

OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST HOUR BROADCAST

By the *WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH*

September 27, 1987

“THE SINE QUA NON OF THE GOSPEL: LIMITED ATONEMENT”

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

This is Fred Phelps, and you’re listening to “The Old School Baptist Hour.”

Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka is an Old School Baptist Church. It has existed for 32 years in this place. Old School Baptists are sometimes called Primitive Baptists. Such Baptists abounded in early America; though they are extremely rare today. They powerfully influenced Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington. And, of course, Abraham Lincoln was brought up in a Primitive Baptist Church: Pigeon Creek Baptist Church in Indiana, before the family moved to Illinois. Lincoln’s parents were members of that Baptist church, and I have documented evidence that Lincoln continued to support the Old School Baptist cause long into his adulthood and even after he began to practice law in Illinois.

The powerful truths and principles he learned from the Old School Baptist preachers of his youth sustained him in the stormy days of the Civil War and helped preserve this union. It was from the Old School Baptists that he derived the Bible principle, that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and that 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.

And, it was from the Primitive Baptists that [Thomas] Jefferson learned to swear on the altar of God eternal enmity against every form of human tyranny over the minds of men. The following account appears in a Lexington, Kentucky newspaper in 1832: A Primitive Baptist preacher named Andrew Tribble was pastor of a small Baptist church, which held meetings a short distance from Jefferson's home at Monticello 8 or 10 years before the American Revolution. Jefferson attended the meetings of that Church several months in succession, and after one of those meetings he asked Elder Tribble to go home and dine with him, with which Tribble complied. Mr. Tribble asked Mr. Jefferson how he was pleased with their Church government. Jefferson replied that it had struck him with great force and had interested him much; that he considered it the only form of pure democracy that then existed in the world, and had concluded that it would be the best plan of government for the American colonies. This was several years before the Declaration of Independence.

Primitive Baptists pastors, including John Cato, raised companies of troops to fight the British in the Revolutionary War because they had a compelling interest in escaping the tyranny of the Church of England which had persecuted them and taxed them to support its heretic preachers for centuries, both in England and even in this country. Primitive Baptists names appear as signatories to the Declaration of Independence; including William Williams, Oliver Wolcott, and Matthew Thornton. John Leland, a Primitive Baptist preacher, with James Madison, drafted the First Amendment to the Constitution; and it is true that we owe the existence of the First Amendment to the Primitive Baptists of early America. This fact is memorialized by a Park and a Monument called Leland-Madison Park and Monument, near Orange, Virginia. It was dedicated in 1952.

So grateful was George Washington to the Primitive Baptists for their contributions to the Revolutionary War effort and for their absolute devotion to total religious liberty and freedom of conscience, that Washington was a profound friend of those early Baptists. In a letter from Washington to the Baptists of Virginia dated May 14, 1789, Washington wrote:

“While I recollect with satisfaction that the religious society of which you are members, have been throughout America, uniformly and unanimously, the firm

friends to civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution; I cannot hesitate to believe that they will be the faithful supports of a free, yet efficient general government. Under this pleasing expectation, I rejoice to assure them that they may rely upon my best wishes and endeavors to advance their prosperity. I am, gentlemen, your most obedient servant. George Washington.”

One month after that letter from Washington to the Baptists of Virginia, Leland and Madison brought forth the proposed First Amendment to the newly drafted Constitution, and eleven of the thirteen states adopted it between November 20, 1789, and December 15, 1791. Thus the condemned, spurned and hated old Baptist doctrine of Soul Liberty, for which blood had been shed for centuries, was not only engrafted into the organic law of the United States; but for the first time in the formation of a great nation it was made its chief corner stone. For the first time on that subject, the quiet, pungent old truth asserted its right to immortality as expressed by Scripture: “the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.” 1 Peter 2:7.

It is a profound historic truth, my friend, that only those who have in their souls a deep knowledge of, and belief in, the absolute sovereignty of Almighty God; are able, on principle, to effectively oppose every form of human governmental tyranny. A nation of religious heretics and spiritual midgets will inevitably succumb to petty governmental tyrants. Such a people have no fire in the belly to oppose tyranny. This nation is no exception. When the Old School Baptist principles that made us great are abandoned, through ignorance and apathy, we will become weak and servile as a people. Petty, mean tyrants, in the form of ignorant and evil governors, legislatures and judges will rule us and every level of government; and we will be morally and spiritually helpless to resist. It is only, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, that ye shall be free indeed”; and it is only, “If you know the truth, that the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32, 36.

A people whose notions and ideas of the nature and attributes of God Almighty are false and defective will not long be free of human tyranny. The man who led Kansas into the union as a free state, rather than a slave state, in 1861 was an Old School Baptist; his name was William Beebe. He was the last territorial governor of Kansas. Thus, you see, at that critical time in this nation’s history, on the very eve of the Civil War testing whether any nation conceived in liberty could endure; both the President of the United States, Lincoln, and the governor of Kansas, Beebe, were men who had been brought up in Old School Baptist churches. They were therefore imbued with accurate notions of God and man, heaven and hell, life and death, sin and righteousness, freedom and slavery.

This nation is today threatened with a loss of individual liberty, as not so threatened since 1787. A perverted kind of judicial tyranny has a strangle-hold on America. Evil and ignorant men, some of them homosexuals, with reprobate minds, with no fear of God before their eyes, have bubbled their way to the top of our judicial systems and threaten to destroy by judicial decree the fundamental civil and human liberties guaranteed every American by the Constitution.

The late J. Frank Norris, an Old School Baptist preacher in Fort Worth, Texas, said shortly before he died, that American lawyers nowadays are about as independent as a frog in a snake's belly. The people are afraid of the lawyers; the lawyers are afraid of the judges; and the judges are afraid of nothing; walking in neither the fear of God nor the respect of man. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Even as our fathers complained of the English judges in the Declaration of Independence; they complained that rather than administer justice the judges obstruct it, conducting mock trials to aid the strong and punishing the weak for pretended offenses; and being dependent on the will of the English tyrant alone. It is even as Jeremiah cried out against such tyranny, saying: "These judges are waxen fat, they shine"—swollen with pride and arrogance—"they pass over the evil deeds of the wicked strong, and they refuse to judge the cause of the weak and the needy. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Jeremiah 5:28, 29.

Old School Baptists and their preachers have heard the word of the Lord sounding in their souls: "Son of man, I send thee to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: that have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear to hear, yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them." Ezekiel 2:3-5. And, "Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak: be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, sayeth the Lord. Be not dismayed at their faces, they shall fight against thee but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, sayeth the Lord, to deliver thee." Jeremiah 1:17, 19.

Some of the historical references made on this radio broadcast are from the Hassel Library of the University of North Carolina; and some are from the Spurgeon Library of William Jewell College at Liberty, Missouri. Charles Haddon Spurgeon was an old Baptist preacher in London who ministered to Queen Victoria, and whose library was purchased following his death by the wealthy Nelson Art family of Kansas City. And that library was transported by boat and rail

from London to Liberty, Missouri in the early part of this century. If you are interested, and you should be, you can drive over to William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, just east of the Kansas City International Airport. You can there find the College Library building and go to the basement of it; there you will see Spurgeon's entire library just as it existed a century ago; and there you may read from hundreds and thousands of sources the Old School Baptist sermons from centuries past.

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into their minds.” 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.

My subject for today is the third of the Five Points of Calvinism, known as the doctrine of the Limited Atonement. That doctrine holds that the atonement which Jesus Christ made for sin was limited to a relatively small number of mankind; that Christ did not die for every individual of mankind; but on the contrary, he died for a relatively few people; and that those for whom he actually died will inevitably be saved; and all the rest will inevitably be damned since they have no savior.

Those relatively few people for whom Christ died or atoned are called by various names in the Scriptures. For example, they are called “his sheep”: “the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep alone.” John 10:11. They are called, “his church”: “Christ loved the church, and gave his life for it.” Ephesians 5:25. They are called, “his remnant”: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ... that election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” Romans 11:5,7. They are called “his seed”: “when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, and shall be satisfied.” Isaiah 53:10-11. They are called, “his children”: “Behold I and the children which the Lord my God hath given me.” Hebrews 2:13. They are called, “his people”: “for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” Isaiah 53:8. They are called, “his elect”, saying, “and mine elect shall inherit everlasting life.” Isaiah 65:9. They are called, “his servants”: “This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.” Isaiah 54:17.

All but the elect are judicially blinded to the truth of this Gospel I am preaching to you today. “The election has obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” Romans 11:7. You, my friend, had better read that verse carefully and think about it. “The election has obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” Romans 11:7. If you

are God's elect you will see the truth of this Gospel I am preaching to you today. If you are not God's elect, you will never see it and you will always reject it and hate it; because God himself has blinded your eyes to the truth and he has done so as a sovereign, judicial act; and has done so in punishment for your sins. You will never see it; you will never understand it; you will never believe it and love it. You, on the contrary, will hate it and rage against it, and mock it. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." Acts 13:41.

Listen: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,"—that is, the only Gospel of glory—"who is the image of God, should shine into their minds." 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. This is the doctrine of reprobation; the flip side of the doctrine of election; and both being subheadings under the doctrine of Limited Atonement.

Don't you understand the implications of what I am telling you? If you are not God's elect, you not only will never see, you will never understand, you will never believe the Gospel of grace; but in addition, God himself has judicially blinded your mind so that you are totally unable to see and believe this truth that I am preaching to you. Exactly! Because God has from eternity determined to leave you in your sins and ignorance and damn you.

You, my friend, are congenitally unable to believe this Gospel I am preaching to you. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: ... and ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." John 10:25-26. How could it be plainer? Of course you do not believe the things that I am preaching to you today. And, the reason is, you are not my sheep. You are congenitally unable to believe these truths. "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they who think they see might be made blind; and those that see not might see, namely the elect." John 9:39. "Jesus said unto them, Why do ye not understand my speech? It is even because ye cannot hear my word. And, that is because ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. God is not your father; if God were your father ye would love me. And, because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." John 8:42, 45. Again, "Jesus said unto them, He that is of God heareth God's words. Ye, therefore, are

unable to hear them because ye are not of God.” John 8:47. It is written, “Therefore they could not believe because God has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts; that they should see with their eyes nor understand with their hearts; that they should be converted, and I should heal them.” John 12:39-40.

My friend, how could it be plainer? If you are not God’s sheep, you are congenitally unable to believe the truth; because God himself has blinded your eyes and hardened your heart for the express purpose of rendered you unable to believe; unable to repent; unable to understand; unable to be converted to the truth. Your vague and indistinct notions of God, his nature and attributes, will not do; you have God pictured in your imagination as some kind of grandfatherly old white-haired gentlemen, somewhat like your Santa Clause lie at Christmas time. Your thoughts of God are too human; your God is nothing more than a figment of your imagination, helped along by heretic preachers such as Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell and Jimmy Swaggart.

I call upon you to hear these Scriptures: “He that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.” Isaiah 27:11. And, again, “Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.” Hosea 1:9. And, again, “Thus sayeth the Lord, I hated Esau, and I called his seed: The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.” Malachi 1:3,4. And, again, “He answered and said unto them, it is given unto you, the elect, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to the rest it is not given. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.” Matthew 11:11, 13. And, again, “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth” and “Though the number of the people be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant shall be saved.” Romans 9:18,27.

My friend, the atonement of Jesus Christ is strictly limited in its benefits to those only whom God from eternity purposed to love and have mercy on; not one drop of Christ’s precious blood was wasted on a single reprobate. Your silly notion of a general atonement would have Christ dying for Judas Iscariot just as much as

Peter; for Adolph Hitler just as much as John the Baptist. Your mindless idea of a general atonement would have Christ dying for millions of souls who were already in hell at the time he died, and for millions yet unborn whom he certainly knew would be in hell in the future.

Your unworthy and tacky theology would have the precious blood of Christ as of lamb without blemish and without spot squandered aimlessly and sloshed indiscriminately upon millions and millions of hateful reprobates, whom God the Father hated from all eternal ages past and predestinated to damnation before the foundations of the world were laid. Your thoughts, my friend, of God Almighty are too human; and your notions of the Godhead are too shallow and illogical for close analysis.

The Gospel must be preached to every creature. Mark 16:15. But it is this Gospel that I am preaching to you today that must be preached, and not some perversion of it after the likes of Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell and Jimmy Swaggart.

This is Fred Phelps, pastor of Westboro Baptist Church. More of the same next week: same time and station.