

OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST HOUR BROADCAST

By the *WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH*

AUGUST 23, 1987

“LIMITED DESIGN IN THE ATONEMENT”

The Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas, presents “The Old School Baptist Hour”, with Pastor, Fred Phelps:

This is Fred Phelps. Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka is an Old School or Primitive Baptist church. It has existed here for 32 years. Many people nowadays do not know what an Old School or Primitive Baptist is; but in early America they abounded and were well known.

John Leland, who with James Madison drafted the First Amendment to the Constitution, was a Primitive Baptist preacher. That we are indebted largely to him for the First Amendment is memorialized by a park and a monument at Orange, Virginia, known as Leland-Madison Memorial Park.

Abraham Lincoln was brought up in a Primitive or Old School Baptist Church; Pigeon Creek Baptist Church; where his parents were members and where as a young boy he stood as they buried his mother in the church yard, and sang Cowper’s Hymn, *“There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood Drawn From Immanuel’s Veins.”* Lincoln always referred to her as his “Angel Mother.” And, in the stormy days of the Civil War, drew upon Old School Baptist doctrine as the bed rock upon which he stood in preserving the Union; with his Bible lines, “A house divided against itself cannot stand,” and “This nation cannot long endure half slave and half free,” and “Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves; and under a just God will not long continue to have it.” A news story in the Dallas paper, last December, referred to Lincoln’s

Old School Baptist upbringing, and added that his favorite hymn was an old Baptist hymn, entitled *“How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours When Jesus No Longer I See.”*

The late Speaker of the House of Representatives, Sam Rayburn of Texas, was an Old School or Primitive Baptist. And, when he left the seat of power in Washington he returned to the little Northeast Texas community where he was born to live out his days near the little country Primitive Baptist Church of his childhood. And, he lies buried there in that little church yard today.

The last Territorial Governor of Kansas was an Old School or Primitive Baptist. Governor Beebe, who was the son of Gilbert Beebe, an Old School Baptist preacher in New York, who established a monthly magazine called *“The Signs of the Times”* in 1832, which has been continuously in print from 1832 to the present, in the interest of the Old School Baptist cause.

Old School Baptists trace their history to the banks of the Jordan River, where Jesus Christ established the first church with twelve members. And, they have no difficulty identifying their spiritual ancestors by various names, through the intervening centuries of time. They were called at various times and at various places, *“Waldenses”*, *“Anabaptists”*, *“Novatianists”*, *“Albigenses”*, *“Paulicians”*, *“Predestinarians”*, *“Strict Baptists”*, and by other names. But whenever and wherever they have existed they have been clearly marked by their distinctive doctrines and practices. And, it is with these doctrines and these practices that this radio program will be devoted.

Old School Baptists do not believe in taking collections, passing plates, or any other such demeaning form of religious begging. This radio program will neither solicit nor accept donations. They went forth, taking nothing from the heathen. [3 John 1:7].

Old School Baptists do not believe in divorce for any cause, and do not tolerate sex in any form outside lawful marriage bonds. One man; one woman; for one lifetime.

Old School Baptists believe in water baptism to intelligent, penitent sinners by immersion only. And eschew the idolatrous notion of sprinkling unconscious infants.

Old School Baptists believe in closed communion, using one cup of wine from which all members drink, and using one loaf of unleavened bread broken and shared by all.

Old School Baptists believe in church discipline of its members, and those who do not walk orderly in Christ Jesus are excluded from the membership.

And, Old School Baptists believe and preach, exhaustively and continually, the Doctrines of Grace, sometimes called “The Five Points of Calvinism.” They are: Total Depravity of all mankind; Unconditional Election of the redeemed; Limited Design in the Atonement of Christ; Irresistible Grace; and the Perseverance or Preservation of the Saints to eternal life.

My subject for today is the Particular Atonement or the Limited Design in the Atonement. This means that Christ died for the sins of a certain, fixed number of persons known in Scripture as “his elect”, “his own”, “his people”, “his sheep.” If you believe that Jesus Christ died for everybody, you have been misinformed. This view of the atonement opposes the error of the so-called General or Universal Atonement, which teaches that Christ died for the sins of each and every individual of mankind.

Today, nearly everyone believes in a General Atonement. The time has come, foretold in 2 Timothy 4:3, when men will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own strong desires they heap to themselves teachers having itching, and having turned away their ears from the truth have been turned unto fables. The primary idolatrous fable of this day is that God loves everybody and that Jesus Christ died for everybody. It is very probable that most, if not all of my hearers this morning, in and around Topeka, Kansas, believe that God loves everybody and that Christ died for the sins of every individual of mankind. It is probable that you have never heard this idea even disputed.

The preachers all preach it and the people all believe it; and, thus the blind lead the blind. It should be said here, that any preacher anywhere who preaches a General Atonement, and advises people of the abominable lie that God loves everybody and that Jesus Christ died for everybody, is what the Bible calls a heretic. This means, that if you hear any man say that Christ died for the sins of every individual that man is a false prophet, understanding nothing at all about the doctrines of Grace.

Mr. Spurgeon, a great Baptist preacher of London, who in the last century often was attended by Queen Victoria, once put it like this:

I would that free grace were more preached because it gives men something to believe with confidence. The great mass of professing Christians know nothing of doctrine; their religion consists in going a certain number of times to a place of worship, but they have no care for truth one way or another. I speak without any prejudice in this matter; but I have talked with a large number of persons in the course of my very extensive pastorate, who have been for years members of churches, and when I have asked them a few questions upon doctrinal matters it did not seem to me that they were in conscious error; they were perfectly willing to believe almost anything that any earnest man might teach them, but they did not know anything, they had no minds of their own, and no definite opinions. Why, our children, who have attended Old School or Primitive Baptist meetings and who have learned the fundamentals of the doctrines of grace, know more about those doctrines and the doctrine of the Bible itself than hundreds, thousands of grown-up people who attend a ministry which very eloquently teaches nothing.

These heretic preachers say that Christ did something when he died that enables God to be just and the justifier of the ungodly, but what that something is they do not tell us. They believe in an atonement made for everybody, but then their atonement is just this: they believe that Judas was atoned for just as much as Peter. They believe that the damned in hell were as much an object of Jesus Christ's satisfaction as the saved in heaven. And,

though they do not say it in proper words yet they must mean it, for it is a fair inference that in the case of multitudes Christ died in vain. For he died for them all, they say. And, yet, so ineffectual was that dying, that though he died for them they are now damned afterward.

Now, I say to you, such an atonement I despise, I reject it. I had rather believe a Limited Atonement that is efficacious for all those for whom it was intended than a Universal Atonement that is not efficacious for anybody except the will of man be joined to it.

But, though we are perhaps thought strange for preaching the Bible doctrine of Particular Redemption or the Limited Atonement, it deserves here to be said, that the ablest and most pious men of bygone years, such as Jonathan Edwards, Martin Luther, John Bunyan, John Newton, Isaac Watts, George Whitfield, William Cowper, Augustus Toplady, and a great host of others that I could name, believed this doctrine and loved it. Christ, my friends, died for his own. “The good Shepherd”, we read, “gave his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11). Our Lord Jesus Christ died only for his sheep. He never died for a single goat; he never died for a single dog; he never died for a single hog. And, all for whom Christ died will certainly and invincibly and inevitably be saved.

This is a question, you see, of exactly what was done at the cross. We say, we Old Baptists say, that the number of God’s elect, and also the number of the reprobate, is so fixed and determinate that neither can be augmented or diminished by so much as one. It is written of God himself that “[h]e telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.” Psalm 147:4. And, in a more near and special sense, we read “the Lord knoweth them that are his.” 2 Timothy 2:19. He knows them that are his, and he consequently knows them that are not his. That is, exactly whom and exactly how many, he has left in the corrupt mass of mankind to be justly punished for their sins. And, for none of them did the Lord Jesus die.

And, that God does indeed precisely know, to the man, who are and who are not the objects of his electing favor is evident from such Scriptures as these:

To Moses: "Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name." Exodus 33:17.

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee." Jeremiah 1:5.

"Your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20.

"The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Luke 12:7.

"I know whom I have chosen." John 13:18.

"I know my sheep, and am known of mine." John 10:14.

And, "He calleth his own sheep [each] by name." John 10:3.

And, the decrees of election and reprobation are immutable (which means unchangeable) and irreversible. Thus, we read, "I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isaiah 46:9-10.

Nor would God be unchangeable if they who were once the people of his love could become the objects of his hatred; or, if the vessels of his wrath could be saved along with the vessels of grace. Hence that word of the old preacher Augustine, bishop of Hippo:

Brethren," says he, "let us not imagine that God puts down any man in His book and then erases him, for if Pilate could say, 'What I have written, I have written,' how can it be thought that the great God himself would write a person's name in the book of life and then blot it out again?" And may we not, with equal reason, ask, on the other hand, "How can it be thought that any of the reprobate should be written in that book of life, which contains the names

of God's elect only, or that any should be inscribed there who were not written among the living from eternity?"

"This," says Martin Luther, "is the very thing that razes the doctrine of free-will from its foundations, to wit, that God's eternal love of some men and hatred of others is immutable and cannot be reversed." Both one and the other will have its full accomplishment.

The oldest Baptist association in America is the Philadelphia Association. It was formed in 1707. Its greatest contribution to Baptist progress was the adoption in 1742 of the "Philadelphia Confession of Faith." This was essentially the same statement of faith as "The London Confession" of 1689. Every sound Baptist through these intervening centuries has accepted and endorsed this grand confession of faith. The Philadelphia Confession has it, on the subject of the Atonement, as follows:

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice. (I Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:5, 6; Rom. 9:22, 23; Jude 4).

These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished by so much as one. (2 Tim. 2:19; John 13:18).

Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto. (Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9; I Thess. 5:9; Rom. 9:13, 16; Eph. 2:5, 12).

As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are

effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, and they are justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. (1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10; Rom. 8:30; John 10:26, 17:8).

Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. (Heb. 10:14; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Isa. 53:5, 6; Rom. 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:26; Eph. 1:6, 7, 2:7).

God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in time due actually apply Christ unto them. (Gal. 3:8; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rom. 4:25; Col. 1:21, 22; Tit. 3:4-7).

John Owen, Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, and Chancellor of Oxford University, put it this way:

Christ died either for all the sins of all men, in which case all will be saved; for some of the sins of all men, in which case no one will be saved; or, for all of the sins of some men, which is the Gospel truth, and in which case those men, the elect, will certainly be saved.

Such logic is as irresistible as it is Scriptural. Consider those words again.

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Think of it: if Christ died for all of the sins of every individual of mankind, than every individual of mankind will certainly be saved.

Payment God cannot twice demand, for this poor soul of mine: once at my bleeding surety's hand and then again at mine.

But Scripture and experience tell us alike tell us that every individual of mankind will not be saved. Christ said, in answer to the question, “are many saved?” strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leads to eternal life, and few there be that find it. Because wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction and hell, and many—the overwhelming mass of mankind--there be who go in thereat. (Matthew 7:13-14).

If Christ died for all the sins of every individual of mankind, why are not all saved then? The Arminian heretic answers, “Because of unbelief.” But, I respond: “Is not unbelief a sin?” Christ said unbelief is a sin. In John 16:9: “Of sin, because they believe not on me.” The truth is that faith itself is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that—that is the faith itself--not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” “But all men have not faith. 2 Thessalonians 3:7. “All men have not faith.” Why? The answer is very simple. It has not pleased a sovereign God to bestow the gift of faith on every individual of mankind, but only upon his elect. And, “without faith, it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews 11:6.

In John 10, this matter is made very clear. Christ said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd and I know my sheep, and I am known of my sheep. And I lay down my life for my sheep. I told you and you believed not, but ye believed not because ye are not of my sheep as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. And, my Father which gave them to me is greater than all and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. And, the sheep hear my voice and I call my own sheep by name. And my sheep follow me for they know my voice and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.”

Paul said, “The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

The Arminian heretic will say, “But men are lost because they will not repent.” I answer, “Is not repentance also the gift of God?” Most certainly. “If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” 2 Timothy 2:25. Just as faith is a sovereign gift of a sovereign God, even so is repentance. And, if God does not bestow saving faith upon you, you have none. If he does, it is irresistible and you have it. If God does not bestow repentance

upon you, you will never have it. You will never savingly repent of your sins. You will be impenitent. You will go to hell impenitent. Repentance is a sovereign gift of a sovereign God.

And all such gifts as accompany salvation are reserved by that same sovereign God for his sheep, his elect. In Owens' words, Christ died for all the sins of only some men. And, those persons, and those persons alone, will believe, will repent, will be saved. The atonement of Jesus Christ was intended and will reach only to those favored persons, his sheep, his elect.

My friend, if your name was not written in heaven in the lambs book of life, before the foundation of the world, Christ did not die for you and 10,000 lying preachers telling you that God loves you and Jesus died for you will not change that immutable fact.

This is Fred Phelps, Pastor of Westboro Baptist Church. More on this station next week at this time on the "Old School Baptist Hour".