

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” Acts 2:23.

It's the Day of Pentecost, following the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and Peter is preaching one of his greatest sermons to the huge crowd of people assembled in Jerusalem from all over the world; to wit:

“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven ... Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians...But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words...Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you; as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” (Acts 2:5,9-11,14,22,23)

Thus you see that Peter plainly and boldly declared the doctrine of REPROBATION in his historic sermon on the Day of Pentecost that launched the infant church, as it were. The Holy Spirit dictated this portion of church history – and we therefore can fully depend on its accuracy. Also, my sermon today is about the strangely controversial doctrine of REPROBATION, a doctrine plainly and clearly taught throughout the Scriptures. To-wit:

“And they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? ...And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, WHOSE NAMES ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE OF THE LAMB slain from the foundation of the world? ...And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” (Rev. 13:4,8;14:9-11)

And then a somewhat strange, startling pronouncement is made, apparently by the third angel, or maybe an unidentified voice from heaven; To wit: ***“HERE is the patience of the saints; HERE are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”*** Rev. 14:12. And then, an unidentified voice is heard from heaven, – maybe the same voice – speaking comforting words to those patient and suffering saints (God’s Elect) who have evidently been hurt by the Beast and his agents, who are now suffering the torments of the damned just described. Here are the words of comfort from heaven; to wit:

“And I heard the voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the (Holy) Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” (Rev. 14:13)

In the preceding **chapter 13** the Beast is seen ruling the world and waging a successful war against God’s Elect; to wit: ***“And it was given him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth”*** – (i.e., the REPROBATES) – ***“shall worship him, WHOSE NAMES ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE OF THE LAMB slain from the foundation of the world”*** – (i.e., the very definition of the doctrine of REPROBATION). ***“If any man have an ear, let him hear”*** – (i.e., only God’s Elect can “hear” and joyfully understand and expound to others the beautiful, but awful, doctrine of REPROBATION). Rev. 13:7-9.

For a time, the Beast had power to kill the saints – ***“cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”*** Rev. 13:15. And one hellish tactic of the Beast in making war on the saints was to deny them the ability to earn a living – to the extent of his power; to wit: ***“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”*** Rev. 13:16, 17. ***“Here,”*** Beloved, right HERE, ***“is the patience of the saints...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.”*** Rev. 14:12,13.

You see HERE, right HERE, some of Satan’s hellish devices to make our lives miserable – but only to the extent of his powers allowed to him by God’s protective providences. It is a miracle of God’s sovereign grace and favor, that any of us have jobs or means of earning a living for our homes and families. And the specter of impoverishment hangs over our heads at all times, testing our faith in the promises of God versus the threatenings of the demon-possessed Sons of Belial with whom we have to do, that swarm all around us. ***“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”*** Heb. 13:13-15.

Truly, Beloved, it is our joy and privilege that we have from this little church – by our preaching, our testimony, and our manner of life – sent forth a message to the whole world, confessing that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ***“For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country...a better, that is an heavenly country...wherefore God is not ashamed to be***

called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.” Heb. 11:14-16. And, remember Beloved, what a dreadful choice the REPROBATES made, when they took the Mark of the Beast – branded, as it were – 666 – indelibly branded upon their bodies by some hellish device – as the price they paid for the right to buy and sell and thereby earn a living in Satan’s worldwide empire; to wit: *“And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark.” Rev. 13:17.* But what a price these earth-dwellers paid for worshiping the Beast and taking his Mark!

See how the Holy Spirit arranged the words – in the happy juxtaposition of **Rev. 13:17 to Rev. 14:9-11 to Rev. 14:12**; to wit: **Rev. 13:17** (next to last verse in chapter 13): the Beast says, Take the Mark or die; **Rev. 14:9-11**: the third angel says, All those who took the Mark must be tormented with fire and brimstone, in Hell for ever; **Rev. 14:12**: *“HERE is the patience of the saints...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.”* And, remember, Beloved, that the Reprobates (by the billions) took the Mark of the Beast pursuant to the Divine Decree of REPROBATION, and the saints refused to take the Mark pursuant to the Decree of ELECTION.

PRETERITION – PREDESTINATED TO GO TO HELL

Like all God’s Holy Decrees, the Decree of REPROBATION is an eternal Decree. Many say – as a school of Lutheran scholars and theologians, in particular – that predestination is proper only for the elect, and that as to the reprobate, there is only a prescience or naked foreknowledge; no pre-ordination; and sometimes called PRETERITION – (a mere passing by) – that is, as to the reprobate, God merely passes him by and leaves him in his sins. But Scripture is strong in the position that just as God actively predestinates some few members of Adam’s race to be saved; even so, God actively predestinates all the huge balance of Adam’s vile seed to be damned – and even pickles him so that he is preserved in his sins to be damned; to wit: *“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly”* – (i.e., the Elect) – *“out of temptations, and to RESERVE”* – (i.e., pickle, or preserve in their sins; or, to prevent escape from their sins and temptations and final judgment by a guard or fortress of full military lines of apparatus) – *“the unjust”* – (i.e., the non-Elect or Reprobate) – *“unto the day of judgment to be punished.”* **2 Pet. 2:9.** Listen to this simple declaration of truth in **Proverbs 16:4**; to wit: *“The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”* **Prov. 16:4.**

In the eternal punishment of the wicked, the Lord God manifests various of His glorious attributes in no other way that God in His wisdom could manifest them. Thus, the Lord created wicked men so that He could punish them in everlasting fire and brimstone, for ever, for their sins. REPROBATION! To wit:

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, 1) THAT I MIGHT SHOW MY POWER IN THEE, and, 2) THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE DECLARED THROUGHOUT ALL THE EARTH. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” (Rom. 9:17,18)

“What if God, 1) WILLING TO SHOW HIS WRATH, and, 2) TO MAKE HIS POWER KNOWN, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” (Rom. 9:22)

Beloved, that's REPROBATION! The eternal torment of these men – in Hell – was decreed from all eternity, so that Almighty God could thereby make gloriously manifest for all creation to see and learn the truth about two of His marvelous attributes; to wit: His WRATH and His POWER. And, why? Because He wanted to – His mere will was to do it; to wit:

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.” (Mat. 11:25,26)

There you have it, from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ. When you track any and all events whatsoever, track them back upstream to their original source – their fountainhead – you will find the original source of all things whatsoever to be the WILL OF GOD. God wanted to do it. It was God's will to do it – and therefore He did it; to wit: *“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and HE DOETH ACCORDING TO HIS WILL in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, – (i.e., stop His acts of providence) – or say unto him, What doest thou?” Dan. 4:35.* And you should look at the context in which the Lord Jesus said, *“Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.” – (i.e., God did it because He wanted to do it, because it was God's WILL TO DO IT, and for no other reason.) Mat. 11:26.*

WHY DIDN'T GOD DO “MIGHTY WORKS” IN SODOM?

The Lord Jesus was announcing the doom of entire cities – telling them that they were going to Hell, because God wanted them to go to Hell; to wit: *“Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not...And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell.” Mat. 11:20-23(a).* And then the Lord Jesus made this startling statement; to wit:

“For if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in SODOM,” (yes, SODOM), “it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.” (Mat. 11:23(b),24)

And then, BANG! Immediately following the prophesy of Jesus that 1) all the inhabitants of the magnificent city of Capernaum would be cast into Hell; and, 2) that God would punish them more severely in the day of judgment than Sodom's hapless inhabitants – and, 3) that God would not have famously destroyed Sodom 2,000 years earlier with a spectacular fire and brimstone annihilation of all her inhabitants, if the mighty works which had been done in Capernaum by Christ had also been done in Sodom. I say, that it was immediately following those three startling announcements that the Lord Jesus said, *“I thank thee, O Father, 1) because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; and, 2) Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight – (i.e., God did those three stunning things regarding the total destruction of millions of people in the cities of Capernaum and Sodom – in what to natural man*

was unfair and prejudicial – for no other reason than this; to wit: BECAUSE GOD WANTED TO. IT WAS GOD’S WILL!).”

THE FATHER’S WILL ABSOLUTELY PREVAILS

Another incident – with almost identical wording – occurred in **Luke Chapter 10**; and there, these additional words are added; to wit: *“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father...”* **Lk. 10:21**. *“Jesus rejoiced in spirit,”* means Jesus was thrilled to the point of exulting and leaping for joy. Beloved, if the Lord Jesus was so happily thankful that the Father’s WILL ABSOLUTELY PREVAILS in every situation, surely we should find great comfort and joy in the same considerations in our meditations.

Look again at our text. Peter is telling the multitudes that they are to blame for the torture and death of Christ, concluding with these words:

“Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:36,37)

Earlier, Peter had also squarely charged them with the murder of Christ, saying, *“Him...ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”* **Acts 2:23**. Absolute responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ! Moreover, they had TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY for Christ’s death! Nevertheless – and simultaneously – Peter boldly asserts that Christ was tortured and crucified *“by the DETERMINATE COUNSEL AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD.”* **Acts 2:23(a)**.

Manton says, *“The scriptures show that the greatest evil that ever was, did not only fall under the foreknowledge, but the ‘determinate counsel of God,’ Acts 2:23; it was not only foreknown, but unchangeably ordained and determined.”*

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”
(Acts 2:23)

God the Father – in the Covenant of Grace – determined in the Counsels of the Holy Trinity to deliver up God the Son, for torture and death by crucifixion. Some places call the Old Baptists, “determinists”, as in the Statement of Faith, *“All things whatsoever that happen in time, were DETERMINED by God to happen in eternity past.”*

Just as, Elder Daniel Parker and the first Baptist church in Texas, called their church, the “Pilgrim Predestinarian Regular Baptist Church,” that all people for all time to come might know by the steady reminder in their very name, that they believed and preached continuously, that God governs His universe pursuant to His absolute PREDESTINATION of all things. Amen.