

# The Circuit Rider

Published By

Covenant of Grace Ministries

2704 Fairway Drive  
Greensboro, NC 27408

Burley W. Moore—Bible Teacher

e-mail: [burleymoore@juno.com](mailto:burleymoore@juno.com)  
[www.covenantofgraceministries.com](http://www.covenantofgraceministries.com)

Phone (336) 292-2408

Listen to Covenant of Grace Radio over [www.covenantofgraceministries.com](http://www.covenantofgraceministries.com)  
Or Over AM830 WTRU in the Triad at 1:00 PM Every Sunday Afternoon

Volume 5, Number 1

January

Winter 2010

## Election (Part I)

“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” (Rom. 11:5-6)

Before we begin our study on the doctrine of election, let me prepare you by saying that we’re getting ready to enter deep spiritual water. However, it is a clear biblical teaching that cannot be denied if we’re going to accept God’s Word the way God wrote it. As poor carnal sinners born under the curse of depravity, we are not only without power, but even without inclination to ever choose God. Therefore, no person will ever get to heaven without a miracle from God being performed in his life. For that simple reason, we can trace the marvelous change from death to life that takes place in a sinner’s heart to the electing “grace” of God. Man is a fallen, ruined creature, totally at “enmity” (Rom. 8:7) with God who will never choose God when left to himself (Jh. 15:16).

There are many that see the doctrine of election from the mere viewpoint of free will. They interpret election as God foreseeing those who are willing to trust Him for salvation as being the ones whom He predestined to everlasting life. In other words, before the world began God looked into the future and foresaw who would choose Him and then elected those individuals based on their freedom of choice. Such an interpretation places man in charge of his salvation with eternal life being a by-product of what man chooses to do. If we want to see what free will is like when exercised under the covenant of works, all we have to do is look at Adam in the Garden of Eden. Why would we think that man’s free will has improved since that is the very thing which caused his ruination in his fall into sin? In other words, by looking at Adam we can see what sinful man will do when the choice of salvation is left up to him apart from the sovereign intervention and overpowering of God’s grace. Man’s concept of free will stands in direct opposition to the saving grace of God.

Scripture teaches that God’s “elect” have been chosen by God “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4-7). Some people will say this means that if we choose Christ, then we are “chosen ... in Him.” But, this places the emphasis upon man’s free will, which is depraved and incapable of ever choosing God. It’s because of the finished work of “Jesus Christ” that a sinner can be adopted into the household of faith. God’s foreknowledge does not mean that God merely foreknew those who would believe on His name (Rom. 8:29-30). Scripture teaches that those “whom He did foreknow, He

also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” The Bible does not say that God foreknew that they would be conformed and so He predestinated them, but it teaches that He predestined them to be “conformed.” That which so many believe today amounts to post-destination rather than what the Bible teaches to be pre-destination. A person is not elected or predestined to eternal life based upon God's foreknowledge of how the sinner will respond. Unconditional election means that there is nothing in a sinner and nothing that a sinner can do to move God to choose him; it is absolutely sovereign, meaning that God made His choices by the good pleasure of His own will “before the foundation of the world.”

Throughout Scripture, we can find examples of God choosing by His sovereign will (Acts 13:48). Abraham was nothing more than an idolater when God called him out of heathenism. Then, we see God choosing Isaac instead of Ishmael, Jacob instead of Esau, and on and on we could go from the Old into the New Testament. Man is damned to Hell because of his sins. It's because of God's GRACE and God's GRACE alone that He has chosen to save some. There is no man who deserves forgiveness and salvation from the Lord, but in mercy and grace, God has chosen to redeem a people unto Himself. God could have left us all to perish, but because of His own grace and to His own glory; He is calling out His Church. One of the marvelous things about God's grace is that He is willing to save some! Many people argue against the doctrine of election by saying that God is not “willing that any should perish” (II Pet. 3:9). This is a frequently quoted verse and most of the time when it is used; it is done so totally out of context. . When one uses this verse to try and prove a non-biblical view of election, then such an argument does nothing more than reveal the shallowness of one's understanding of the Scriptures. This passage from Second Peter is teaching the perseverance of those whom God has elected to salvation, or in other words, God's elect are guaranteed to never “perish” because they have the promise of “everlasting life” (Jh. 3:16). Without a correct understanding of election, one will never have a correct understanding of God's Covenant of Grace.

The doctrine of unconditional election, along with the other doctrines of grace, was the gospel that was believed by the Southern Baptist Convention for the first eighty years of its history. JP Boyce, founder and first president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, and president of the SBC (1872-1879, 1888) made it very clear in his book, Abstract of Systematic Theology, that he not only believed in unconditional election, but required all professors in the seminary to believe it also. The Charleston Baptist Association, the first Baptist association in the South, founded in 1751, adopted the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689, as it's doctrinal statement. Part of this statement, under God's Decree, reads, “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained 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.” Under the heading, Of Effectual Calling, it says, “Those whom God hath predestinated unto life, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh: renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit; he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.”

Before my retirement from the pastorate, I served most of my forty years in churches affiliated with the SBC. I'm thankful for the resurgence of the conservative movement that has taken place in the denomination, but it has not gone far enough. There is still much that needs correcting in the denomination. I've never been a denominational ladder climber and never will. Without apology, let me say that what the SBC needs is a return to its doctrinal roots of Calvinism. Some progress has been made, but very little in comparison to where we need to go. Revival and Reformation is the

crying need of churches throughout our land today. We need a return to the mighty Truths of God's Word and for the pulpits of our land to proclaim Biblical doctrine in expository fashion. God has not called us to get people to "make a decision", but to proclaim God's Word and trust the Holy Spirit to call out God's "sheep" (Jh. 6:37-39, 10:27). Just as Spurgeon fought the heresy of baptismal regeneration in his day, we are fighting the battle of "decisional regeneration." A common teaching today is that a person is regenerated after they exercise faith in Jesus Christ, but the truth of the matter is that genuine faith cannot be exercised until regeneration takes place. A true believer is not one who has merely walked an isle and made a decision to follow Jesus, but one who has been chosen of God unto salvation. I'm afraid that most visible local churches have filled their membership rolls with lost people and have become no more than social clubs or community centers.

God's knows His "elect", but how can we know if we have been elected of God? That's a good question. To begin with, a person who is trying to avoid repentance of sin and simple faith will find no assurance of salvation. For a person to have assurance of salvation and to know that he is numbered among God's "elect", he must seek to honestly ask and answer such questions as:

1. Do I love God for Who He is, or do I look to Him just to make me happy, and give me what I want?
2. Do I love the Word of God? Do I love to read it? Do I love to be taught the Scriptures? Do I have a hunger to learn God's Word?
3. Do I delight in keeping the commandments of God?
4. Does my soul find comfort in God's Truth?
5. Do I feel conviction of my sin? Is there any sense of remorse?
6. Does my sin grieve me because it grieves God?
7. Does my life give evidence of an ongoing pursuit of holiness?
8. Is there a real distinction between the world and myself?
9. Do I love to fellowship with the brethren?
10. Is the worship of God a priority in my life?
11. Do I have a willingness to deny self for the glory of God?
12. Do I have a desire to serve God sacrificially?
13. Do I commune with God in regular secret prayer?
14. Do I make it a practice in daily living to try and obey God's Word?

These are just a few distinguishing traits of true Christian character that doesn't come by walking an isle, but by the Holy Spirit taking up residence within the soul and imparting a new nature. Witness is given that we are God's "elect" by the fruit that we bear for the glory of God, not merely by reciting a prayer. Paul knew that the Thessalonians were God's "elect" because of their testimony of spiritual transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit (I Thess. 1:3-6). In order to have assurance of salvation and to "make your calling and election sure," one needs a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and experience the sanctifying graces of God's Spirit (II Pet. 1:5-11).

### **Definition of Election**

In closing this first of a two-part study on the subject of election (the second part will appear in our next quarterly edition of "The Circuit Rider", scheduled to be published in April), I leave you with a definition of the biblical doctrine of election. Before creation, God selected from the human race those whom He would redeem, justify, sanctify, and glorify in Jesus Christ. The divine choice is an expression of free and sovereign grace. It is not merited by anything in those who are chosen. God owes sinners no mercy of any kind, only condemnation; so it is a wonder that He should choose to save any of us.

## **A MINISTRY UPDATE**

In our last edition of "The Circuit Rider", I announced and requested prayer for Rev. Jerry Stanley, one of our board members and a personal long-time friend. Shortly after that publication, Jerry went home to be with the Lord on October 19<sup>th</sup>. I will greatly miss him, but look forward to the day when we'll both worship at the feet of Jesus. Please continue praying for his widow, sister, and brother-in-law as they adjust to life without him. Our oldest board member, Rev. Gerald Primm, is now living in a nursing home in Greensboro. Remember him also before the throne of God's rich and free grace.

I'm glad to report that my book (**My Life as a Pastor, Shepherding God's Sheep and Herding Goats**) is back from the publisher and ready for distribution. I've been asked about the cost of this book. After seeking God's will in what He would have me to do, I feel led to make the book available free, to anyone desiring a copy. This book is the story of my life as a pastor. I did not go seeking to be a pastor. It was a calling from God. I consider it a gift of God's grace in allowing me to serve Him down through the years and I share my story as a gift to others. If this book causes one to get angry, then it could be indication that repentance is needed. The main reason for the writing of this book is not to anger anyone, but to be an encouragement to people in ministry and pastors in particular. If God has called you to serve Him, then He will sustain you regardless of how difficult the journey. I simply want this book to be a testimony of God's faithfulness to those whom He has called to serve Him. Yes, the book did cost me to have it published, but I paid for it myself and did not use ministry funds. However, if anyone who receives a copy of my book wants to make a contribution toward the cost of publication, all funds will be deposited into COGM and used for our ongoing work.

In recent months, our son, Wilson, got me up and running on Facebook. Within the last few weeks, he has now put Covenant of Grace Ministry on Facebook. He's done an excellent job and will continue to manage this part of our ministry. Plans are to download a new audio Bible Study weekly on Facebook. If you're a Facebook fan, check us out and pay special attention to the "sentence sermons" and spiritual quotes that give "food for thought." Thanks Wilson, for handling this great outreach opportunity.

We're a small ministry, but with the worldwide web, we're able to reach into such places as China, Germany, Romania, Netherlands, Israel, Kenya, Pakistan, Ivory Coast, Bulgaria, Malaysia, Norway, Sweden, and Singapore. In the month of December, we had 573 hits from the Russian Federation alone. For the entire year of 2009, we had a total of 13,458 hits on our web site. We're going to trust God with the results of this little ministry. Thank each of you who support us with your gifts and prayers.

Because of His Sovereign Grace .....BWM

# The Circuit Rider

Published Quarterly by

**Covenant of Grace Ministries**

2704 Fairway Drive  
Greensboro, NC 27408  
Burley W. Moore-Bible Teacher

Listen to COVENANT OF GRACE RADIO over [www.covenantofgraceministries.com](http://www.covenantofgraceministries.com)  
or over AM830 on WTRU in the Triad at 1:00 PM every Sunday afternoon