

WILL GOD'S ELECT BE DECEIVED?

“Our dear Lord, we come to look up into Thy face tonight, praying that the Spirit would move upon these lips of clay and anoint the Word of the Lord as it goes forth. And then, O Lord, move upon our cold, dead hearts that they might be made alive one more time, that we might hear the Voice of King Jesus tonight. We pray in Christ’s lovely name. Amen and Amen.”

LET US TURN to Matthew chapter 24, as we wish to ask an important question and seek its answer from the Word of God, as we are enabled to do so. That question is, ***“Will God’s Elect Be Deceived?”*** Is it possible? We know that this age is ending in a gigantic deception, a deception that is moving at such a rapidity as never known before. Our text is Matthew 24:24,

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Since we are dealing with the question concerning whether God’s elect will or can be deceived, I trust that if you here tonight have made a profession of faith and have your own conceptions, you will be led to give this message an honest hearing. May you listen with your mind, soul and spirit, for we are facing desperate hours all over the church world of today, more desperate and tragic than most people are able to realize. Notice in our text there are at least five clear statements about the future.

First, there would *arise a time of great deception*. And the path of wisdom for you is to take heed and let no man deceive you. If this age is to end in widespread deception, why is it that everybody today has “the truth”? They would argue with you to the last that they are right! Every denomination or new movement is “right” in their own eyes! Many are so convinced about what they believe until they take the position that they are immune from deception. Be careful! Remember the Lord Jesus said that this age would end in deception—***“Take heed that no man deceive you”*** (Matthew 24:4). But I trust that in the message tonight you will be given such a great fear of deception that you won’t trust any of these false prophets, and that you will be brought to trust the Lord alone and the Bible alone. And if the Lord brings you to this point, I will be happy!

Secondly, the Lord tells us that this age of deception will see *the rise of “false Christs”* that shall deceive “many” (verse 5). The best Greek scholars will tell you that the word “many” means the majority. That ought to make you tremble as you face the Word of God. They will come on the scene and openly declare, ***“I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”*** Satan does not operate in his own name but desires to use the name of Christ to put over his program.

Thirdly, the age ends in *“false prophets”* — ***“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many”*** (verse 11). The saddest situation we face today is to find so many individuals who are going to Hell from a church pew; they are victims of these false prophets. They are going to Hell with a Bible or hymnbook in their hands; going to Hell with a prayer upon their lips; going to Hell while believing in solid doctrine. Oh, yes, they are straight on doctrine—straight as a gun barrel and just as empty! All the while their hearts are rotten while they are comforted and deceived by false prophets.

Then our Lord said the age would end with *false signs and wonders*—notice verse 24. The deceivers and false Christs are coming in the last days, and they will bring many signs and lying wonders to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. In other words, it would be a time of pragmatism—the end justifies the means, and you prove that you are real by the wonders and miracles you perform. But “success” in itself does not prove anything, and neither does apparent “failure” prove the truth or the falsity of the witness. For that, we must come to the Word of God. All the signs and wonders we see today, the big churches and gigantic Sunday Schools, do not prove that they are doing anything for God. They may have a group of buses and bring the people in, and that makes a fantastic show in the flesh. And they swell up and say, “Oh, we have the truth! And we are bringing the masses

of people to hear the Gospel!” But it is not so, sadly, for they merely have the false signs and wonders that our Lord warned about.

A fifth thing He warned about—Jesus said this age would end in *judgment*, nothing but the judgment of an offended God. We are told in verses 38 and 39 of this 24th chapter of Matthew, **“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”** So what will the last days be? “As the days of Noah,” says our Saviour. The days of Noah were not days of great revival; they were not days of real Holy Ghost conviction of sin; they were not days when large numbers of people were coming to the Lord; but rather the days of Noah were days of fearful apostasy and declension from God and His truth. Noah preached by demonstrating his faith in God for 120 years, as he moved with fear and prepared that ark. He had no converts, nor did he offer people passage on the great ark. He preached by his faithful example of obedience to the God in whose eyes he had found amazing grace. But his day was a day of judgment for the majority of people.

So in verse 5 we are given to understand that many are coming in His name with only one purpose—that is to deceive. According to verse 11, the false prophets will be absolutely successful—they **“shall deceive many,”** the majority. And we know that the majority of people who are coming into the churches today are deceived. That does not mean that we are sitting in judgment upon any individual, but we are analyzing our present situation! **“There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect”** (verse 24). Thank God and the Lamb forever that it is not possible! If you tonight are a member of the body of Christ, one of God’s elect, I have good news for you, news that should make your ears happy and your eyes sparkle with the glory of God. Then you can go on your way rejoicing and shouting, **“Glory to God and the Lamb forever!”** God is going to take care of all the arrangements to guarantee that His elect people will not be finally deceived. Well, your trouble might be that you wonder whether you are one of the elect or not. If you stay with the message, we will help you with some of the evidences of election a bit later.

In dealing with our question, **“Will God’s Elect Be Deceived?”** we must ask four questions.

I. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF DECEPTION? Well, since I am not a scholar in Hebrew or Greek, I do have *Young’s Analytical Concordance* and *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*. And I have reviewed this word thoroughly, but never have I studied any Bible word that so arrested me and puzzled me and troubled me as this word “deceive” or “deceived.” We must enumerate about 10 outstanding meanings, showing you the power that is contained in this word. What does it mean to be deceived?

1. It means *to entice*. And how we see this in the churches of today! They have buses, bubblegum, candy and every device to get people to come to the church. None of these things are found in the New Testament nor in the Old. When God sent His men out He commissioned them to preach and to pray and wait upon God. We must expose all of this modern religion that seeks to entice people by appealing to the flesh. This is moving in the wrong direction. The sinner is dead; how can he respond to your programs and gimmicks? You are shut up to the realms of the flesh and moral persuasion, but you cannot reach him or cause him to respond in a spiritual and saving manner. For this, that sinner needs the life-giving power of God.

2. Deception means *to persuade*. How could you persuade that dead man to get up out of his grave and walk away? Lazarus was in the grave and had been dead four days; by now he was stinking. How would you or some soul-winner persuade Lazarus? After all that the Scriptures have shown us about the condition of Lazarus, you must surely come to see that his only hope was the Resurrection Power of the Saviour. Life was not in Lazarus’ hands but in the hands of Christ. Salvation is not in the hands of the sinner but in the hands of the Saviour, and you do a great injustice to try persuading the natural man to come to God.

3. Then it means *to reason amiss*. When you come to the truths of Christianity, you cannot deal with them on the basis of reason but of revelation. There is nothing reasonable in God's work of grace, so far as the old alien sinner is concerned. God's purpose of grace, His plan and program, the teachings and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the calling of God's people unto salvation in Christ—none of these ever made any sense to a natural man. When you appeal to the intellect and start the sinner to reasoning, you are moving him in a most dangerous way, a way that will lead to the pits of Hell. Then we must know that the truth of God is based not on reason but on revelation. Empty reasoning is the greatest form of deception.

4. Deception means *to deceive or confuse the mind*. That's the power of the flesh and the battleground of the devil. If Satan has control of your mind, then he has you as his willing captive, unless God is pleased to come and set you free. ***"Taken captive by Satan at his will"*** (2 Timothy 2:26) is the terrible condition of the sinner.

5. Deception means *the wrong opinion*. People will blindly state, "Well, you have your opinion and I have my opinion." But God is not interested in a natural sinner's opinion. You are I are shut up to the necessity of a revelation of Divine truth, and only God can give that revelation. He is sovereign; He can grant you the knowledge of truth and bring you to repentance, or He can leave you in your own darkened mind in the worst form of deception. A sovereign God can create faith in your heart or He can leave you in your unawakened, spiritually dead condition. I want you to realize that God is sovereign in His grace and mercy. He is sovereign in everything that He does to bring about the salvation of His elect. So, by nature today men are shut up in deception and in the wrong opinion of God and truth. When converted men come to the right opinion of God and His Word!

6. The word "deception" carries another meaning—it means *to throw down*. The devil is after every human being that he can possibly deceive and he just loves to throw them down, causing them to stumble and to fall. Thank God, however, that while old Satan may have the power to cause you to fall at times, he can never totally lead you astray. I have said that many times I've been knocked down but never knocked completely out of the race! God's grace will keep His elect people and when they fall they will rise up again.

7. That word "deception" means to be hood-winked. Whenever I see the young people riding their motor bikes and wearing a helmet, I think of this word. "Hood-winked." With that hood over you, you travel on in the dark, wandering after Satan and his false prophets, and you just cannot see the truth!

8. Another thing: deception indicates *to play upon one*. Did you ever see a cat catch a mouse and play with his captive? After a while the cat will turn his prey loose and let him scamper off a little way; then he pounces upon him and pulls him back. He will injure the mouse a bit, but keep it alive and continue to turn him loose and pull him back. It almost seems the cat has hypnotic power over the mouse. Continually playing upon him, the mouse wears down little by little. Oh, how we can see this in these false teachers of our days—playing upon the emotions of sinners, dealing in their terrible work of deception of the souls of men!

9. Then I notice that deception means *leading into error*. Now truth, of course, is God's property, and if you are God's child you have a right to all the truth of God. He will give you as much truth as you are ready to walk in. But the false prophets only peddle error and lead people into error; they cannot teach you or lead you to walk in the path of God's truth. We must come to the Word of God and to a true prophet of God in order to receive God's truth.

10. Finally, deception means *to lead aside from the right way*. Here is the sinner by nature, totally in the wrong way, and the devil is not seeking to deceive that sinner who is already deceived. No, Satan wants to deceive and lead astray and confuse the true people of God if he can.

In Isaiah 66:4 we read, ***"I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."*** It is a solemn thing to hear the truth of

God, and you had better be careful what you hear and how you hear. It is possible that God would send you a strong delusion—yes, God sends delusions to people! That is what He said. We don't need to soften it but believe it. ***“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (2 Thessalonians 2:7-14). Notice they would not receive the truth, and one of the great truths they would not receive was the *doctrine of election*. Preachers today are fighting the doctrine of election, which shows they have no love of the truth.

II. WHAT SHALL WE SAY ABOUT GOD'S ELECT? We are told in the text that if it were possible they would be deceived. Notice something that is special and secure concerning God's elect people.

1. *Their security is in the hands of Christ.* It is comforting to know that the One who died for the elect and who loves them and has pledged to bring them in without fail, is the One in whose hands their security rests! No false prophet or false Christ can ever ultimately deceive His people and snatch them out of His hands. Why would an all-powerful Christ give His life for them, and then at some later point allow the devil to rob Him of the objects of His sufferings? How wonderful that their security is in the hands of Christ! ***“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”*** (John 10:28). That is their security.

2. *Their preservation is by the mighty power of God.* God will protect His own and will preserve them and give them the power to persevere. Brethren, this is of God's power, and if it were not so, I have no hope for any one of you nor for myself. The devil would surely get us if God abandoned us. You can be sure that, according to Christ, greater power of deception is just ahead. The false prophets are coming on the scene with an over abundance of power to deceive, delude and damn the souls of men. Thank God that we are preserved by His power: ***“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”*** (1 Peter 1:5).

3. *In the purpose of God it is impossible that the elect should be totally and finally deceived.* God has put the truth inside of them, and the Holy Spirit is their divine teacher, and God will see to it that every one He loved and chose in Christ will be saved and not finally deceived by Satan. The elect have a sure and firm perseverance unto the end in spite of sin and men and devils! The great God who said they would deceive the elect “if it were possible” is making sure that it is ***not*** possible. His purpose is sure and successful. When God saved me, I was just a North Carolina mountain sinner, living 'way back there in the woods—knew nothing of city life and nothing of these big modern churches with all their buses and gimmicks, knew nothing of Sunday Schools, and I have been ever grateful to God that He didn't allow me to be brainwashed by all of these things. I knew nothing of the Bible, had no preconceived opinions, and was just fertile territory for the Holy Ghost to plant His crop. And when God saved me He didn't have to get rid of a lot of false religious notions, and the Holy Ghost began to lead me and teach me.

4. *The elect may be and often are deceived before their conversion.* While unregenerate they are deceived in some areas from their youth; the only exception would be those who were regenerated in their mothers' wombs and came into the world as new creatures in Christ Jesus. Even though they are not deceived by Satan, they have much to learn, and the Spirit begins to teach them. I believe we

have some Bible examples of people who were regenerated in the womb: **Jeremiah** was regenerated and called as a prophet before ever he was born. The Bible tells us that **John the Baptist** was regenerated, sanctified, filled with the Holy Ghost and ordained as the Forerunner of our Lord while he was yet in his mother's womb! But in my case this was not so; I was deceived in many ways as I was born and grew up in the North Carolina mountains, and had to be quickened and converted after I was born. Most of you can witness the same thing. Notice the words of Paul to Titus, "***We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared***" (Titus 3:3-4). Here were some of God's people who had been in great depths of deception before they were converted.

But it is the responsibility of the Holy Ghost to find all of the Lord's chosen sheep, call them out and bring them into the fold without the loss of one. He is going to find every last one of them! Notice in Luke 8:2, "***And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom when seven devils.***" Here was one of God's chosen people, greatly deceived and possessed of evil spirits, but thank God when Christ crossed her path He broke the powers of darkness over her and made her into a new creature. She came and fell at His feet. But if He never calls you, if He does not deliver you, then you will never be freed from deception nor come to the Saviour. Speaking of the woman who had been bound 18 years with an infirmity, when the Lord Jesus had set her free, He said, "***And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?***" (Luke 13:16). Being a daughter of Abraham is proof that she was one of God's elect, yet Satan had her life in total bondage until Jesus came. And I would point out to you something you need to face—Christ could have delivered her earlier instead of allowing her to remain under the control of Satan. Why didn't He? Because He didn't want to! His timing in the salvation of the elect is a perfect timing. God is never in a hurry, never excited or fearful that His plan will fail. He knows what He will do, what He started out to do, and there is no failure with our God in spite of all that Satan and his demons can do.

III. WHY GOD'S ELECT CANNOT BE FATALLY, FINALLY AND TOTALLY DECEIVED.

What are the reasons and what are the proofs that they cannot be deceived?

1. *God the Holy Ghost will open their eyes.* All of them are blind by nature, but when the Spirit opens their eyes they begin to see the truth. I'll never forget when God opened my blinded eyes—I saw myself a sinner, saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, saw myself under the curse of the Law and headed for Hell and in need of God's mercy. Never had I seen this before! Now there was no argument with God, and I knew that God would be just if He didn't save me. When your eyes are opened the blindness and deception are gone forever!

2. Then God's elect cannot be deceived because *the Spirit also opens their ears.* With your eyes open, you see the glory of God and your true condition. Then with your ears open you are able to hear the Lord's voice when He calls you. You cannot come apart from this Divine, effectual call. "Oh," you say, "I came without any special call." Then you are still in darkness and the valley of death. Your eyes and ears have not been opened. You are still in your sins and without God! Don't fool yourself! May God awaken you. The only way you can know that you are one of the elect is by the Divine call. And when God calls you, personally and effectually, you are going to come. "***Lazarus, come forth!***" That call from the Lord's lips made him alive, and the Holy Ghost floated that bound body out of the tomb; he didn't walk out, nor respond to a mere invitation. The voice of Christ raised him to life and when he was out of his tomb, Christ told those around him to loose him from his grave clothes.

3. A third reason why God's elect cannot be fatally, finally and totally deceived is because *the Holy Ghost will regenerate them and bring them savingly to Christ.* This regeneration is His work and He will approach and quicken every elect sinner in His own time. Now we have got to come back and put salvation where it belongs—in the hands of the Lord instead of in the sinner himself or the

preacher. Then we will be honoring the Lord in this matter of Salvation and He will begin to honor our preaching once more! If that sinner is dead by nature—and he is!—then he is shut up to the sovereignty of God in regeneration. ***“The Son quickeneth whom he will”*** (John 5:21). Then who do you expect Him to quicken? His elect people, and He will bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ without the loss of one. Yes, this quickening, this regeneration is in the power and the will of God alone.

I had been preaching along this line in Texas when a preacher confronted me and said, “What you are preaching is true, but it is dangerous.” “Why is the truth of God dangerous?” I asked him. And I knew that he was afraid of it for it could mean that his large church would reject him and he would lose his salary! He said, “These things confuse sinners.” But I reminded him that the sinner is by nature dead to spiritual truth, and what little he does know is in the natural realm and he is confused, blinded, ignorant, deceived and hopeless. The sinner has to have somebody give him life, and we ought to preach these truths openly and clearly.

4. *They can never be deceived because God the Holy Spirit will indwell them and will be their Teacher and their Guide.* When God saves a man He puts the schoolhouse and the textbook and the teacher on the inside of him. That makes it sure. Hear the promise of Christ. ***“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”*** (John 14:26). And in John 16:13, we have these words concerning the Spirit, ***“He will guide you into all truth.”*** Now if He is teaching you ALL things and is guiding you in ALL truth, then how are you going to be finally deceived? These false prophets can tangle up and confuse God’s people for a time, but there will be a renewing of the Holy Ghost whereby He brings them out of all the errors of Satan and into the full light of Divine truth. The Good Shepherd will call His sheep back unto Himself. And you will come running back to Him gladly, freely and absolutely.

My friends, I want to stress the sureness of God’s work. Wouldn’t it be a stupid thing for God or any man to offer Lazarus a proposition while he yet lay in the tomb? That’s what these soul-winners are doing—winning thousands all over the country, but damning every one of them, and God will put them in Hell for it. I warned some preachers in the city of Atlanta that God is going to put them and their converts in Hell, and of course that stirred up a hornet’s nest and didn’t make me a popular preacher!

5. Here again we notice that God’s elect cannot be finally deceived because *God’s Spirit will call them and continue to call them.* Yes, He calls them, and He continues to call them time and again back to Himself. He will keep on calling them until He gets them safely home to Glory. In John 10:3 we read, “He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.” He does not offer them a proposition! That is the devil’s “gospel,” ladies and gentlemen! You are not saved by making a decision, you are not saved by accepting a proposition or by any form of persuasion. You are not saved by water baptism or church membership. If it were that way, then the devil himself could join the church and get baptized and God would be under obligation to take him to Heaven! Ah, beloved, the Lord our God knows exactly what He is doing. He calls His own sheep and leads them out. When He first finds them, they are dead and totally unable to respond to Him. He first quickens them and then they come to the Shepherd.

6. There is another reason why we know the elect won’t be deceived, and that is because God the Holy Ghost will open their understanding. Here is a verse of Scripture that I like to read and then pause and praise God a little while for what it says—***“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures”*** (Luke 24:45). There is no way for you to understand the Bible if God doesn’t open your understanding and give you a new heart to perceive the truth. You can go to all the seminaries, all the Bible schools, colleges and universities, and you will be only more ignorant of the truth. You don’t reason your way or train your way into these things. They come by a revelation from Heaven. ***“A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven”*** (John 3:27).

7. There is the final reason why God's elect cannot finally and totally be deceived, and that is *because the Spirit of God will reveal to you who are the false prophets*. It may be your pastor, a popular evangelist, or this one or that one, but the Spirit knows the false prophets and he will ultimately show them to you. You may love and admire a certain preacher, but if he is a false prophet the Holy Ghost is going to reveal it and give you the grace to separate from him. Listen! ***“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world”*** (1 John 4:2-4). Bless God, O my soul! When the Lord God saves an individual, the Holy Ghost who is God comes in to dwell. And how do you suppose that the wicked one can overcome and get that child? Never, for ***“greater is he that is in you!”***

As we face the situation in the world today, according to the newspapers, radio and TV, what on earth would we do if we didn't have this assurance?

IV. HOW CAN I KNOW THAT I AM ONE OF GOD'S ELECT? If the elect are the ones who will not be deceived, then wouldn't you like to know whether you are included in that number? Well, I believe that you can know. Turn quickly to 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10. Here he gives you seven ways that you might determine that you are one of God's elect. Please read this and study it. Everything hinges on whether I am one of God's elect, for I tell you that in due time God is going to save all of them, and He will bring them savingly to Christ and they will not be deceived by all the false religions of this present hour.

“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God” (verse 4)—and then beginning with verse 5 he shows you the seven marks of God's election.

1. *The Gospel comes home to you with power*. The false prophets cannot preach the Gospel in the power of the Holy Ghost. They will preach it in the power of their personality and their training, but the power of God is missing. ***“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power.”***

2. Then *the Gospel comes to you in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance, giving you peace*. If you don't have peace, it may be that you are one of the elect but have not yet been called effectually. Or it could be that you are not one of God's elect. I don't know.

3. *The Gospel comes to you in a way of faith*. Paul said, ***“Ye know what manner of men we were,”*** and ***“ye became followers.”*** You will receive the truth of the Gospel in faith if you are one of the elect.

4. Then I would point out that *the Gospel comes “in much assurance”* (verse 5). Why would God save a man and not let him know anything about it? If you had no assurance that God saved you, then you might lose your salvation and never miss it! Ah, the Gospel comes to a quickened elect sinner “in much assurance.” He didn't say *perfect* assurance, for at times the believer's assurance may be shaken—but he will have *“much assurance.”*

5. *The Gospel would come to them “in much affliction”* (verse 6). I am afraid of these religious professors who always boast of having a hallelujah-good time. I have had “hell” to contend with for these past 47 years, for I received the Word of God with affliction. Oh, the afflictions! But they are for your good.

6. *The Gospel will come in the joy of the Holy Ghost. “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost”* (verse 6). If you have no joy, where are you? You have no evidence of being one of God's elect.

7. *The Gospel comes in repentance, in your turning “to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven”* (verse 9). You turn to God and away from idols to serve Him and to wait for His Son. What are we waiting for? The conversion of the world? No. For the

world to become more enlightened and better? No, no! I am waiting for the Son of God to appear from Heaven. He is my Saviour and my Lord, and I am looking forward to seeing Him.

“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.” You can know it, the apostle says, and we have enumerated several sure marks of election as it relates to your response to the Gospel of God concerning His Son. The Gospel coming to you “in word only” will not save you; it must come in power and in the Holy Ghost. “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.” These quickened elect souls followed Paul as he followed the Lord. You say, “I’ll never follow a man.” Well, God doesn’t expect you to blindly follow any preacher, but if he is God’s preacher you must pay attention to his message. God says of His elect people, **“How shall they hear without a preacher?”** God did say that! The preacher has his place in this matter of conversion as God is pleased to use him. Then we see that these people who received the truth became good examples and helped to sound forth the word of the Lord to others also (verses 7 and 8).

“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.” Notice verse 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.” There you have the life of the elect children of God summarized—they are looking for the appearing of the Lord because they know Him. He is the One who rose from the dead and delivered them from the wrath of God. And what assurance there is in knowing that while the devil may be permitted to trip you up and confuse you at various times along the way, that old monster of Hell cannot finally and permanently deceive you and cause your eternal damnation in Hell. God is going to complete the work which He has begun in His elect children and see to it that you are brought through it all unto eternal life in that glorious final resurrection!

In conclusion, I would like to ask you four questions:

1. Have you been born again?
2. Do you know Christ?
3. Do you have the Inward Witness?
4. Is the call of God upon your soul?

Forty-seven years ago God found me, He quickened me, He aroused me, He withered me, He called me and He saved me. He has been with me all these years. I hear His voice every day, and I feel His divine presence. As we march on in this wonderful, marvelous salvation of our God, I rejoice that it is IMPOSSIBLE to deceive God’s elect. They are going to be brought in! Amen. **B. B. Caldwell** (1899-1976)

- *Date originally preached was about 1973. This is transcribed from tape and slightly abridged by Wylie Fulton. Hear some of Caldwell’s sermons in MP3 format via the Internet at: www.sermonaudio.com/barnard*

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