



"Let us cleave, therefore, to the innocent and righteous, since these are the elect of God."
—Clement of Rome

08-Oct-21

'Before the Foundation of the World' (Part One)

It may sound shocking or too simplistic to hear a minister say, "The receiving of God's Holy Spirit is salvation." Yet, it is a true statement. In one of his booklets, Herbert Armstrong explained that "salvation means, simply, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the very life of [God](#)."

While it certainly does not stand alone, this simple teaching derives from verses like [Romans 8:9](#) and 11:

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. . . . But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

It is easy to conclude that, if we have the Spirit of God in us, we will be saved. This fact makes receiving the Holy Spirit the most essential and critical factor in life.

It is so simple. Why do we not just believe it?

Perhaps we resist accepting it because we do not realize how dedicated our heavenly Father is when He sets out to accomplish something. Notice [Psalm 33:11](#): "The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations." [Isaiah 46:9-10](#) affirms this thought, saying, "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My purpose shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.'" We will be in His Kingdom. God is a Planner, and He is not planning to fail!

In [John 6:37](#), Jesus declares, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." Jesus alludes to all those whom the Father would provide Him as disciples throughout history. Every disciple, handpicked by the Father, can have [faith](#) in Christ's statement, knowing God's commitment.

In [Ephesians 1:4](#), Paul tells us that God chose us in [Jesus Christ](#). The Greek word underneath "chose" is *eklegomai* (*Strong's Concordance* #1586), and its primary definition is "to pick out, choose . . . for one's self." It refers both to "choosing one out of many" and to "choosing one for an office." The *Strong's* definition continues: It is used "of God choosing whom He judged fit to receive His favors and separated from the rest of mankind to be peculiarly His own and to be attended continually by His gracious oversight."

It is no wonder that the Bible speaks of God's people as the apple of His eye ([Zechariah 2:8](#))! All His devoted attention is on us! Of ourselves, we are essentially no better than anyone else, but those outside of the church, the rest of [the world](#), are not under the blood of Christ. Not yet, so they do not yet have salvation. Their time will come as prophetic events come to pass in the future.

In [John 17:24](#), Jesus prays, "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world." The apostle Peter writes something similar in [1 Peter 1:20](#): "He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." Paul does likewise in [Ephesians 1:3-5](#):

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in [love](#), having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, . . .

So, Scripture asserts that God loved the One who became Jesus Christ "before the foundation of the world," that He had a plan for Him from "before the foundation of the world," and we, those of us in the church of God, also have been a part of that plan since "before the foundation of the world."

What does Paul tell us in [Ephesians 1:3-5](#)? The main point for our purposes is that we can praise God because He chose or elected us individually to be part of His people, His Family. His choice happened ages ago, before this present creation, showing that His sovereign will and purpose trumps any kind of merit we might claim. With His election of us comes all the benefits included in His grace and providence that He deems necessary to bring us to the character image of Jesus Christ. Now that is something to praise God for!

Just think about how much work our calling involved. We do not know how long before the foundation of the world God chose us to be specific officers in His Kingdom, but it could have been millions or even billions of years ago. It did not just happen. Consider how much foresight, planning, and preparation that entailed.

In addition, our bodies are composed of billions of cells that God has specifically designed and created to make us the individuals we are. We are, specifically, a 1-in-64 trillion possibility! Let us not forget that we are who we are today because of, not just our DNA, but it combined with our diet, our physical conditioning, our experiences, and other external factors and forces that have also taken their toll on us. We also need to add our educations, careers, life's adventures, and relationships.

And it did not begin with us! The same pattern had to be repeated countless times with each of our ancestors to make us into who we are. God's

commitment to His plan to fill His Family with sons and daughters required precise execution to ensure each person turned out according to His purpose so He could call him or her to Christ. We are right where He wants us!

In Part Two, we will see how He is building us into a unified Body to bring us to eternal life in His Kingdom and do the work He has planned for us to do.

- John Reiss

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[God's Faithfulness and Hope](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

The children of Israel severely tested God's patience through their compulsive murmuring and faithlessness, but God (having incredible longsuffering and patience) refused to give up on them, giving them continual instruction and tests designed to make them grow spiritually- even to this day. The significant events experienced by the nation of Israel (the Exodus, Red Sea crossing, and wilderness wanderings) serve as reminders to us not to reject or disparage God's providence, but to trust in God's ability to lead and protect us, giving us all we need to succeed.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Faithlessness is the essence of mankind's general character at the end of the age. However, faithfulness is to be a hallmark of a true Christian. How can we become more faithful? How can we be true to the course God has laid out for us?

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