

WILL ALL THE ELECT OF GOD HEAR AND OBEY THE GOSPEL

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Hebrews 2:1-3, *“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him”.*

Is it true that all the elect of God will at some point in their life hear the gospel and obey the gospel? This doctrine seems to be gaining in popularity of late in the Old Baptist. In Proverbs 22:28 Solomon said, *“Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.”* The ancient landmark is the marker for a border or territory. If the landmark is removed the border or territory of “truth” will soon be lost. We need the ancient (OLD) landmark, that we might from time to time go back and remember the precious truths of God. The gospel of Christ and His accomplishments on Calvary are a precious landmark. The faith that was once delivered to the Saints is the landmark of truth. It encompasses all the precious doctrines of Grace, redemption, atonement, effectual calling, preservation of the saints, the eternal and everlasting covenant, and so on.

This landmark is found in Zion, the Church of the living God. Deuteronomy 19:14 says, *“Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor’s landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it.”* God has, by his grace, allowed us to inherit the land found in His church, a land flowing with milk and honey. But there are those who would want that landmark removed. Job 24:4 states, *“some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof”.* It is a sad commentary indeed when we see churches that are swept away from the truth of Gods word. Jeremiah 50:6 says, *“My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace”.*

But Jude said that we are to contend for the faith. That means to fight for it, stand for it, and be not ashamed of the truth. It was a Chinese philosopher, Sun Tzu, which once said, *“The best offense is a good defense”.* While Paul was in the Philippian jail he said, *“I am set for the defence of the gospel”.* Paul was a soldier of the cross. And we too should always stand for the truth and not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

When landmarks are moved the changes can seem very small. Often times even the smallest misinterpretation of the bible can lead someone into large error. For example, in Matthew 25 where God speaks of the sheep and the goats, there are those who would take those verses and apply them in a timely since. But if we do that, then what are we going to do about the words such as “eternal life”, and “everlasting”? We would have to change their meaning all through the bible to the point that eternal really doesn’t mean “eternal” and everlasting doesn’t really mean “everlasting”.

Such is the case with the question posed as the title of this writing. If we conclude that all of Gods elect will hear and obey the gospel then we will begin to run into brick walls

throughout Gods word. If all will hear and obey, then what shall we do with those who die in infancy? And what about the mentally handicapped, or the physically deaf, or those in a distant far off land? What will we do with all these cases mentioned? There will have to be made, of a certainty, exceptions to the rule. So if there are exceptions for those who will not have the opportunity to hear the gospel then we should be able to see them in God's word. But I have yet to find one verse anywhere that says anything about how God made an exception concerning His elect in salvation! Not one! You would think that if these suggestions were true, as some may say, then you would be able to find an exception somewhere!

And not only that, but what gospel shall they hear? Every denomination has their "gospel". Or else we would have to say that we all have the same gospel. And if so, then we are all in fellowship with all denominations and Gods church is universal to all religions. Therefore we can partake in open communion and we have the right to deal with those in the other denominations when they do wrong, and they have all right to deal with us. But Paul said in Galatians 1:6-7, "*I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ*". So then we see that there is only one true gospel. This conclusion will still lead us into error if we say that all of the Elect will hear the gospel. We, the old Baptist, would have to conclude that we have the gospel. And if so, then it would only stand to reason that heaven is going to be pretty empty, for there are not many people that hear that gospel. But Paul tells us that Christ died for many!

If it is true that all the elect will hear the gospel, then that would make it just as binding as the other promises of God such as, predestination, election, justification, calling, and his covenants of promise. In Romans 8:29-30 we read of the promises of God, but we do not see where the gospel is injected within those things working together for our good. But we do read where man hindered man from hearing the gospel and entering into his blessed Kingdom. In Matthew 23:13 Christ said, "*But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in*". This "kingdom" is not speaking of eternal heaven. If that is the case, we would have to say that man could shut up eternal heaven so that none can go! That would not make since. The "kingdom of heaven" speaks of wherever heaven rules. While the kingdom of heaven is at times referring to eternal heaven, it can also imply the kingdom that can be at times in our heart, and also in His church. Here they were not allowing for those to enter into the kingdom that is found in this life where the blessings of God are. The same can be found in Luke 11:52 where Christ said, "*Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered*". Clearly here again we see man hindering others from hearing the gospel. If the gospel were as binding as the promises of God, then we would have to conclude that man could hinder another's eternal salvation!

When Christ was speaking to Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37-39, he was not speaking of the buildings and walls of Jerusalem but rather the wicked rulers. "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,*

thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord". Christ desired that his children would be gathered in a gospel sense, but it was the wicked rulers that were preventing that from happening. We can look at one of Paul's writings to show yet another instance where man hindered others from receiving gospel blessings. In 1Thessalonians 2:15-16 Paul said, "... *Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost*". The word "persecuted" means "to drive out". We see here that they were driven out and forbidden to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved!

With the texts that have been brought forth we should be able to clearly see that man can indeed and does hinder others from hearing the gospel. Even Christ himself said, "*These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*"(Matthew 10:5-6). We would have to conclude by this verse that eternal salvation was only to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles or Samaritans if all will hear the gospel. But the Lord said that he has a redeemed out of every nation, kindred, tribe, tongue, and people. And I would have to believe that includes both Gentiles and Samaritans. But God can bring a judicial blindness on his people. Such was the case in Acts 13:38-41. This blindness does not prevent the child of God from eternal salvation but does remove him from hearing the truth through the gospel (Matt. 13:15).

Just by moving that precious landmark we can see how that error will begin to spread through God's word like a disease. You start off with something small and it begins to snowball. To take the stand that all will hear the gospel is to incorporate man into the works of eternal salvation. And before you know it, timely salvation, or salvation through active obedience to God is no longer valid, and there is no timely salvation!

Let us consider briefly the second part of that question: "All will obey the gospel". In Mark chapter 10 we read of the rich young ruler who went away sorrowful. There can be no doubt that he was a child of God, for Christ said he loved him! But he did not obey the gospel or commandment of God, which is LOVE, the love for God and the love for your neighbor. For on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matthew 22:36-39). When the rich young ruler turned away from Christ, because he had many riches, he was in essence breaking both laws! He did not obey the gospel, but yet he was a child of God. Demus was said to be a fellowservant of the Apostle Paul, but yet we read where he forsook Paul having loved this present world. I believe that Demus was a child of God, but I don't believe that he was obeying the gospel. Also, the same could be said concerning King Agrippa. He was without doubt, a child of God, but we see where he was "almost" persuaded to be a Christian. In other words he was almost willing to lay down his worldly crown and robe and take up his cross and follow Christ. But almost is not close enough. He did not obey the gospel that one should deny himself

and take up his cross and follow Christ in gospel obedience. It was not gospel obedience that King David was looking to in his last days. He had seen where he had erred in his life in obeying God. But in 2Samuel 23:5 he could still say, *“Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow”*. One's faith might be overthrown in this life, we may have those who would hinder others from hearing the precious truths, and God may blind our eyes from the truth in our disobedience. But I am still going back to the ancient landmark that God saved his people on Calvary and their salvation is secure in Christ regardless if they ever hear the gospel or not.

That does not imply that the gospel has no value. For in this life the gospel of Christ will save us now! The gospel is of great value! And our obedience to God in this life has much to do with our gospel blessings. Though it should be said that not all blessings in life are due to our obedience. We can, if not careful, fall into the other side of the ditch by proclaiming that there are no blessings in this life outside of obedience. Paul said in Titus 2:11-12, *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”*. Also we find that Peter said, *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious”*(1Peter 2:2-3). Without question, God's grace works in our lives with and without obedience to him.

In Hebrews 2:3 Paul was speaking of the gospel and how it saves in this time. He said, *“how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation”*. There is a great salvation in the gospel, and through it we can escape the burdens and weights of sin in this life by going to Christ and asking forgiveness. Forgiveness was not shown under the old law, but in this new law age we have forgiveness of sins if we confess them to God. That is the salvation that is found in Romans 10. It is being saved from ignorance and having a peace which passeth all understanding. Christ said in John 10, *“I am the door, by me, if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture”*.

To move the ancient landmarks that Christ and his apostles have set in the gospel is to risk losing all the blessings that come from the gospel. If all the elect will hear the gospel and obey the gospel then time salvation is wrong, and perseverance is right. Heaven will only have a few and hell will have the “many”. These thoughts I cannot hold. May we continue to contend for the faith and stand for what God's word says. May we be as the church at Berea who studied God's word daily.