



FIRST BAPTIST of Hayden

2/28/2024

**The Baptist Faith and Message
Grace II**

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Preface

From the earliest days of the New Testament Church, the issue of grace and its effect and purpose have been debated.

There were those who believed that by God's grace, we were saved to be sinless. Others believed that our salvation was the activity of God and grace, while at the same time, the actions of man in regards to God's expectations. We must do certain things in order to curry God's favor.

The Roman Catholics have long held that a man named Augustine, AD 354-430, preached the very same doctrines of grace that they have held to since the "inception" of the church. He was a pastor in north Africa and wrote of his journey from sinful liscense to salvation in Christ. Here is a list of some of his doctrinal understanding as taught by the Roman Catholic Church today.

- The canon of Scripture includes the Septuagint OT canon (deuterocanonicals, Apocrypha)
- Authoritative Tradition
- Baptismal regeneration and grace
- Necessity of baptism for salvation
- Real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (Lord's Supper)
- The Mass is a sacrifice

- Necessity of the Lord's Supper for salvation
- Purgatory and praying for the departed
- The communion of saints and saintly intercession
- Authority of the Catholic Church
- Apostolic Succession
- Possibility of falling from grace
- The sacrament of penance
- Mary was ever virgin
- *Predestination of the elect*

I know of some theologians who have spent their lives studying Augustine who would disagree with this list, but both Catholic and non-Catholic alike hold that he was one of them.

It seems that there are many mixed up people because of what men have written. So many today read Calvin, or what others say about a small part of what John Calvin wrote. Others are mixed up because they have never read Augustine, but they have read a little about what someone else has written about Augustine. Some are mixed up because they listen to so many different voices, they cannot discern truth from error.

It is unfortunate that so many today refuse to go to the inspired, authoritative and reliable Word of God to form their doctrinal beliefs.

The history of the Baptist church until recent decades was to go to the Bible and ask “What does the Lord say?”

So, tonight I would like for us to spend some time looking at God’s Word and asking, “What does the Lord say about grace and salvation, redemption and the process that gets a person to the point of repentance and regeneration.

Our Baptist Distinctives:

5. God's Purpose of Grace

BFM: 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.

- Election
- Free Agency of man
- God's sovereign goodness
- Endurance of the saints
- Fall into sin but kept by the power of God

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These are key phrases that promote the Calvinist doctrine of election, but is there another way by which we can view these biblical ideas?

Churches that may not have been called Baptist centuries ago, but which practiced baptistic polity, a democratic form of governance, baptism by immersion, believer's baptism, an emphasis on the proclamation of the gospel and the necessity of regular evangelism have been preaching and teaching Baptist doctrine since the earliest days of the church.

I want to particularly focus our attention on the election of the saints tonight, because there is such controversy over that single issue, and perhaps offer you a biblical perspective that may help you understand better where we, as Baptists, came from.

General Calling:

The general call is God's gracious gospel invitation of salvation to all the lost.

Matthew 22:1–3 (ESV): 1 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

This invitation was to the children of Abraham. They were the elect of God, only because of God's relationship with Abraham.

Look what God has said regarding his choice of Abraham and his children.

Genesis 18:17–19 (ESV): 17 *The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”*

Matthew 22:4-7 (ESV): 4 *Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ 5 But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.*

This is a second invitation and a judgment of the Jews who refused to heed the invitation.

Matthew 22:8-9 (ESV): 8 *Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’*

This is a clear picture of the general call of God to any who hear and respond.

Matthew 22:10 (ESV): 10 *And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.*

This is the “whosoever will” group. High and low alike, any who listen to the invitation are given wedding garments to wear into the banquet hall and sit at the table of the king.

Matthew 22:11-13 (ESV): 11 *“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*

Only those clothed in the righteousness of Christ will be accepted. That invitation comes in this life, not after.

Matthew 22:14 (ESV): 14 *For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

It is interesting to me that the more we declare the gospel, the more people respond to the gospel. But there will be some who believe falsely.

I believe these are those who buy into what the Catholic theologian wrote above. Like Mormonism, there is this idea that salvation is by God’s grace and my effort.

The Lord’s supper, baptism, marriage, the message must flow through “Apostolic authority,” etc.

Apostolic authority, or succession, means that someone who has been ordained, or recognized, as a pastor by someone who is in a direct line back to an apostle. It is like a spiritual lineage that takes one back to the first apostles. All are doctrines of works; we must add to the grace given by God in order for salvation and eternal life to be effectual. Baptists have historically rejected these views and held closely to the biblical truth Paul taught the church in Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:4–10 (ESV): 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Our good works are a result of the salvation and redemption he provides to us, not a prerequisite to receive it. So, if the doctrine of Calvinism and predestination is not biblically accurate, how then does the process of regeneration work?

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2 Peter 3:9 (ESV): 9 *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

Peter is talking about the Day of the Lord, his coming, judging, and establishing a kingdom in this world. That day is coming, but God is unwilling that any perish.

John 1:12–13 (ESV): 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.*

We are told that we are dead in trespasses and sin, alienated from God and completely unable to even seek him. That is the standard reformed, or Calvinist view.

The Bible teaches us the same.

Romans 3:10–12 (ESV): 10 *as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."*

Then, we are incapable of doing good, which in this context is doing the will of God, because we don't seek him; we will not seek him.

Jesus told a parable about a sower. Let's read what he said.

Luke 8:5–8 (ESV): 5 “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. 8 And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

According to Jesus, there are four types of soil. The path: it is trafficked, hard and packed; it will not allow anything to grow. Rocks: they may have some soil, but little to no moisture, and therefore cannot sustain the life of the plant. Thorns: something can grow among thorns, but the thorns are unwilling to give up the ground’s nourishment and so the plant is choked and dies. Good soil: tilled, broken, moist, fertilized and ready for growth; it just needs the seed.

Luke 8:9-15 (ESV): 9 And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, 10 he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

13 *And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.* 14 *And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.* 15 *As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.*

Some say there is growth, or salvation, in three of these soils and no life in only one. Others say that three produce death, while only one produces sustained life. Let me give you a different interpretation that may be more useful.

Each soil, each part could be turned into good soil. We were recently in Israel and we saw huge areas of olive trees and grapevines. One farmer said *“We have returned to the land, and now the land is returning to us.”* He spoke of drilling through rock to plant grapevines and olive trees.

Over time, the roots break the rocks, produce soil and eventually the land become fertile. Now let me read to you another passage of scripture.

Romans 10:13–17 (ESV): 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!"*

16 *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"* 17 *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

It's that last verse I want you to focus on. "*Faith comes by hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.*" It is when the word of God enters a life, through your witness or mine, and it begins to drill down and break up hard soil. If, over time, that happens enough, there will be soil that can receive the word and grow the fruit of faith.

This is the reconciliation of God's sovereignty and man's free will. God doesn't want any to perish. Ezekiel says, "*The Lord does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked.*" Thus in his divine plan, he has ordained that whosoever will may come, but they will not come unless someone goes to them and presents God's Words of faith and life.

Thus God sovereignly elects the saints by his Word, and then he commissions those saints to take his Word into the world and use it to break down barriers, destroy strongholds, drill into rock hard hearts and plant the truth.

One last thought to ponder regarding God's sovereign purpose of salvation and his general call to all men.

John 12:32–33 (ESV): 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

The cross is what draws all people and calls out to all people. When all people hear and understand, they have a divine choice: to choose life and Christ, or to choose death and eternal destruction. God's sovereign grace does not violate man's free will but works alongside it, and provides an opportunity man's will would not have otherwise had.

Let me finish with this passage.

Matthew 11:20–24 (ESV): 20 Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

Had the message been heard, they would have repented.

Additional Scripture:

Deuteronomy 30:19, Isaiah 45:22, 55:1-7, Ezekiel 18:1-32, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:47, 1 Corinthians 9:19, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Acts 17:30, 18:4,19:8, Revelation 7:9