

## Soteriology—Doctrine of Salvation: Election and the New Birth

*The Purpose of God's Will; the Power of God's Word; and the Pattern of God's Witness: I Thessalonians 1*

David Pitman

*1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; 4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. 9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; 10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come (I Thessalonians 1).*

### I. Definitions.

- A. Election is that eternal act of God, by which in His sovereign pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, He chooses out of the number of sinful men to be the recipients of the special grace of His Spirit, and so to be made voluntary partakers of Christ's salvation (Strong's Systematic Theology, pg. 779).
- B. The New Birth (regeneration) is that act of God by which the governing disposition of the soul is made holy, and by which, through the truth as a means, the first holy exercise of this disposition is secured (Strong's Systematic Theology, pg. 809).

## II. Defective views of election corrected.

- A. Any view that election is unknowable—*Knowing....your election of God (I Thessalonians 1:4).*
- B. Any view that election is harsh fatalism—*....brethren beloved, your election of God (I Thessalonians 1:4).*
- C. Any view that election is detrimental to evangelism—*4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake (I Thessalonians 1:4-5).*
- D. Any view that election can be separated from human responsibility—*And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost (I Thessalonians 1:6).*
- E. Any view that election undermines holiness—*7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing (I Thessalonians 1:7-8).*
- F. Any view that election can accomplish its purpose without repentance and faith—*9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; 10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come (I Thessalonians 1:9-10).*

## III. Defective views of the New Birth corrected.

- A. Any view that the New Birth takes place apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the word of God—*For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake (I Thessalonians 1:5).*
- B. Any view that the New Birth takes place without the express purpose of God—*Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God (I Thessalonians 1:4).*
- C. Any view that the New Birth does not produce genuine repentance and faith, evidenced by new spiritual life—*For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (I Thessalonians 1:9).*

## IV. The purpose of God's will—election of God (I Thessalonians 1:4).

- A. As to origin—*5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will....11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will (Ephesians 1:5, 11).*
- B. As to its object—*6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved....12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ (Ephesians 1:6, 12).*

- C. As to its offer—*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love (Ephesians 1:4).*
- D. As to its obtainment—*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).*

**V. The preaching of God's Word**—*5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing (I Thessalonians 1:6).*

- A. Personal message—*our gospel.*
- B. Powerful message—*in power.*
- C. Providential message—*in the Holy Spirit.*
- D. Persuasive message—*in much assurance.*
- E. Persecuted message—*in much affliction.*

**VI. The pattern of God's Witness**—*what manner of men we were among you (I Thessalonians 1:5).*

A. An antidote to hard-shellism—*1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: 2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. 3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: 4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. 5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: 6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. 9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: 11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, 12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. 13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. 14 For ye, brethren, became followers*

*of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: 15 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: 16 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. 17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. 18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and joy (I Thessalonians 2).*

- B. An antidote to antinomianism—*And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost (I Thessalonians 1:6).*