

BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE 2000

Article V – God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT GOD'S PURPOSE IN SALVATION?

Last fall we studied through this doctrine at length. Election and endurance are key ideas in what is called the “doctrines of grace”. This is also commonly referred to as the “5 points of Calvinism”, or more broadly as “reformed theology”. If you remember our Rock the Block theme from this past summer (“Proof Pirates”), this was essentially using the book of Ephesians to teach these doctrines, proclaiming the gospel to kids. This should be nothing new to us, but it is important that we see these doctrines do not spring from a theological system, but are rooted in Scripture itself.

- What are some of the misconceptions that you think some people might have about election?
- Why can this a difficult doctrine to understand? To believe?

1) Gracious Purpose of God

The article states, “**Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners.**” Danny Akin unpacks this statement, saying, “Election is an act of grace rooted in the purpose of God. Election unto salvation starts with God, not man. Election to salvation is rooted in grace, not works. It is unmerited and undeserved.”¹

The abstract of Principles (the confessional document of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) tightens the language a bit on election. It says, “Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life – not because of foreseen merit in them, but of His

¹Akin, Daniel, *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (Plymouth, UK: Rowan & Littlefield, 2007), 45-46.

mercy in Christ." The statement in the BFM is certainly compatible with this statement and not contradictory in any way. However, it is broader than the Abstract of Principles article on election.

The Lord has of his own volition chosen a people for himself. We see this from the very beginning with Abram in Genesis 12.

Genesis 12:1-3

[1] Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. [2] And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Exodus 19:3-8

[3] The LORD called to [Moses] out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: [4] 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. [5] Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; [6] and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

[7] So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. [8] All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.

This continued through Israel in the Old Covenant, and God promised that he would enact a new covenant by which he would secure a people for himself.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

[31] "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, [32] not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. [33] For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [34] And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

We see more clearly in the New Testament that this chosen people would be gathered in the name of Jesus. God's people are united to Christ, and it is God who does the electing and the drawing of people to himself.

Luke 2:27-32

[27] And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, [28] he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, [29] "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; [30] for **my eyes have seen your salvation** [31] **that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples**, [32] a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

John 1:9-14

[9] The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. [10] He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. [11] He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. [12] **But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God**, [13] **who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God**.

[14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 6:41-47

[41] So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." [42] They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" [43] Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. [44] **No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him**. And I will raise him up on the last day. [45] It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—[46] not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. [47] Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

John 6:63-65

[63] **"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.** [64] **But there are some of you who do not believe.**" (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) [65] And he said, "This is why I told you that **no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father**."

John 15:12-17

[12] "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. [13] Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. [14] You are my friends if you do what I command you. [15] No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. [16] **You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide**, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. [17] These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

The salvation that God's people have been granted has been planned from before the foundation of the world.

Luke 1:68-79

[68] "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for **he has visited and redeemed his people** [69] **and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David**, [70] **as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old**, [71] that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; [72] to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, [73] the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us [74] that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, [75] in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. [76] And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, [77] to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, [78] because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high [79] to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Matthew 25:31-34

[31] "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. [32] Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. [33] And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. [34] Then the King will say to those on his right, '**Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**'

In his various letters, Paul unpacks this idea of election. He is clear that all of redemption is done according to God's plan. God has elected individuals unto salvation from eternity past, and this is all a work of God's grace. We have done nothing to merit favor with God, and as a result this should drive humility in us.

Romans 8:28-39

[28] And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, **for those who are called according to his purpose**. [29] **For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers**. [30] **And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.**

[31] What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] **Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.** [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

[37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

[1] Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, [2] To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: [3] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3-12

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

[11] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 2:10

[10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 3:7-13

[7] Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. [8] To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, [9] and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, [10] so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. [11] This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, [12] in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. [13] So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Colossians 1:13-14

[13] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

[13] But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. [14] To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. [15] So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

Peter affirms this doctrine as well in his letters.

1 Peter 1:1-5

[1] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, [2] **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 2:4-10

[4] As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, [5] you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [6] For it stands in Scripture: "**Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.**"

[7] So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," [8] and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

[9] **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.** [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

This is a lot of scripture focusing on this one point, but it is important for us to understand that this is not something that is foreign to the Bible. We see God's enacting his will in choosing a people for himself, and this is rooted not in a theological system, but in God's word.

- Why has God elected particular individuals? Why did he elect you?
 - God elects individuals by his free choice. We do not know why he chooses particular people, and we bow to his sovereign wisdom and grace.
- What are different ways that the doctrine of election should affect our lives? Why does this matter? After all, we cannot determine who is elect or not?
 - It should promote **humility**, as we did nothing to earn God's favor.
 - It should promote **evangelism**, as we know that there are some who are elected to salvation and they will respond to the God's call.
 - It should promote **thanksgiving**, as we cannot elect ourselves. It is God who has mercifully called us unto himself.
 - It should promote **unity** within the church as we unite with other sinners who have been called just as we have been called.
- What are ways that we can misunderstand or misuse this doctrine?
 - Cage-stage Calvinism, Arrogance, Pride

2) Responsibility of Man

The article states, “[Election] is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.” All over Scripture we see the tension of God's sovereignty versus man's responsibility. Both doctrines are absolutely true. God elects people unto salvation; it is all of God and man does nothing to merit this choice. And just as true, man is responsible for his own sin, and man must turn in repentance and faith to be reconciled to God. There is no contradiction here – God is the one who mercifully regenerates the sinner so that he can choose God. God is sovereign over all aspects of salvation. Man is responsible and must repent and believe.

This can be very difficult to fully comprehend the way that God works here. Charles Spurgeon summed it up like this. “I am not sure that in heaven we shall be able to know where the free agency of man and the sovereignty of God meet, but both are great truths.”²

All through redemptive history we have seen the necessity of man to trust in the promises of God and follow after him. While it remains true that God elects men to salvation, this results in a life that is lived by faith.

1 Samuel 8:4-7

[4] Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah [5] and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” [6] But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. [7] And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.

Jesus continued to preach this message. Though God had chosen the nation of Israel, not all of Israel was true Israel. It is only those who lived a life of faith, who trusted and treasured the Lord that were truly his. Jesus unpacks this in a few different parables.

Matthew 21:28-46

[28] “What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ [29] And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. [30] And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. [31] Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. [32] For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

²Spurgeon, Charles, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 51 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1978), 50.

[33] "Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. [34] When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. [35] And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. [36] Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. [37] Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' [38] But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' [39] And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. [40] When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" [41] They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

[42] Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?

[43] **Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.** [44] And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

[45] When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. [46] And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

Therefore, we see the constant call in the New Testament for all people everywhere to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. It is through repentance and faith that we are united to Christ. This is a real command and we bear real responsibility in this command.

John 3:16

[16] "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 5:19-25

[19] So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. [20] For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. [21] **For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.** [22] For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, [23] that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. [24] Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.**

Romans 10:12-15

[12] For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. [13] For "**everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**"

[14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone

preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

1 John 1:7-9

[7] But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. [8] If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [9] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- Where else in Scripture do we see the tension between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility juxtaposed?
 - Genesis 50:20
 - Acts 2:22-24
- How does the doctrine of man's responsibility affect our lives? Why should this matter to us?
 - This drives **urgency in our evangelism**. There are eternal consequences on the line and we know that men have been called to repent and believe in order to be saved.
 - This inspires **wonder and awe of God**. He works in remarkable ways, sovereignly directing all things but holding man accountable for his decisions, and this is not contradictory.
 - This encourages us to look within to **examine our own faith** and turning to the Lord in repentance, faith, gratitude, and humility.

3) Enduring to the End

The article says, **"All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."**

It is clear in God's Word that Christians will endure, they will remain Christians until the end of their lives. They will not ultimately fall away, for if they do they expose that they were never truly a part of God's people. 1 John is clear on this:

1 John 2:18-19

[18] Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. [19] They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

Jesus spoke of preserving the elect. It is by his power that the elect are saved. Because we can do nothing to save ourselves, we cannot keep ourselves saved. The Lord graciously and powerfully grants to us endurance.

John 10:22-30

[22] At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, [23] and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. [24] So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." [25] Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, [26] but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. [27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. [29] My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. [30] I and the Father are one."

Matthew 24:21-22

[21] For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. [22] And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. **But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short...** [29] Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [30] Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31] **And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

John 17:6-12

[6] "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. [7] Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. [8] For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. [9] I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. [10] All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. [11] And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. [12] **While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**

Paul unpacks this doctrine in Acts, and again through his letters.

Acts 20:32

[32] And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is **able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.**

Ephesians 1:13-15

[13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**

2 Timothy 1:12

But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

2 Timothy 2:8-10

[8] Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, [9] for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! [10] Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

1 John 3:1-2

[1] See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. [2] Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Again, we are reminded that Christians, true Christians will endure to the end. They will grow in holiness like we discussed last week. They will not ultimately fall away, and will continue in a posture of repentance until they meet the Lord.

2 Timothy 2:14-19

[14] Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. [15] Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. [16] But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, [17] and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, [18] who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. [19] But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

James 1:12

[12] Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

- How has this doctrine been abused? [Once saved, always saved, go on sinning.]
- How should this doctrine affect us? Why does this matter to us?
 - This should cause us to **continue on in the Christian life**. We are called to endure, to continue to pursue Christ and a life of holiness as a part of God's people.
 - This should cause us to **praise God** for his mighty hand as he secures us and seals us until the last day.
 - This should cause us to **preach a full gospel, not cheap grace**. Once saved, always saved only applies to those who are truly God's children.

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

- A) What difference does this make in my life? How should my life look because of these truths?
- B) What changes do I need to make because of these truths?
- C) How can I share these truths with family, friends, or neighbors?

HOMEWORK

For next week, read Article 6 and all of the associated scriptures with this article.