the glorious forerunners who have actually taken possession of this rest-God and Christ. It is certain that God, after the creating of the world in six days, entered into his rest; and it is certain that Christ, when he had finished the work of our redemption, entered into his rest; and these were not only examples, but earnest, that believers shall enter into their rest: He that hath entered into rest hath also ceased from his own works as God did from his, [v. 10](#). Every true believer hath ceased from his own works of righteousness, and from the burdensome works of the

law, as God and Christ have ceased from their works of creation and redemption.

VI. *The apostle confirms the misery of those who do not believe; they shall never enter into this spiritual rest, either of grace here or glory hereafter.*

This is as certain as the word and oath of God can make it.

As sure as God has entered into his rest, so sure it is that obstinate unbelievers shall be excluded.

As sure as the unbelieving Jews fell in the wilderness, and never reached the promised land, so sure it is that unbelievers shall fall into destruction, and never reach heaven.

As sure as Joshua, the great captain of the Jews, could not give them possession of Canaan because of their unbelief, notwithstanding his eminent valour and conduct, so sure it is that even Jesus himself, and captain of our salvation, notwithstanding all that fulness of grace and strength that dwells in him, will not, cannot, give to final unbelievers either spiritual or eternal rest: it remains only for the people of God; others by their sin abandon themselves to eternal restlessness.

Matthew Henry's Commentary

4:3 Verse 3 is introduced by *gar* and can indicate the **grounds for the preceding statement**, or according to Moffatt, the grounds for the statement in [4:1](#). **The NIV translates it as "*now*" to show transition to the next point.**

The participle translated "*we who have believed*" identifies the subject of the verb "*enter*," with the aorist tense specifying the preceding act of faith as that which enables entrance into the "*rest*."

The verb "*enter*" is emphatic by word order since it is first in the sentence. The significance of the present tense verb "*enter*" is the key interpretive issue in this verse.

Is the rest to be entered into something available in this life or is it future when one arrives in heaven? It can be understood to imply their entrance into rest is certain at some point in the future, probably heaven. More likely, however,

it indicates that they were in the process of entering the rest. It may be that the concept of rest in this passage connotes both a future expectation and a present reality.

Miller took the present tense as iterative, "with each believer, in consequence of his faith, entering in." According to Guthrie, no specific statement is given as to when or where the rest is entered.

This statement is followed by "*just as,*" which introduces the grounds for the preceding thought and shows that this quotation corresponds to the preceding quotation in [Heb 3:11](#).

The quotation is introduced by the perfect verb *eirēken* ("has said"), and most consider "God" as the subject (as in the NIV).

The quotation begins with "as," which may introduce a comparison with what follows or a consequence of what precedes.

The phrase "*they shall never enter*" accurately renders the Greek idiom, which (lit.) reads "if they shall enter," **indicating strong negation.**

The author rounds out the statement in [v. 3](#) with the clause "*and yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.*"

This is a concessive clause making the point that the "rest" was certainly available to be entered, and **although God's works were completed and the rest available, yet they did not enter into it**. The expectation was that they should have entered.

The NIV uses "creation" to render the Greek *"foundation of the world,"* which **is preceded by the preposition "from"** and **gives a temporal orientation as to when the "work" was finished.**

- The New American Commentary

In verse 3 the author once again quotes from Psalm 95:11, on which he has been basing his argument since Hebrews 3:7.

"They will not enter my rest" resoundingly condemns the wilderness generation for its failure to trust the promises of God and enter his Sabbath rest.

While Psalm 95:11 convicts the wilderness generation for its unfaithfulness, **the author of Hebrews uses it to**

reiterate a great theme of this passage: those who *believe* enter God's *rest*.

In fact...

the end of verse 3 affirms the availability of that rest to all

generations—even the wilderness generation—since God's rest started at the foundation of the world, a notion the author grounds in verse 4 by drawing from the creation narrative. Since the seventh day of creation, the opportunity to join God in his rest remains.

- Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary

Personal Faith

For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

(4:2-3)

From the human side, the first requirement for salvation is *faith*. Hearing the gospel is essential,

but it is not enough. The ancient Israelites heard God's good news of rest, but it did them no good since they did not accept it. They did not trust in the God who gave them the good news. It does no good to hear if we do not believe. That is the point here. Hearing the good news of the rest of God is of no benefit, no profit, to any person at any time unless the hearing is **united by faith**.

It is tragic that hell is going to be populated with people who will say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" To which Jesus will reply, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" ([Matt. 7:22-23](#); cf. [Luke 13:26-27](#)).

Their knowledge and their work was not united with faith.

Jews prided themselves on the fact that they had God's law and God's ordinances and God's rituals. They were especially proud to be descendants of Abraham. But Jesus warned that true children of Abraham believe and act as Abraham did ([John 8:39](#)).

Paul reminded his fellow Jews that *"He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of*

the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God" ([Rom. 2:29](#)).

Spiritually, an unbelieving Jew is a contradiction in terms.

ILLUSTRATION

If you run a red light and a policeman pulls you over and starts to give you a ticket, you do not show him your copy of the state driving laws as your defense. You do not try to establish your innocence by telling him you have read the booklet many times and know most of the regulations by heart. Far from making you innocent, this would make you all the more responsible for living up to the laws and all the more guilty for breaking them. Knowing the law is an advantage only if we obey it. "For indeed circumcision is of value, if you practice the Law," Paul says, "but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision" ([Rom. 2:25](#)).

Being a true Jew under the Old Covenant was not a matter of having the law but of obeying it. Being a true Christian under the New Covenant is not a matter of knowing the gospel but of trusting in it.

Having a Bible, reading it, knowing it, taking it to church every Sunday, and even teaching from it do not

make us Christians. Only trusting in the One to whom it testifies makes us Christians.

"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life," Jesus warned, "and it is these that bear witness of Me" ([John 5:39](#)).

The issue is not knowledge or work, but faith.

Paul was happy and thankful for the Thessalonian Christians not simply because they accepted the gospel as the Word of God, but because they believed it ([1 Thess. 2:13](#); cf. [2 Thess. 2:13](#)).

This signifies whole life commitment to the Lordship of Christ.

Both the positive and negative sides of this truth are categorical, absolute. Those *who have believed enter that rest* and those who do not believe *shall not enter My rest*.

Belief and unbelief are very serious things.
From the human side, belief with nothing else will save us; unbelief with everything else will condemn us.

These are the two equally true sides of the gospel, which is *good news* only for those who accept it with all their hearts.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Hebrews.

([Hebrews 4:3-10](#))

There has been so much confusion in the minds of commentators, so many conflicting interpretations of [Hebrews 4](#) in the past, that we deem it the more necessary to go slowly, and endeavor to supply full proof of the exposition which we are here advancing. That which appears to have occasioned the most difficulty for many is the statement made at the beginning of verse 3, "For we which have believed do enter into rest," or, more literally, "for we enter into the rest, who believed." Having regarded this verse as setting forth a spiritual rest into which believers now enter, they have altogether failed in their understanding of the second part of verse

1. That **sinner do enter into rest upon believing is clear from the promise of Christ in [Matthew 11:28](#)**. That the measure in which this is *enjoyed*, subsequently, will be determined by the degree and frequency with which faith is kept in exercise, we fully allow. But these things are not the subjects of which Paul is treating here in [Hebrews 4](#).

Considering that [Hebrews 4:3](#) speaks of the believer's present rest, many expositors have read this into the opening verse of the chapter, and have regarded its admonition as meaning, Let

Christians be on their guard lest, through carelessness and backsliding, they "seem to come short" in their experimental enjoyment of Christ's rest. In other words, they look upon the "rest" of the opening verses of [Hebrews 4](#) as signifying *communion* with the Lord. They argue that this *must* be what was in the apostle's mind, for he was not addressing the unconverted, but "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." With considerable ingenuity they have appealed to the context, the contents of the closing verses of [Hebrews 3](#), as supporting their contention. **Those who failed to enter into Canaan (which they consider was a figure of the saints' present portion) were not heathen, but Israelites, the covenant-people of God. We must therefore expose the error of this interpretation before proceeding farther.**

First, we would **remind the reader once more that the apostle was not here writing to Gentile Christians, but to Hebrews, whose circumstances and temptations were peculiar, unique.**

There was a very real and grave danger menacing them, not so much of interrupting their spiritual fellowship with Christ, but of shaking their faith in Him altogether. The temptation confronting them was the total abandonment of their Christian profession, of their faith in Jesus of Nazareth, now exalted at the right hand of God; and returning to Judaism. This fact must be kept in mind as we take up the study of each chapter of this Epistle. To lose sight of it, courts certain disaster in our interpretation.

Second, while it is true that the apostle's warning in [Hebrews 3](#) is taken from the history of Israel, the covenant people of God, **it needs to be borne in mind that in connection with Israel there was an election within an election, a spiritual one within the national.**

Romans 9:7, 8 distinctly affirms, "*Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*" Unless this fact be steadily remembered, much misunderstanding and error will ensue. The fact is that Israel *as a Nation*, in Old Testament times, is *not* a type of God's elect in this New Testament dispensation (as so many have wrongly supposed), but a figure of *Christendom* as a whole.

It was only the spiritual remnant, the elect of God within the nation, who foreshadowed His saints of today.

Third... *close attention to what is said of the Israelites in Hebrews 3 shows conclusively that they were an illustration not of true Christians out of communion with God, but instead, of nominal professors who were never born again.*

In proof of this note in [Hebrews 3:10](#) it is said of them, "They do always err in heart;" now though believers err frequently they do not so "always;" then it is added, "they have not known My ways"—could this be said of the spiritual election of God?

Surely not.

Again, in verse 11, We are told, "So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest:" but God is never wrathful with His own children. **Further, in verse 17 it is not simply said that "they died" but that their "carcasses fell" in the wilderness, sure proof is such language that they were not children of God, for "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" ([Ps. 116:15](#)).**

Finally, the words of the apostle in [Hebrews 3:19](#) admit of no misunderstanding, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." Thus, they were "children in whom is *no faith*" ([Deut. 32:20](#)).

Now at the beginning of chapter 4 the apostle applies this solemn warning to *test* the profession of those who were in danger of "departing from the living God."

First he says, "Let us *therefore* fear." The "therefore" would have no real force if after referring to unbelievers he should apply their example to warn believers, of the tendency and danger of ceasing to have *communion* with the Lord; in such a case his illustration would be strained and irrelevant. No, when he says, "Let us therefore fear" he obviously has in mind the danger of an empty profession, and sets them to a testing of their faith, which test is answered by perseverance. "*Lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.*" It was *not* a "rest" of communion into which they *had* entered but were warned against leaving, or failing to enjoy; but instead, a rest that was *promised*.

What follows clearly defines "His rest" and confirms what we have said above. It has to do with the Gospel, and not with precepts to saints! And the point insisted on is the presence or absence of faith.

The order of thought in [Hebrews 4](#), so far as we discern it, is as follows:

First, there is a searching exhortation made (verse 1) to all who profess to be Christians, that they should work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and that their walk should be such as to give no one the impression that they "seem" to be departing from Christ.

Second: this is followed by a solemn warning (verse 2) that, the mere hearing of the Gospel is not enough; to profit us, it must be received by faith.

Third, this is followed by the declaration that only believers enter into the rest of God.

In the remainder of our passage the Spirit makes further comment on [Psalm 95](#) and shows (by negative inference) what the "rest" of God is, and how that the believer's entrance into it is yet future.

"For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they should enter into My rest" (verse 3). The relation of these two clauses the one to the other, is denoted by "as He said," what follows being a quotation from the 95th Psalm; their connection with the opening words of the verse being that they supply proof of what is there said. As pointed out in the previous article, "For we enter into the rest, who believed," simply informs us *who* are privileged to enter God's rest, namely, Believers. Corroboration of this is now furnished. Upon the second clause of this verse we cannot do better than [quote from Dr. Gouge](#):

"These words 'as He said' may have a double reference. One immediate, to the words next before. Considered thus, they furnish a proof by the rule of contraries. The force of the argument resteth on that ruled case, which the apostle taketh for granted, verse 6, namely, that 'some must enter' into that rest which God hath promised. Hereupon this argument may be made: If some 'must enter,' then believers or unbelievers: But not unbelievers, for God by oath hath protested against them; Therefore believers shall enter."

"The other reference is more remote to the latter part of the former verse. If the first clause of verse 3 be included in a parenthesis, the reference of this unto the former verse will appear to be the more fit. For it showeth unbelievers reap no benefit by the word of promise, because God hath sworn that such shall not enter His rest. The relative 'He' is to God. That which He said was in and by David, in [Psalm 95:11](#)." Upon the words here quoted from the Psalm, Dr. J. Brown said, "According to the Hebrew idiomatical elliptical mode of expressing an oath, 'they shall not enter into My rest'."

"Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" (verse 3).

It is at this point the real difficulty of our passage begins, due in part to its peculiar grammatical structure.

"The passage that follows wears a peculiarly disjointed appearance, and has occasioned perplexity to interpreters.

I apprehend that the last clause of the 3rd verse should be disconnected from the words immediately preceding, and should be connected with those which immediately follow. Along with the 4th and 5th verses, it appears to be a kind of explanatory note on the expression, 'the rest of God'." With this explanation the writer is in full accord, indeed, it seems to him impossible to see in the passage any connected sense unless it be taken thus. Continuing to quote from Dr. Brown:

"A promise is left us of entering into *His rest*. The 'rest' of God, in its primary use in the Old Testament scriptures, is descriptive of that state of cessation from the exercise of creating energy, and of satisfaction in what He hath created, into which God is represented as entering on the completion of His six days' work, when in the beginning 'He formed the heavens and the earth, and all their hosts.' In this sense the phrase was plainly not applicable to the subject which the apostle is discussing; but in these words he shows that the phrase, the *rest of God* is not in the scriptures so appropriated to the rest of God after the creation as not to be applicable, and indeed applied, to other subjects.

- An Exposition of Hebrews.

A Sabbath-Rest for God's People

In light of his reasoning, **the fact that the Israelites would blatantly ignore God's truth is even more appalling, and that's exactly what the first-century believers were beginning to do.** Twice more the author quotes [Psalm 95:11](#) ([Hebrews 4:3](#), [5](#)) as he had in [3:11](#). **He makes it clear that entering God's rest is the issue, and the possibility of failing to enter it is very real.**

The fact that the writer uses present tense in [verse 3](#) creates potential problems with interpretation. Some people leap to the assumption that he is saying that the Old Testament saints couldn't enter God's rest because it hadn't yet been made available by Christ's death and resurrection, while believers after Christ can enter God's rest immediately. This view makes no sense, however, in light of the fact that the author had just stated that the promise forfeited by the Israelites was the same promise the current believers must be careful not to abandon. He says the gospel is the same, then and now. And **he says, as he will repeat again and again, that the promise (the gospel, salvation, and all things related) ultimately refers to heaven, not just to the partial experience of salvation believers enjoy in this world.**

A better interpretation of [verse 3](#) is to **read it as a futuristic present tense.** For example, **Paul and Barnabas had preached, “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” ([Acts 14:22](#) NIV).**

It is clearly a principle that applies to entering the kingdom of God in the future, and the thought remains the same if *rest* is substituted for *kingdom*.

That's what the writer of Hebrews intended.

It makes little sense to say that New Testament believers have already entered the rest of God when the writer's urgent admonition is that they continue to persevere in faith lest they fail to enter the rest! [Hebrews 4:6](#) and [4:11](#) both make it clear that the author is looking to the future as he discusses God's rest. Another possibility is that the present tense carries a progressive sense. Believers are entering the rest through the process of salvation but must endure so as to fully enter that rest at the consummation of their salvation. **Not to persevere means to fail to enter God's rest (salvation).**

The concept of the rest of God was certainly nothing new. From the beginning, God had demonstrated a period of rest at the end of one's work ([4:4](#)). After the six days of creation, God rested on the seventh day. So at this point, the rest of God is identified as participation in God's own rest that began immediately after the creation of the world.

This is the rest that the Israelites had failed to obtain—not because it wasn't available to them, but because they did not continue to put their faith in God.

Demystifying Hebrews

The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that some people will enter God's rest while others will not, even after hearing the gospel (4:6-7). The difference is a person's response to the message.

And here he repeats himself about the need to respond while there is still time (3:15; 4:7). God has been making the offer for centuries, in an extended stretch of time called "today" (4:7). This "today" is the whole period of time in which the gospel message of salvation is being offered. It is a limited opportunity. The writer urges his readers to act while there is still time.

The first generation of Israelites missed the opportunity to enter the Promised Land because of their lack of faith. They missed out on God's rest. The author of Hebrews takes this idea of rest and applies it to God's ultimate "Promised Land," what he defines (in various places) as the better country, the enduring city, and the world to come.

The author uses a word that might literally be rendered *Sabbathment* but is usually translated *Sabbath-rest* (4:9). The word is found nowhere else in the Bible and has been detected in no earlier uses than this one. The writer may have invented the word to define what he was talking about.

No doubt the term evoked in his mind a connection to the weekly Sabbath.

Just as God rested from His work on the seventh day of Creation, so He now invites believers to enter into His rest, signifying both His presence and salvation. Just as the seventh day of Creation represented the completion of God's work and a time of rest, so the Sabbath-rest for believers symbolizes the consummation of their salvation and entrance into God's rest.

Some Christians use this passage to justify doing away with a weekly day of rest for Christians. This, however, is not the author's point (but see [Romans 14:5-6](#); [Colossians 2:16-17](#) for Paul's perspective on the Sabbath).

He is simply drawing an analogy between the weekly Sabbath-rest and our salvation. Both involve entering God's rest, which the author uses as a metaphor for the presence of God and the salvation He provides.

- Layman's Bible Commentary

Not every pastor is a disciple making pastor because not every pastor is leading toward the mission Christ gave the Church. If a pastor is not leading toward the mission of making disciples, they have not yet become a disciple making pastor. I've seen this happen countless times. Many a pastor follows God's call to feed and lead a congregation without ever really being taught the mission of the Church. These pastors mean well, but they simply haven't ever had anyone help them see that the Great Commandment and Great Commission give us the mission of the Church. It is impossible to lead toward a mission if you do not know what it is.

Imagine an NFL coach leading his team to the mission of remaining injury free the entire season. If the coach is leading toward an injury free season, there is a great chance they will lose every game. Imagine a military general leading his troops to a mission of everyone having equal input in decision making. That army is not likely to win any wars! Imagine a factory that is being led so that the end result is to win the cleanest plant award. That factory won't do very well at producing a product. If a church is being led by a pastor and leaders that do not understand the mission, that church is in trouble. A disciple making pastor understands that his number one job is to lead his church to accomplish the mission of making disciples. The number one job of the pastor is not to preach great sermons. It is not to personally care for every person in the church. It is not to build big buildings and run great programs. The number one job of every pastor is to lead the church toward the mission of Jesus Christ.

Near the end of His ministry, Jesus prayed to His Father in John 17:4, “I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.” Jesus had accomplished the work of starting a movement of multiplying disciples, and now He was about to finish what He was put here to do by dying on the cross. Jesus brought His Father glory by fulfilling His purpose on earth.

Every pastor needs to be able to say they have glorified God by accomplishing the work they have been given. That work is the same work Jesus had- make disciples.

- Ken Adams, Impact Ministries

**How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring
near to You, To dwell in Your courts.**

*We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house,
Your holy temple. – **Ps 65:4***

The Lord has made everything for its own purpose,
Even the wicked for the day of evil. – **Prov 16:4**

And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. – Mt 24:31

now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? – Luke 18:7

So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,
And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,
Says the Lord, who makes these things known from long ago. – Acts 15:17-18

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. – Romans 8:28-30

Who will bring a charge against **God's elect**? God is the one who justifies; – **Rom 8:33**

for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, – **Romans 9:11**

For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.
– **Romans 9:15-16** (the whole chapter)

God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?
– **Rom 11:2**

In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; – **Romans 11:5-7**

but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; – 1 Cor 2:7

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,... also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will...
– Ephesians 1:5,11

knowing, brethren beloved by God, **His choice of you;**
– 1 Thes 1:4

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because **God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation** through sanctification by the **Spirit and faith in the truth.** – 2 Thes 2:13

Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, **for the faith of those chosen of God** and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,
– Titus 1:1

according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. – **1 Peter 1:2**

*All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. – **Rev 13:8***

Aren't some of these so obvious??

Some that believe in free will may try to avoid proper hermeneutics when it comes to these verses to support what they believe, or they flat out just reject these verses. But it's clear. And **if all glory is to God and not to ourselves and if we were dead in sin before we were saved, how could we raise ourselves from the dead?**

To deny predestination you'd have to reject God's Omniscience and that He even had a plan when He created the heavens and the earth.

Thank God He has predestined us, because it is in our nature to reject God and if He didn't seal us, we would fall away in a heartbeat.

The Elect Are Kept by the Power of God

-
- Resource by
John Piper

- Scripture: [1 Peter 1:5](#) Topic: [Perseverance of the Saints](#)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

There are no commandments in the first 12 verses of this letter. No demands or requirements or directions. **What Peter is doing here is not telling us what to do but telling us what to enjoy. He is not exhorting, he is exulting.**

Where We Stopped Last Week

We saw this [last week](#) in verse 3 where [Peter begins this paragraph not with commands or even instruction, but with worship.](#) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." [His aim is to move us to bless God. To show us that God is the greatest value in the world.](#)

He starts by blessing and honoring God. And **God is the center of what he says in verses 3 and 4:**

1. God is great in mercy.
2. God causes us to be born again
3. God gives us a living hope.
4. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
5. God promises an indestructible inheritance.
6. God is keeping that inheritance so that it will never perish or soil or fade.

But we stopped at verse 4 last week. The reason we stopped there is because I think verse 5 deserves a sermon of its own. You might believe all the great truth about God in verses 3 and 4 and then worry about one crucial danger not covered there; at least not explicitly.

Protected by the Power of God Through Faith Now

You may know that God is merciful. You may know that God has caused you to be born again. You may know that God raised Jesus from the dead. You may know that God promised to keep your inheritance imperishable in heaven. In other words, you know what God has done in the past to give you life, and you know what God is going to do in the future to give you your inheritance.

But what about now? What about the time between new birth and final salvation? What about the temptations, pressures, stresses, weariness, persecution, frustrations, suffering, confusion, perplexity, fears, and traps that we face now? Does God do anything about that? Does he send his Son to die for our sins, raise him from the dead to open eternal life, cause us to be born again, and then stand back to see if we will make it to heaven? Peter is

not about to leave that question unanswered, or even implicit. **He makes the answer explicit, clear, and powerful in verse 5.**

Those who are born again "are protected [i.e., now are being protected] by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." There's **Peter's answer: NO.** God does not just stand back after he has caused us to be born again. He uses his divine power to protect us all through life for the salvation ready to be revealed.

What Peter wants us to see here is that God means for his people to be profoundly secure in him. He wants us to feel that God himself is doing everything that must be done to guarantee our final, eternal salvation.

Chain Illustration:

Picture it like this. **Your salvation is like a chain that extends back into eternity and forward into eternity. It is an unbreakable chain. Wherever you look on this chain, you find links of iron forged by God himself.**

If you look back into eternity as far as you can look, you find election (1:1-2): "To the elect aliens." "God chose you from the beginning," Paul says in [2 Thessalonians 2:13](#), "for salvation."

If you look forward into eternity as far as you can on this chain of salvation, you see an inheritance that (according to verse 4) is reserved by God for you, and is therefore imperishable and undefiled and unfading. God took charge of your

salvation at the beginning before you existed, and God is securing its great goal before you ever get there in the future.

If you look back on this chain a couple thousand years, you find God sending his Son Jesus to shed his blood for your sin (the sprinkling in verse 2). And then you find him raising Jesus from the dead to conquer death and give you hope (v. 3).

If you look back one or two or twenty or seventy years as a believer, you see that great link in the chain called new birth, and you see from verse 3 that it is not a link forged by you but by God: "Blessed be God who caused us to be born again unto a living hope."

And if you look now at the chain of salvation being forged this very day in your life, what do you see? If you look at the chain that connects new birth in the past with your inheritance in the future, what do you see?

Two Images I Hope You *Don't* See

Let me tell you what I hope you DON'T see first. I hope you don't see two images.

The Believer Left Insecure

One image is of the Christian walking along the edge of a great chasm which he needs to cross to get to heaven. He is holding onto one end of the chain leading into the past. Day by day he is forging the links of faithfulness as best he can with some help from the Holy Spirit (not infallible help) so that eventually he can try to connect with the chain of heaven that hangs down from the high cliff on the other side. But he is never sure that he will forge the links well enough or have the strength to finish the chain.

In other words, I hope the image you have of the chain of salvation is not one that leaves the believer insecure and ready to fall out of faith and into destruction. I will tell you why in a minute.

The Believer's Security in the Wrong Place

The other image, which I hope you don't have, errs in the opposite direction. It's almost the same image as before. The Christian with the chain of salvation leading into the past is walking along the chasm attempting with some help of the Holy Spirit (not infallible help) to forge the links of faithfulness and eventually link up with the chain of heaven on the other side. But in this image the Christian has a safety belt around his waist tied to the chain of heaven on the other side so that even if he lets go of the chain leading to the past or stops forging any links of faithfulness, he will not fall to his death but be drawn into heaven another way than by the chain.

In the first image, the believer has no security or confidence that he will make it to heaven. In the second image the believer has security in the wrong place; a kind of automatic eternal security that can get you to heaven another way than by the chain of God's saving, persevering acts revealed in Scripture.

The Image in Verse 5

Verse 5 points to a very different image. Remember, the question we are asking is: "If you look now at the chain of salvation (which connects new birth in the past with your inheritance in the future) being forged this very day in your life, what do you see?"

Verse 5 says, "[We] are [now being] protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Now what image do you see of the chain of salvation in that verse? Here's what I see.

Standing in the middle of this chasm which disappears into the abyss so deep no one can see the bottom is God Almighty. Under his right arm he is squeezing against his chest the chain of my salvation that leads into the past and connects with election, the death of Jesus, his resurrection, and my new birth. Under his left arm he is squeezing the chain of heaven. The end of the chain of heaven hangs loosely over his left forearm waiting for the eventual attachment to my life. The end of the other chain is in his hands. And he is forging the necessary links of faithfulness that will make the chain long enough to connect properly with the chain of heaven.

Two Crucial Differences

Now there are two crucial differences between this image and the other two:

One of the differences is that the last image seems to make the security of the believer uncertain while the second image seems to make it certain. The reason the last image could appear to make our security uncertain is that there is no safety belt and the links of the chain are not connected yet. Either there will be links of faithfulness forged in our lives or we will not connect with heaven. The Bible does not guarantee security at the expense of faithfulness to Jesus. That seems to many to make our security uncertain.

But the other difference is that God himself is holding the chain and forging the links with infallible power. It is we who do the acts of faithfulness—the chain of

salvation is now being forged in our lives—but it is God who "works in us to will and to do his good pleasure" ([Philippians 2:13](#)).

What Is God Protecting His Elect From?

Now let's check this out with verse 5: "[We] are [now being] protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Notice Several Things:

1. There is a salvation ready to be revealed. We are saved now, but our salvation is not complete. There is an inheritance imperishable, undefiled and unfading yet to be received. There is much more grace and glory to be experienced (1:13; 4:13; 5:10). We are not yet across the chasm.
2. There is danger on the way to salvation in heaven. We need ongoing protection after our conversion. Our security does not mean we are home free. There is a battle to be fought. And in this battle we need protection and help far beyond what we can supply for ourselves.
3. Our protection comes from God. More specifically, from the power of God. "[We] are [now being] protected by the power of God." In verse 3 we saw that God causes the new birth, and in verse 5 we see that God protects his children all the way to heaven. So our security doesn't mean that there is no battle, or that we don't have to win it, but that God will fight for us with infallible skill and omnipotent power.
4. The means God uses to protect us is faith. "[We] are [now being] protected by the power of God through faith."

What Is the Only Thing That Keeps Us from Salvation?

Now think with me carefully about this for a moment. What is God protecting us from? That is, what, in the end, is the only thing that can keep us from salvation ready to be revealed in the last time?

Death won't keep us from salvation. It takes us straight to heaven. So we don't need protection from that. Suffering won't keep us from heaven. Verses 6–7 say suffering will refine our faith. So that's not what we need protection from.

It's true we need protection from Satan "who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour" ([1 Peter 5:8](#)). And we need protection from overwhelming temptations and "lusts that wage war against the soul" (2:11). So we should pray, "Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from the evil one" ([Matthew 6:13](#); cf. [1 Corinthians 10:13](#)).

But why? What's the bottom line in the damage that these enemies can do? What is the one thing that cuts us off from heaven? The answer is unbelief. Not trusting God. Not living "by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us" ([Galatians 2:20](#)).

The Meaning of Verse 5

So what does verse 5 mean, then, when it says we are "protected [from losing our final salvation] by the power of God through faith"? It means that God's power protects us for salvation by sustaining our faith. The only thing that can keep us from heaven is forsaking our faith in Christ, and turning to other hopes, other treasures. So to protect us God prevents that. He inspires and nourishes and strengthens and builds our faith. And in doing this he secures us against the only thing that could destroy us; unbelief, lack of trust in God.

This is very different from the security of the safety belt. Some people think that, because of some past experience, they have a safety belt and can leave the forging of faith behind, drop off into the chasm of sin and unbelief, and just swing low over to the promised land. Well, there is no safety belt. There is one way to heaven: the way of persevering faith. And this is why verse 5 is so important.

Our security is not in making heaven unconditional. Our security is in God's infallible commitment to fulfill the conditions of heaven.

Peter's Denial and Restoration

Let me close with an experience that Peter had which taught him this lesson very powerfully. On the night when Peter betrayed Jesus, the Lord said to him, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat [in other words to press Peter through a sieve of temptation to try to strain out his faith]; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" ([Luke 22:31-32](#)).

Jesus prayed that Peter's faith not fail utterly. That is why Peter wept bitterly and returned from his sin. But to whom did Jesus pray? To God, his Father. And what did he ask God to do? To not let Peter's faith come to an end. So who forged the link of faithfulness in Peter that awful night? God did. And who brought him back from the precipice of unbelief and gave him tears of remorse? God did.

Peter knows first hand what he is talking about. Those who are born of God "are protected by the power of God through faith"—through God's sustaining their faith—for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. He caused us to be

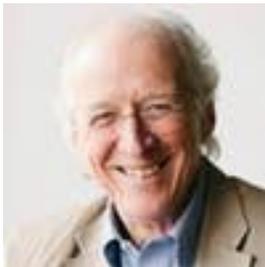
born again by creating our faith; and he protects us on the way to heaven by preserving our faith.

The chain of salvation is a God-forged chain. And therefore it is gloriously and invincibly secure. We have a great God and a great salvation!

For more on the preserving power of God in the life of the believer see [1 Peter 4:19](#); [5:10](#); [John 6:37-39](#); [10:27-30](#); [1 Corinthians 1:8-9](#); [Philippians 1:6](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:23-25](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:13](#); [2 Timothy 1:12](#); [Hebrews 13:20-21](#); [1 John 2:19](#).

JULY 9, 2011

11 Ways God Works for Us



Article by
John Piper

Founder & Teacher, desiringGod.org

Only a few things have gripped me with greater joy than the truth that God loves to show his God-ness by working for me, and that his working for me is always *before* and *under* and *in* any working I do for him.

At first it may sound arrogant of us, and belittling to God, to say that he works for us. But that's only because of the connotation that I am an employer and God needs a job. That's not the connotation when the Bible talks about God's working for us. As in: "God works for those who wait for him" ([Isaiah 64:4](#)).

The proper connotation of saying God works for me is that I am bankrupt and need a bailout. I am weak and need someone strong. I am endangered and need a protector. I am foolish and need someone wise. I am lost and need a Rescuer.

"God works for me" means I can't do the work.

And this glorifies *him* not me. The Giver gets the glory. The Powerful One gets the praise.

I just completed a series on Twitter ([@JohnPiper](#)) celebrating some of the texts that express this truth. Here's the summary list. Read and be freed from the burden of bearing your own load. "Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you" ([Psalm 55:22](#)). Let him do that work.

1. "No eye has seen a God besides you, who works for those who wait for him."
([Isaiah 64:4](#))
2. "God is not served by human hands as though he needed anything, but he himself gives life and breath and everything." ([Acts 17:25](#))
3. "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" ([Mark 10:45](#)).

4. "The eyes of the LORD run through the earth, to show himself strong for those who trust him." (2 Chronicles. 16:9)
5. "If I were hungry, I wouldn't tell you. Call on me, I will deliver you. You will glorify me." (Psalm 50:15)
6. "To old age I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save." (Isaiah 46:4)
7. "I worked harder than any, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Corinthians. 15:10).
8. "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." (Psalm 127:1)
9. "Whoever serves, let him serve by the strength God supplies, so that in everything God may be glorified." (1 Peter 4:11)
10. "Work out your own salvation, for it is God who works in you, to will and to work." (Philippians 2:12-13)
11. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

Psalm 19...

The glory of God's works.

The heavens so declare the glory of God, and proclaim his wisdom, power, and goodness, that all ungodly men are left without excuse. They speak themselves to be works of God's hands; for they must have a Creator who is eternal, infinitely wise, powerful, and good. The counter-changing of day and night is a great proof of the power of God, and calls us to observe, that, as in the kingdom of nature, so in that of providence, he forms the light, and creates the darkness,

God's Works Revealed

No. 2309-39:241. A Sermon Delivered On Lord's Day Evening, May 12, 1889, By

C. H. Spurgeon, At The Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

A Sermon Intended For Reading On Lord's Day, May 21, 1893.

Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents" (that he was born blind): "but that the works of God should be revealed in him." {[John 9:3](#)}

1. Never attribute any special sorrow endured by men to some special sin. There is a tendency to consider that those on whom the tower in Siloam fell must have been sinners more than all men who lived in Jerusalem; and if any have met a very sudden death, we are apt to suppose that they must have been extremely guilty; but it is not so. Very godly men have been burned to death in a train; I remember one who came to that terrible end. Many holy men have been drowned on board ship when they have been going about their Master's errands. Some of the most gracious men whom I ever met have dropped dead without a moment's warning. You cannot judge a man's state before God by what happens to him in the order of providence: and it is very unkind, and ungenerous, and almost inhuman, to sit down, like the friends of Job, and suppose that, because Job is greatly afflicted, he must therefore be greatly sinful. It is not so. All afflictions are not chastisements for sin; there are some afflictions that have quite another purpose and object. They are sent to refine, sent as a holy discipline, sent as sacred excavators, to make more room in the heart for Christ and his love. Indeed, you know that it is written, "As many as I tenderly love, I rebuke and chasten." "Whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives."

2. It was, therefore, absurd to the nth degree to suppose that, if a man was born blind, it was a punishment for the sin of his parents, or a punishment sent in advance for some sin which he might commit eventually. Our Saviour tells us to look quite another way, and regard infirmities and physical evils as sent to be a time when God may display his power and his grace. It was so very specially in this particular case; and I am going to push the fact further, and say that even sin itself, existing as it does everywhere, existing especially in some, may afford what we call "elbow-room" for the grace of God, and may, indeed, become a platform on which the wonderful power, and patience, and sovereignty of divine grace may be displayed.

3. That will be the subject that we shall talk about tonight, how God takes opportunity from the sorrows and the sins of men to reveal his own works for his own glory. Just as this man was born blind, in order that, through his blindness, the power of God might be seen in giving him sight, so I think there are many in whom the power of God may very readily be seen, and the works of God be very clearly revealed.

4. I. So, first, let us enquire what works these are. **WHAT WORKS OF GOD ARE SEEN IN THE SALVATION OF MEN?**

5. There is a man over there who is all out of order; there is nothing right about him. He is a man upside down; his heart loves what will ruin it, and does not love what would bless it. His understanding is darkened; he puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. His will has become very domineering, and has usurped power which it never ought to possess. If you will study him well, you will not make much of him. He is all out of sync, like a piece of machinery in which the wheels do not operate correctly. To describe him briefly by one word, I should say that he is in a state of chaos, everything is in confusion and disorder, tossed up and down. "Well," one says, "that is my case; I am like that tonight."

6. Now, the first work of God that we read of in the Bible is the work of *creation*: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." When the fulness of time was come for the outfitting the world, which event we generally call creation, although it was really the arrangement of what had been created, then the Lord came out, and the Spirit of God, with outspread wings, brooded over chaos, and brought order out of confusion. Oh, that the Spirit of the Lord would tonight come and brood over that man's confused and confounded mind where everything is tossed about in wild disorder! He cannot tell why he was born, nor for what object he is living. He seems to have no purpose in life, he is tossed to and fro like a log in the ocean. His passions flit from vanity to vanity, and you cannot put him into order. His mother tried it; but he scorned to be tied to her apron-strings. Many friends have tried it since then; but he has now taken the bit into his mouth, and has run away, and refuses to obey the reins. Oh God, if you will come tonight, and make him a new creature in Christ Jesus, your creating work will be revealed in him! If you will mould, and model, and form, and fashion him until he shall be a vessel fit for your use, then the work of God will begin to be revealed in him. Oh, that it might be so! There are some of us here who can bear witness that God is a great Creator, for he has made all things new within us, and transformed what before was chaos into a world of beauty and delight where he delights to dwell.

7. After the world was created, God's next work was that of light-making. The earth was created, but it was swathed in darkness. "Darkness was on the face of the deep." No sun, no moon, no stars had yet appeared; no light had yet fallen on the earth;

perhaps by reason of dense vapours which shut out the light. God only said, "Let there be light; and there was light."

8. Well now, tonight, there has come in here one who is not only without form and void, and dreadfully tossed about, but one who is himself dark, and in the dark. He wants the light, but he has none. He does not know the way of life; he does not see a ray of hope that he ever will find the way. He seems shut up in gloomy, thick, Egyptian night; and perhaps, worst of all, he does not know his true condition; but he calls darkness light, and prides himself that he can see, when really he can see nothing at all. Lord, speak the word, and say, "Let there be light," and the man will see the light, and see it at once! I am quite sure that, whether I can speak with power, or not, God can speak with power; and standing here, it is to my heart a sweet solace that he can, at this moment, find the most darkened sinner in the building, sitting or standing anywhere around, and the light can penetrate into his soul in less time than it takes me to say the words; and to his own surprise the darkness shall be light around him, and the Egyptian night shall be turned into the midday of infinite love and mercy. Pray God that it may be so, brethren. Lift up a silent prayer to heaven, for this light-giving, this illumination is a special work of God; and there are many, who are now in the dark, in whom it is possible for this work of God to be revealed.

9. After these two works of God are done, after we have had creation and light-bringing, there is still death, and there is need of the divine work of *resurrection*. What is the use of a form beautifully fashioned if it is dead, and what is the use of light shining with all its brilliance on a corpse? Yet in this house of prayer there are tonight some who are dead in trespasses and sins. They do not feel the weight of sin; yet to a living man it is an intolerable burden. They are not wounded by the two-edged sword of the Lord, though a living man is soon cut and gashed by it. They do not hear even the joyful notes of free grace and dying love. Though they ring out like a peal of silver bells, these dead sinners do not appreciate their sweet music. It is the work of God to make men live. There will come a day, and perhaps sooner than we think, when all the myriads of bodies that lie in our cemeteries and churchyards will rise up from the grave to live again. That will be a display of divine power; but it will not be a greater display of divine power than when a dead heart, a dead conscience, a dead will is made to live with a divine life. Oh, that God would work that mighty miracle of mercy tonight! Pray that it may be so, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. The dead will not pray for this resurrection; therefore let us pray for it for them. But if there is a man who prays for it, one who cries, "Lord, make me live!" that is a proof that already there is a spark of life shooting through him, or he would not have that living desire.

10. Brethren, I might so continue working on the line of the story of the creation, and the arranging of the world in due order; but I will not; you can do that for yourselves. Next, I want to speak to you about the divine work of *cleansing*. There is, tonight, in this place of worship, a man who is black with filth. He has done

everything that he could do in order to rebel against God. Perhaps he is like Mr. John Newton, who describes himself somewhat like this: he says, "I was in many respects like the apostle Paul. I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but there was one point in which I went beyond the apostle Paul, for he did it ignorantly, but I sinned against light and knowledge." Do I speak to any here who, in sinning, have transgressed very grossly because they have done what they knew was wrong, and have persevered in doing it against the checks of conscience, and against the warnings of a better longing, which they have never yet been able to kill? I am amazed, sometimes, when I have had to talk with those whose lives have certainly gone almost to the very extremity of iniquity, but who, nevertheless, all the time have had a certain inward check that would never let them go just that little piece further which would have put them beyond hope. There was always something that they still revered, even when they pretended to doubt everything, and to blaspheme everything. There was some influence for good still operating on them, as though God had a line and a hook in the jaws of leviathan; and though he ran out so far into the great deep of sin that you could not tell where he had gone, yet he had to come back again after all. God still does wonders of mercy and grace. Now, suppose, tonight, that that black sinner, with all his years of sin, should be forgiven outright, suppose that tonight all of those fifty or sixty years of sin should vanish once and for all, suppose that God should forgive, better still, that God should forget, suppose that, with one tremendous fling of his omnipotent arm, he should take the whole mass of that sinner's sin, and cast it into the depths of the sea, what a wonder of grace that would be! That is what God will do for everyone who trusts in Jesus. If you will come, and cast yourself at his dear feet, and look up to Jesus crucified, bleeding in your place, and believe those words of the prophet Isaiah, "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all," or the words of the apostle Peter, "Who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree," if you trust Jesus, the great Sin Bearer, he will make you whiter than snow; and in your case the works of God shall be revealed, for no one but the Almighty God can make scarlet sinners white, and he can do it in a moment. Lord, do it now!

11. Suppose that another thing should happen, that a man here, or a woman, who is desperately set on mischief, should tonight be turned in an entirely opposite direction, that would be obviously a divine work of *changing the whole current of life*. I have never seen Niagara Falls, and I do not suppose that I ever shall; but there are some here who have seen it. Down comes the mighty flood with a tremendous crash, for ever leaping down from on high. Would you not believe him to be God who should, in a moment, make that waterfall leap upward instead of downward, and as impetuously seek the heights as now it leaps into the depths? Well, the Lord can do that with some big Niagara-Fall of a sinner here this very evening. You are determined tonight to go into evil company, and to commit a filthy sin; you are determined tomorrow to grasp the drunkard's cup, and not be satisfied until you have turned yourself into something below a beast; you are determined to pursue

that evil business of yours, that getting money by gambling, or something worse. Yes, but if my Lord comes tonight, determined to save you, he will make you sing to another tune. "Oh, but I should never be a Methodist!" one says. I do not know what you will yet be. "Oh!" another says, "you would never make a convert of me." I did not say that I could; but the Lord can make you what you think you never will be. There are some here who, if they could have seen themselves, ten years ago, sitting here, and enjoying the Word, would have said, "No, no, Charlie, that is not you, I am sure, my boy," and, "No, Mary, that is not you, my girl; you will never be there; there is no fear of that." But you are here, you see; and what free grace has done for some of us, it can do for others. Lord, do it, according to that mighty power which you worked in Christ when you raised him from the dead! Work in the same way in the ungodly tonight, and turn them from the error of their ways to run as impetuously after you as they now run from you!

12. I have only one more matter to mention under this point. I think that God's works are sometimes revealed in men, by *giving them great joy*. There is a person here tonight convicted of sin. Mr. Conscience has come up against him. You know Mr. Conscience. He keeps a cat-o'-nine-tails. When he is allowed to get to work, and he gets tight hold on a sinner who has long kept him suppressed, he says, "Now it is my turn"; and he lets you know it, believe me. Let a man once get conscience, with a cat-o'-nine-tails, laying it on, and he will never forget it. Every stroke seems to tear off a thongful of his quivering flesh. See how the nine ploughs make deep furrows every time they fall. "You speak," one says, "like a man who knows it." Know it? I did know it for years, while only a child; and neither night nor day could I escape from the falling of those terrible thongs. Oh, how conscience scourged me, and I could find no rest anywhere until, when one time, I heard the divine voice that said, "Look to me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth"; and conscience put away his cat-o'-nine-tails, and my wounds were bathed in heavenly balsam, and they ceased to smart, and I was glad! Oh, how my heart cried, "Hallelujah!" as I saw Jesus on the cross! Then I understood that God had executed the full vengeance due to my sin on his Well-Beloved, who had kindly bared his shoulder to the lash, and had undertaken to bear the punishment of my sin. Then my heart leaped with joy. You notice that I am always preaching that doctrine of substitution. I cannot help it, because it is the only truth that brought me comfort; I should never have gotten out of the dungeon of despair, if it had not been for that grand truth of substitution. I hope that no young lady is going to ask me to write in her album this week. That request is made to me I do not know how many days in the week, and I always write this verse in all the albums: —

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

13. If you once know the power of that blessed theme, then you will see that it is a work of God to sweep away our ashes, and to give us the oil of joy, to take from us our robes of mourning, and to clothe us with garments of beauty, to put a new song into our mouths, and to establish our goings. May you all have this blessed work of God performed in you, to the praise of the glory of his grace!

14. **II.** Now, my second point is this, **HOW ARE THESE WORKS SPECIALLY REVEALED IN SOME MEN?**

15. I will take this blind man, and just go over his life. First, *he was totally blind*. There was no sham about his blindness; he could not see a ray of light; he was totally blind; he knew nothing about light. Is there anyone here who is totally blind in a spiritual sense? You cannot see anything, my poor friend. You do not have a good desire; you do not even have a good thought. Ah, you do not know what kind of people we have in this London; but we do meet people who, for years, seem never to have had a good thought ever cross their minds; and if someone else were to speak to them about anything that is good, or even decent, he would be talking double Dutch to them! They do not understand it. We have multitudes of that kind in our slums; yes, and in the wealthy West-end they are just as bad. Now, when the Lord, in his infinite mercy, comes to these people who are totally blind, and he makes them see, there is room for his mighty power to work there, for everyone says, "What a wonderful thing that such a person as that should be converted!" I remember well a man with whom I have often prayed in very sweet fellowship. He was a strange fish when I first knew him, though he was a very good man afterwards. He was as eccentric a being as I ever met; and I am sufficiently eccentric myself; but he was a dead worldling. His Sundays — well, he did not know any difference between Sunday and Monday, except that he could not be in the beer store for quite so long on Sundays. He said, "I had been out one Sunday morning to buy a pair of ducks, and I put one in each pocket of my coat; as I went along, and saw the people going into a place of worship, I thought that I would see what it was like, I had heard that it was a decent looking place inside." He went, the Lord met him, and that day those ducks did not get cooked, they had to wait until Monday; but he himself was caught, and captured for Christ that day. A total change took place in him, and he became a fervent Christian at once, whereas before he had been totally without any kind of religious thought, either of fear or of hope. Here was a case in which the works of God were especially revealed. That man has gone to heaven now; well do I remember him, and how I praised God for his conversion.

16. But the man mentioned in our text was *born blind*. Now, there are many like that; indeed, all people are born blind. It is original sin, from which we all suffer. Sin is a taint of the blood. We are born blind. There are some who, in a very particular way, are bred and born in a family utterly destitute of religion; they are brought up to

despise it, or else brought up in the midst of superstition, and taught to say a useless prayer to a crucifix of wood or stone. Can these people, who are brought up, find Christ? But they do find Christ; or rather, Christ finds them; and they hear the gospel, and it commends itself to their minds immediately. I should suppose that no one was ever more superstitious than Martin Luther was. I have seen that staircase in Rome, up which Martin Luther went on his knees; it is said to be the staircase down which our Lord came from the palace of Pilate. I have seen the people go up and down on their knees. Just think of Luther doing it; and there came to him, as he was going up the stairs on his knees, those words, "The just shall live by faith," and he rose up at once, and he did not go on his knees any farther. Oh, that God would appear in that way to some of you!

17. Next, this blind man was *cured by special means*. That was another display of God's works. The Saviour spat, stooped down, and with his finger worked that spittle into the dust until he had made clay; then taking it up, he began to put it over the man's eyes. I believe that God is greatly glorified by the salvation of people through the simple preaching of the gospel, the very simplest means that can be used. Often men say, when souls are saved in this place, as they are continually, "Well, I cannot see anything remarkable in the preacher." No, and if you were to look a great deal longer, you would see less than you see now, for there is not anything whatever in him, but there is a great deal in the gospel. Oh brethren, if some preachers would only preach the gospel, they would soon see how very superior it is to all their fine essays! But they prepare their sermons so well. Oh, yes! I know, but did you ever hear of the man who used to prepare the potatoes before he planted them in his garden? He always boiled them; but they never grew, for he had prepared all the life out of them. Now, many a boiled sermon is brought out to the people; but it never grows. It is elaborated and prepared so much that nothing will ever come out of it. The Lord loves to bless living words spoken in simple language out of an earnest heart. The man who speaks like this does not get the glory; but the glory goes to God, and so there is room for the works of God to be revealed.

18. This blind man was also a specially fit sphere for God to reveal his works in, because *he was known as a public beggar*. They used to lead him up in the morning, I suppose, to the gate of the temple; and there he took his place, and sat down. He was a man with a ready tongue, I should guess, so that he often used to exchange chaff with those who went by, and they remembered what kind of a man he was. He was always very sarcastic, I suspect; and when they spoke to him, and gave him nothing, he knew how to give them something. That blind beggar was a well-known character in Jerusalem, as well known as the blind beggar {John Bunyan} of Bethnal Green; so the Saviour selected him, because he was so well known, and opened his eyes. So you have come here tonight, my friend, have you? You are well known; but I will not point you out; I do not like doing that kind of thing. There came in here, not long ago, a soldier who had been a professor of religion, but he had been a dreadful

apostate, and had gone back, but he wanted to hear the gospel again. Just over there, where there are two pillars, he wisely chose a place where I could not see him. But it so happened, on that Sunday night, and he is the witness of it, and I well remember saying, "Well, Will, you have got to come back, you know; you have got to come back; and the sooner, the better"; and Will did come back, and he sent word to me to say that Will had come back with a broken heart to find his Lord. I did not know that his name was Will, I am sure, and I did not know why he had hidden himself behind the pillars there; but God did, and he adapted the word to the person, and so he brought Will back again. If there is any Will, or Tom, or Jack, or Mary, or if there are any others here who have wandered far from God, oh sovereign grace, bring them back, whether they are soldiers or civilians, so that they may seek and find the Saviour even now! This Will was well known, and his restoration to Christ will, I trust, reveal the works of God in him because he was so well known. Oh, that the Lord would hear that prayer of my friend this morning, and convert the Prince of Wales! We all said, "Amen" to that petition. We want the Lord to bring into his church some of those who are best known, whether they are princes or whether they are beggars, so that the works of God may be revealed in them.

19. When this man was converted, instead of being a public beggar, *he became a public confessor*. I like that answer of his, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I do not know: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." There is many a man who can say, "Well, I do not know much about theology; but I know that I was a drunkard, and I know that I am not a drunkard now. I know that I used to beat my wife; and now, God bless her, she knows how I love her! Then I could have gone into all manner of sinful company; but now, thank God, his saints are my choice companions! Once I could have gloried in my own righteousness; but now I consider it dross and dung, so that I may win Christ, and be found in him. There is a great change in me; no one can deny that fact, and I praise God's name for it." May the Lord send out a great company of men who are not ashamed of Jesus Christ! We want many men and women, who will come straight out from the world, and say, "Christ for me, for he has so touched my heart, that I am for him; and if no one else will confess him, I must do so, for he is my best Friend, my Lord, my Saviour, my all." In such cases, the works of God are revealed.

20. **III.** Now, I am finished when I have just said three or four things by way of hints on this last point, **HOW MAY GOD'S WORKS BE REVEALED IN US?**

21. Some of you are very poor; others are very lame or very sickly; you are consumptive, asthmatic, full of aches, and pains, and complaints. Now, then, perhaps all this suffering is permitted so that the work of God may be revealed *in your afflictions*, by your holy patience, your submission to the divine will, your

persevering holiness amid all your poverty and trials. All this is sent so that God's grace may be seen in you. Will you look at your afflictions in that light, and believe that they are not sent as a punishment, but, as a platform on which God may stand, and display his free grace in you? Bear well all the Lord's will, for your trials are sent for this purpose, so that God's works may be revealed in you.

22. The same is true of *your infirmities*. None of us is perfect; but we may also have physical infirmities. Now believe, if you are sent to preach the gospel, or to teach children, or in any way to advance the kingdom of God, that you would not be any better prepared for your work if you had all the eloquence of a Cicero, and all the learning of a Newton. You, as you are, can serve the Lord, and can fill a certain place better, with all your drawbacks, than you could without those drawbacks. A sensible Christian man will make use of his infirmities for God's glory. There is a strange story that they tell about St. Bernard, a tradition which is believed by some people, but which I look at as an allegory rather than as a matter of fact. He was going over the Alps towards Rome on some business. The devil knew that the saint was about to do something that would greatly injure his kingdom, so he came and broke one of the wheels of the saint's carriage; after which Bernard called out to him, and said, "You think to stop me in this way, do you, Satan? Now you shall suffer for it yourself"; so he took him, and twisted him around, and made a wheel of him, and fastened him to the carriage, and then went driving on. Now, the meaning of that allegory is that, when infirmities threaten to injure your usefulness, you are to use those infirmities in God's service. Turn the devil himself into a wheel, and go ahead all the better because of the hindrance that he tried to cause. Why, it might be an advantage sometimes to be compelled by stammering to lay emphasis on a word; and if ever I did feel myself now and then stuck in a hole by that process, I would take care to be stuck somewhere near the cross. Many a man has had the power to attract people by the very infirmity which looked as if it must impair his usefulness. All our infirmities, whatever they are, are just opportunities for God to display his gracious work in us.

23. So it will be with all *the oppositions that we encounter*. If we serve the Lord, we shall be sure to encounter difficulties and oppositions; but they are only more opportunities for the works of God to be seen in us.

24. Eventually, we shall come to die, and *in our deaths* God's work may be revealed. I wonder by what death we shall glorify God. Was that not a beautiful expression of John's, when the Saviour spoke of Peter? He told Peter how he would die; but John does not put it like that. He says, "By what death he should glorify God." Perhaps it will be by a long, pining sickness; some will be gradually dissolved by consumption. Well, you will glorify God by it. Those pale cheeks, and that thin hand, through which the light will shine, will preach many a sermon on that sick-bed. Or perhaps you will glorify God in some other way. You may have to die with bitter pangs of pain; but then, if the Lord cheers you, and makes you patient, you will glorify God by that kind of death. You will look death calmly in the face, and not fret,

and not be afraid. You will have to die somehow, unless the Lord himself shall come; and, blessed be his name, he will take you home in a way that will somehow or other bring glory to his name, however it may be. So let us begin to rejoice in it even now. 25. May God bless these words of mine, and may many here be eternal monuments of the boundless, sovereign grace of God; and to him be glory for ever and ever! Amen.

{See Spurgeon_Hymnal "The Adorable Trinity in Unity, Doxology to the Trinity" 152}

{See Spurgeon_Hymnal "Jesus Christ, Names and Titles — Ambassador" 369}

{See Spurgeon_Hymnal "Jesus Christ, Names and Titles — Physician" 394}

Exposition By C. H. Spurgeon {[Joh 9:1-38](#)}

1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth.

The man could not see Jesus, but sight came to the man from Jesus. If there are any here who cannot look to Christ as yet, our prayer is that he may look on them as he looked on this blind man.

2. And his disciples asked him, saying, "Master, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Beloved, if you had Christ with you, you could occupy your time better than in asking such questions as this; and I think that, when we go to Holy Scripture, we can do better than pry into things of little practical importance, or even into great mysteries. However, in this case, since the disciples were liable to fall into grave error, our Lord gave them instructions on the matter that perplexed them.

3. Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

In other words, this man is not blind as the result of sin in himself, or in his parents. He is blind in order that God may have a platform for the display of his gracious power in healing him.

4, 5. I must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day: the night comes when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Our Saviour felt that he was commissioned as a servant of his Father, sent here to do a certain work, and he must be doing it. It is good for God's servants to feel a holy compulsion; it does not take away from them the freedom of their action, and their delight in the service of God; but still it exercises a powerful influence over a man when he feels, "Woe is me, if I do not preach the gospel"; or when, like the Lord Jesus, he says, "I must work the works of him who sent me." Did the Well-Beloved, the Prince of Heaven, come under compulsion? Did he put himself under that "must" which is for the king? Then you and I may well put ourselves under holy bondage for the Lord. There, do not hinder me; do not tell me that I am too feeble in health; "I must work the works of him who sent me."

6, 7. When he had spoken this, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said to him, "Go, wash in the

pool of Siloam," (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

Our Lord often works miracles without means, and sometimes with means which appear to be quite inappropriate. It would seem to be more easy to blind a man with clay than to open his eyes with it; and there are some who assert that the gospel plainly spoken would lead men into sin, but it does not. It is "the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes." If you go to work in the name of God, if you put the clay on the sinner's eyes, and tell him to go and wash, you will see what will happen.

8-11. *The neighbours therefore, and those who before had seen him that he was blind, said, "Is this not he who sat and begged?" Some said, "This is he": others said, "He is like him": but he said, "I am he." Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" He answered and said, "A man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash': and I went and washed, and I received sight."*

Does he not tell his story well? If he had not been a blind man whose eyes had just been opened, he would have exaggerated somewhere or other. I never heard a man tell a story with absolute accuracy; it is not the way of people, they are sure to put in some little item by way of garnishing, for there is a bump of romance in most men's heads; but this shrewd, strictly honest man tells the story briefly, but leaves out no important detail.

12-15. *Then said they to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought him who previously was blind to the Pharisees. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now see."*

That was short and sweet; and when you have to deal with Pharisees, do not give them too much; they are not worth it, and they are sure to misuse it. When he spoke to the common people, he enlarged, and gave them details; but now that he comes to talk to these pragmatic professors, he cuts it down to as few words as possible.

16. *Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not of God, because he does not keep the sabbath day." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?" And there was a division among them.*

Yes, and there is always a division among the enemies of Christ; they cannot agree among themselves. If they could always lay their heads together, and agree, they might have greater power; but the Edomites draw their swords against the children of Ammon, and they are sure to kill each other in the long run. There were also some among these Pharisees who had a conscience, men like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea; and they asked, "How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?"

17. *They say to the blind man again, "What do you say about him, that he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."*

He must be a prophet. He could not have worked such a miracle as that if he had been a common man: "He said, 'He is a prophet.'"

18. *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight.*

You see, John gives to the Pharisees the name which they arrogated to themselves: "we are Jews." But they were not true Jews. They called themselves Jews, and so John speaks of them as "the Jews." It often happens that a certain clique or party will run away with a name which does not belong to them any more than it does to a great many who differ from them very widely. These Pharisees pretended that they would not believe the miracle. It was obviously before their eyes; but yet they would not believe it until they called his parents.

19-21. *And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now sees, we do not know; or who has opened his eyes, we do not know: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself."*

This was very shrewd on their part; but I think that I must add that it was very cowardly to throw all the testimony on their son. There are some parents who, if their children do right, if they follow Christ, seem to leave them to take care of themselves.

22. *His parents spoke these words, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man confessed that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*

Excommunicated; and they could not bear to be cut off from the respectable society which they had so far enjoyed.

23, 24. *Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." Then again they called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner."*

Does it not sound pretty from their Pharisaic lips? Arch-hypocrites pretending to teach a man who knew much better than themselves! "We know that this man is a sinner. You did not know it, but we know it and since we know it, and we are doctors, you must believe it."

25. *He answered and said, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I do not know: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."*

He could not be beaten out of that. You cannot argue a man out of an experience of this kind; and if the Lord Jesus Christ has ever opened your eyes, dear friend, no one can make you doubt that blessed fact.

26, 27. *Then they said to him again, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you did not hear: why would you hear it again? Will you also be his disciples?"*

He threw a little sarcasm into that last question. The man was a very remarkable person, a simple-hearted, honest man, but as well quite able to hold his own in any company.

28. *Then they reviled him,*

It is a bad case, so abuse the plaintiff. There is nothing to be said for our side, so let us abuse the man who has had his eyes opened.

28-30. *And said, "You are his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses: as for this fellow, we do not know where he is from." The man answered and said to them, "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that you do not know where he is from, and yet he has opened my eyes!*

Does not that revelation of miraculous power show where he must have come from? Could he have come from anywhere but from God?

31-33. *Now we know that God does not hear sinners: but if any man is a worshipper of God, and does his will, he hears him. Since the world began it has not been heard that any man opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."*

Well argued! The case is proven indeed.

34. *They answered and said to him, "You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us?"*

Can you not hear them say it? "A blind beggar, who has just begun to see, 'Do you teach us?' — D. D.'s, men who are learned in the law, 'Do you teach us?'" Well, brethren, if a man has only one eye, he may teach those who do not have any, for the old proverb says, "In the realm of the blind, the man with one eye is king." Yet there is another proverb on this subject, and that is, "In the realm of the blind, the man with one eye gets hung." That was likely to be the case here; the blind Pharisees could not bear the man who could see. He knew too much for them.

34-36. *And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him?"*

He needed instruction. Christ may have done much for a man, but he may not as yet fully know the Lord. There may be some here tonight on whom Christ has done a great deal, and yet you do not know him as you will know him: "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

37, 38. *And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen him, and it is he who talks with you." And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped him.*

That is the way with a genuine believer, he worships Christ. Why? Because he believes him to be God. It would be idolatry to worship Christ if he were only man, and Christ would have been an impostor if he had allowed this man to worship him if he had not been God. But he was God; and we, believing him to be God, worship Christ as very God of very God, to whom be praise for ever and ever! Amen.

The Adorable Trinity in Unity, Doxologies to the Trinity (152)

- 1 Bless'd be the Father, and his love,
To whose celestial source we owe
Rivers of endless joy above,
And rills of comfort here below.
- 2 Glory to thee, great Son of God!
From whose dear wounded body rolls
A precious stream of vital blood,
Pardon and life for dying souls.
- 3 We give thee, sacred Spirit, praise,
Who in our hearts of sin and woe
Makes living springs of grace arise,
And into boundless glory flow.
- 4 Thus God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, we adore;
That sea of life and love unknown,
Without a bottom or a shore.

Isaac Watts, 1709.

Jesus Christ, Names and Titles (369 — Ambassador)

- 1 Jesus, commission'd from above,
Descends to men below,
And shows from whence the springs of love
In endless currents flow.
- 2 He, whom the boundless heaven adores,
Whom angels long to see,
Quitted with joy those blissful shores,
Ambassador to me!
- 3 To me, a worm, a sinful clod,
A rebel all forlorn:
A foe, a traitor, to my God,
And of a traitor born.
- 4 To me, who never sought his grace,
Who mock'd his sacred word:
Who never knew or loved his face,
But all his will abhorr'd
- 5 To me, who could not even praise
When his kind heart I knew,
But sought a thousand devious ways
Rather than find the true:
- 6 Yet this redeeming Angel came
So vile a worm to bless;
He took with gladness all my blame,

And gave his righteousness.
7 Oh that my languid heart might glow
With ardour all divine!
And, for more love than seraphs know,
Like burning seraphs shine!

Ambrose Serle, 1786.

Jesus Christ, Names and Titles (394 — Physician)

1 Jesus, if thou art still today
As yesterday — the same;
Present to heal, in me display
The virtue of thy name.
2 Since still thou goest about to do
Thy needy creatures good;
On me, that I thy praise may show,
Be all thy wonders show'd.
3 Now, Lord, to whom for help I call,
Thy miracles repeat;
With pitying eye behold me fall
A leper at thy feet.
4 Loathsome, and foul, and self abhorr'd
I sink beneath my sin;
But if thou wilt, a gracious word
Of thine can make me clean.
5 Thou seest me deaf to thy command,
Open, oh Lord, mine ear;
Bid me stretch out my wither'd hand,
And lift it up in prayer.
6 Silent (alas! thou know'st how long),
My voice I cannot raise;
But oh, when thou shalt loose my tongue,
The dumb shall sing thy praise!
7 If thou, my God, art passing by,
Oh let me find thee near!
Jesus, in mercy hear my cry,
Thou, Son of David, hear!
8 Behold me waiting, in the way,
For thee, the heavenly light;
Command me to be brought, and say,
"Sinner, receive thy sight."

Charles Wesley, 1740, a.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-5a

*2*We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,*3*remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. *4*For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,*5*because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

2 Chronicles 7:14

if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Consider today's text and...

VIII. Your Selection

- a. Your Start/spark
- b. Your Seeking
- c. Your Surrender

IX. Your Salvation

- a. Your Separation
- b. Your Satisfaction
- c. Your Service

X. Your Sanctification

- a. Your Struggles/"sifting"
- b. Your Sanctity/Spiritual-fruit
- c. Your Surprises
- d. Your Sorrows/Sickness
- e. Your Strength/Spiritual-gifts

XI. Your Sabbath/rest

XII. Your Security

INTRODUCTION:

It is theologically critical to engage, explain & expand your understanding of the relationship & roles of “biblical works” & “biblical work.” To show you just how complicated this can get (and why we need to undertake the task, consider the following:

A. Ephesians 2:8-10

B. Thus, “works” become work, BUT, work is NOT works!

C. Works are neither the root NOR substitute for faith... No! There is no such thing as “saving works” - that’s gospel-defying & gospel denying heresy! Instead, the Bible is abundantly clear... your God-honoring work is the fruit of your faith.

Remember Christ’s words...

“...work out your Salvation with fear & trembling...”

Connect the roles & relationships between:

- Biblical fear & biblical rest
- THE gospel & biblical belief
- God’s Plan, Power, Promise, Purpose, Person & People

*** **1 Peter 1:1-7**

A Living Hope, and a Sure Salvation

*1Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus,
Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are
chosen 2according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by
the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be
sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the
fullest measure.*

*3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who
according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to
a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the
dead, 4to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and
undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for
you, 5who are protected by the power of God through faith for a
salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6In this you
greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary,
you have been distressed by various trials, 7so that the proof of
your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable,
even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and
glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

Ephesians 2:1-10

(v.1 = "dead" & v.10 = "beforehand")

*1And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2in
which you once walked, following the course of this world,
following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is
now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3among whom
we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out
the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature*

children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

*** Connect:

A. Romans 1:16-18

B. Hebrews “warning #2” & Hebrews 4:3

C. Romans 8 (“Romans 8 by Piper”)

Evangelism is the elect’s privilege! -JDP

*** One can plant, another water, but ONLY God can bring the increase (new life)

*** John 6:29 = the work of God is our belief!!!!

Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

“God’s Sovereignty & Human Free-will”

Embracing Both Divine Sovereignty And Free Will

The best way to approach this and most any complex, highly debated issue is to first look at it from a distance. This paper will attempt to paint a broad picture of the subject and then zero in on the particulars. If we can first encapsulate the “whole,” we will be far more likely to understand the various viewpoints contending to define the “components” of the debate. With that said, the foundational question under-girding the divine-sovereignty/human freedom (free will) tension asks: “what is the relationship between the decree of God and creation?” Different perspectives on this question offer an effective overview of the subject matter as well as a perfect entry point for this work.

When we talk about the decree of God we are discussing the plans God made before any of creation came into being. The real question at the heart of the broader question is: “how much of the future, does God really know, and what is the nature of His knowing?” While many people are quick to say: “Well, God knows everything.” Many today would contend that those who are so quick to respond have not given the concept of free will its biblical justice. On the other hand, the people who suggest that God does not know the future, having been all but handcuffed by the free will he gave to humanity, are negating one of God’s core characteristics – His sovereignty. As we will see, there are three pillar positions represented in this continuum: classical theism, open theism, and process theism – each with their own myriad of subdivisions.

The first perspective to consider is classical or traditional theism. Those holding to this position are generally regarded as defenders of the highest view of Scripture. Herein we find the

advocates of an inerrant and infallible Bible. Given their acceptance of the entire Word of God being inspired, classical theists tend to apply literal interpretations to the Bible. Therefore, God's sovereignty is heavily weighted in comparison to the "open" and "process" position. Within the classical or traditional camp there is a division worth noting. While both viewpoints stand far to the left of open and process theism, Arminianism and Calvinism divide the classical position. "Not only did Arminius work through a series of key biblical and theological loci related to the problems of grace, human will, and predestination, he also became acquainted with a series of Lutheran and Roman Catholic views in which alternative approaches (to Calvinism) were to be found."¹ The particular differences found within traditional theism will be covered in more detail below. Open theism however, builds on the premise of Arminianism (libertarian freedom) but takes it to an extreme. In short, open theism argues that God cannot know the future free actions of creatures. Consider the following view offered in support of such a position: "...those who do not believe will be lost. But if we ask why some believe and others do not, we can say no more than that this is part of the mystery of evil to which the Pastorals, like the rest of the Scripture, can offer no answer."² Embedded in this theological position is the divorce of any connection between God's "plan" and creation – not to mention biblical revelation. So much weight is given to freedom in open theism that God's sovereignty is minimized to the point of defying its definition.

The doctrine of providence (God's prior knowledge and provision for the world) serves as the theological framework for this debate between sovereignty and freedom. While the word

¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, Bruce A. Ware, *The Grace of God – The Bondage of the Will*, (Baker Books, 1995), 255.

² Clark Pinnock, *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, (Bethany House Publishers, 1989), 69.

“providence” is not found in the Bible, the concept of providence is clearly a bedrock foundation to Scriptural teaching. Based on the clear and frequent reference to God’s omniscience (all-knowing) and omnipotence (all-powerful) in the Bible, the question of providence has led to the broader debate of Scriptural reliability (characterized and spearheaded by the liberal wing of Christianity noted above, namely open and processed theists).

There are three aspects of divine providence: preservation, concurrence, and government. Preservation speaks to God’s required involvement in the sustaining of creation. In essence, the need for God’s preservation in the universe acknowledges Him as the glue that keeps everything together. Next, concurrence speaks to the fact that God is active in everyday living. Concurrence tells us that God does more than just check in on creation every once in a while. A direct and powerful, personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the finest example I know of to demonstrate the validity of concurrence. Those who know the wonder of having been carried or sustained by the love of Christ recognize His ever-present role in creation. Lastly, God’s government is seen best in the coming to fruition of His plans and purposes. There is no such thing as “blind luck” or “mystical fate” – it is through God’s governance that all things, big and small, come to pass.

The filter of providence allows us to see two contemporary models or perspectives on God’s sovereignty. The first is referred to as “general sovereignty” and weights human freedom as its predominant characteristic. Within the general sovereignty camp there is a sub-continuum with traditional Arminianism on the far left, Paradox Indeterminism centered, and Open Theism representing the far right.³ At the root of these three positions is the belief that God has granted

³ Stephen Wellum, Lecture Handouts (SBTS, Spring 2004)

mankind a libertarian freedom. In so doing, they contend that God has eliminated the possibility of a fully mapped out plan for creation through eternity. That is not to say that He is not in charge or in full control, rather the Arminian contention is that God has in affect allowed humanity to choose the specific route and role that each individual will play in His creation. In short, choice supersedes control. Paradox Indeterminism divorces human reason and simply clings to the two paradoxical, but arguably biblically defensible standards of God's absolute sovereignty and libertarian free will.⁴ Lastly, as noted earlier, Open Theism limits God's sovereignty all together. Open theism forces one to accept a god that can do little more than hope, thereby requiring Him to make contingency plans and take risks. There are two verses in Scripture that general sovereignty models consider to be foundational to their views: 2 Peter 3:9 and Matthew 23:37. They also point to the problem of evil as a necessity for espousing their view.

The other model is called "specific sovereignty" and emphasizes God's overarching foreknowledge and plan for creation. In so much as God has already worked out all the details of creation (past, present, and future), those who hold to the specific sovereignty position acknowledge the responsibility of the individual in daily living but fall short of delegating libertarian freedom to each person. "The free will is not violated when the outcome of an event is in God's hands, and when God according to his hidden decision guides men differently from what they have resolved... God's mercy precedes our will, accompanies it and gives it fruitfulness."⁵ Collectively, this position is most frequently referred to as Calvinism. However, as was the case within the general sovereignty view, specific sovereignty can also be divided into

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ernst Winter, *Discourse on Free Will*, (Fredrick Ungar Publishing, 1961), 49.

sub-categories: Paradox Specific Sovereignty and Compatibilistic Specific Sovereignty. The Paradox category within specific sovereignty is much like its counterpart in general sovereignty – it upholds both God’s complete sovereignty and man’s libertarian freedom. The paradox represented in the position is acknowledged by its advocates. They hold to their beliefs nonetheless because they believe the Bible describes both tenets as valid. Moreover, like their paradoxical brethren from the general sovereignty camp, they are not willing to forgo what they believe to be biblical truth so as to fit their theology into the compartmentalism of human rationale. The Compatibilistic Specific Sovereignty position will be detailed below as it represents my personal convictions and will be defended as such.

In describing and defending the Compatibilistic Specific Sovereignty position, there is a fundamental understanding that must be established. In short, that which the Bible says - will be accepted as absolute truth. What the Bible does not say will be checked against the full context of what the Bible does say, and where there appears to be conflict beyond our ability to reason, neither side of the biblical givens will be minimized; rather, both will be upheld as truth and the biblically ordained use of “mystery” will be inserted to bridge the biblical givens. Consequently, the question of sovereignty versus free will no longer becomes an either/or proposition but a “both/and” acceptance of the Word. Moreover, there need not be a paradoxical (the inexplicable marriage of two theological opposites) interpretation but rather a complimentary understanding of the relationship therein. “God’s controlling providence and his causality by grace with man’s will is the source and condition of man’s achievement of true freedom.”⁶The nature of this complementary relationship between sovereignty and freedom is

⁶ John Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, (The Newman Press, 1964), 310.

at the heart of the compatibilist position. What it says is that God did predetermine each person's actions, but He never constrained anyone from doing what they wanted. The hair-splitting comes down to how one defines freedom. The general sovereignty (Arminian) camp would say that if God knew what the outcome would be, then genuine freedom could not have been given to humanity, which means that people should not be held responsible for their actions, which would imply God is unjust. Conversely, the specific sovereignty view says that whether or not God knew the outcome is not the determining question in this matter. Rather, the proper question to ask is: was the person forced to act in a way contrary to their wishes?⁷ If, according to we compatibilists, the agent is uninhibited and free to choose, "Biblical freedom" is maintained and the "either/or," as well as the "paradoxical" interpretations can be eliminated. I particularly like Jewett's perspective when, while trying to expand his reader's understanding of biblical "election" he writes: "Election means that in his eternal counsel, God has decreed that they only shall be saved who acknowledge his Son. Thus, election is solely in Christ, who earnestly desires the salvation of all, a desire that is not fulfilled because – and only because – the wicked make it impossible for the Spirit to effectually to work for their salvation."⁸

There are three biblical givens that serve as the under-girding premise for the compatibilistic position. First, God is absolutely sovereign. The following Scriptural references carry this point beyond the possibility of debate (Isa: 14:24-26; 46:9-11; Jer. 23:20; and Eph. 1:11). Next, human beings are moral creatures held accountable as well as responsible for our actions. We can see God's heart in regards to His relationship with humanity in the following verses:

⁷ Stephen Wellum, Lecture Notes (SBTS, Spring 2004)

⁸ Paul K. Jewett, *Election and Predestination*, (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 11-12

(Rom. 10:9-11; Gen. 22:12; Mic. 3:1-12; Isa. 30:18). Thirdly, God is perfectly good and just – that can never be questioned, it is at the heart of God’s character and identity. Lest there be any doubts, see John 1:5 and Rev. 15:3-4. The Bible places these three “givens” together in Isa. 10:5-17; Phil. 2:12-13; and Acts 2:23; 4:23-31.

The bottom line is that there is no Christianity without God’s sovereignty. Moreover, sovereignty is an absolute term. To espouse anything less than an omniscience, omnipotent God is simply heresy. Therefore, any and all positions that minimize or strip God of His sovereignty cannot be embraced as Biblical Christianity. At the same time, Scripture tells us that man is granted freedom. Consequently, we are challenged to understand the nature and definition of free will within both the orthodox appreciation of God’s sovereignty as well as the context of biblical truth. Given the premise of the specific sovereignty position (not to mention our Christian faith in general), namely, that God is completely sovereign, man is responsible, and God is always good and just, a “both/and” understanding of the issue must be revealed. Otherwise, we are required to fall back upon the declaration of “mystery.” The point is, we never have the luxury of saying: “it doesn’t make sense to my finite mind, therefore, I reject either/or biblical truth... now I believe... this or that.” Lastly, if anyone would lose sight of the third bedrock to biblical truth, that God is always good and just, they are no longer debating within the framework of Christianity.

In my humble opinion, no other theological position can so aptly embrace the three foundational tenets of biblical teaching. Consequently, the specific sovereignty model could and should be heralded as the one, “comprehensive, non-paradoxical, both/and position” when it comes to the question of divine-sovereignty and human freedom. It is this writer’s opinion that

specific sovereignty is the most complete encapsulation of biblical orthodoxy on the subject. The position is unique in so much as it stands on Scripture alone and yet minimizes nothing in terms of biblical content. All other perspectives appear to force us to pick and choose, or at least emphasize and minimize tenets of our faith. I do not believe God intended for us to sift through the Bible the way we do the world. Every word in Scripture is true and edifying. While we as creatures have been given the freedom to make choices in our lives, one must never forget that God's Word is absolute truth – regardless of whether or not we creatures choose to believe it.

Hebrews 4:3

*For we who have believed enter that rest,
just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH,
THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,"
yet/although His works were finished from the
foundation/creation of the cosmos/world.*