

The Glorious Hour – Part 2

By David Harrell

John 17:1-10

Will you join me by taking the infallible record of the Word of God and turning to John's gospel chapter 17? This is the second in, basically, a two part series that I have entitled, "The Glorious Hour."

As we read earlier in our Scripture reading, the very basis of our faith is summarized in what that brilliant angel who sat upon the stone that had been rolled away from Jesus' sepulcher said to the astonished woman. He said, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said."¹

Indeed, we worship a risen Savior who bore in his body the sins of all who believe on him as their only hope of salvation. And this is the amazing event, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that Christians around the world are celebrating today. And I pray that you have come to worship him this morning, the one who will one day come again just as he promised he would. You will recall when he departed there were two angels that spoke to the astonished disciples that were watching him rise up into heaven in the clouds of glory after his resurrection and they said to them, "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."²

So not only do we serve a risen Christ, dear friends, but we serve a Christ who is coming again. Never forget that. And how will he return? Well, the same way he went up. The Messiah will return again to the Mount of Olives. His feet will touch there. He will come physically in human form. He will come publicly in clouds of glory. He will not come as a helpless babe as he did the first time, but as the King of kings and Lord of lords. He will not come as a Savior to seek and to save the lost. But he will come to judge and also to glorify his bridal church and establish his millennial kingdom on a renovated earth, a time when we will reign with him among the newly saved Israel. A remnant of his covenant people will finally understand who the Messiah really is and they will experience the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and the Davidic covenants. It will be a time when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

In fact, many people around the world today that perhaps will be alive during this time, certainly many in Israel will be able to join in with the songs that we have just sung. Do you believe that? Wouldn't that be amazing? What a testimony to God's grace.

And after he reigns for 1000 years he will uncreate his universe. There will be a new heaven and a new earth and then all those that he had chosen for eternity will enter into that place and worship the triune God forever.

This has been his predetermined plan from the beginning. And neither man nor devil can thwart it.

¹ Matthew 28:5-6.

² Acts 1:11.

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Now unfortunately, too often, when Easter time rolls around people tend to focus much more on hunting Easter eggs than finding Christ. So we are not here today to hunt Easter eggs, but rather to celebrate the pearl of great price that we have found in Christ. And so I pray that I can bring clarity to some of the chaos and the confusion and frankly some of the ignorance that even abounds in the Church today with respect to the events surrounding our Lord's final days on earth and his resurrection and all that that means.

Now last week we began to make our way with Jesus and his disciples as he departed from the upper room. They came out and left Jerusalem. They went down across the Kidron Valley. They began to make their way up to the Mount of Olives, headed toward the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus in the anguish of his Soul over the cup that he was about to drink would be in such excruciating spiritual pain that he would actually sweat drops of blood knowing what laid ahead for him.

And yet with all those before him, the selfless Savior stops with his disciples and he prays for them, disciples who were dismayed. They were disappointed. They could not believe that he was going to die. They thought that he was going to establish the kingdom right then and there. But as their great high priest, he pauses and he intercedes on their behalf and trusting them to the Father's care upon his departure.

So he prays for all whom the Father had given him, those who would ultimately be saved as a result of their faithful preaching. And this prayer is recorded here in John chapter 17, one of the most amazing passages of all Scripture.

And here we are allowed access into the very holy of holies of inter trinitarian communication. And here we glean many profound theological insights that really help us understand that God has decreed a plan that is really four fold at least. It is one that is predetermined, one that is personal, one that is perfect and one that is preeminent.

We are just going to focus, once again, on the first few verses here of John 17. So will you follow along as I read them beginning in verse one.

These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee, even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

"I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept

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Thy word. Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine; and all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.”³

By way of review, once again, we looked last week and we learned that his plan is, first of all, predetermined as we see in verse one.

“These things Jesus spoke...”⁴ referring to the recorded content of the previous three chapters. It says that he lifted up his eyes to heaven and he said, “Father, the hour has come.”⁵ And, of course, that hour was the decreed of redemptive history when the Son of God would offer himself as a sacrifice for sin, when he would conquer sin and Satan and death for all who place their trust in him. That was the hour when the Son of Man would finalize his earthly ministry in his death, his resurrection, his ascension and even his coronation, the hour when he would be, as Peter said in Acts 2:23, “delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God,”⁶ an hour when the Father would glorify the Son and the Son the Father.

So obviously this speaks of a predetermined plan of mutual glorification. But, as we learned last week, it was also a personal plan, one that included sovereign grace being set up on specific individuals. This included, of course, his disciples as we learn in verse six. He says, “The men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world.”⁷

But also, according to verse 20, he says, “I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word.”⁸

And so the expansion here goes to all believers.

And in verse 24 he says, “Father, I desire that they also...”⁹ And, again, this would include us. “... that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world.”¹⁰

And so, indeed, this plan includes specific persons.

³ John 17:1-10.

⁴ John 17:1.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Acts 2:23.

⁷ John 17:6.

⁸ John 17:20.

⁹ John 17:24.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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And may I remind you of what I said last week? In eternity passed the Father ordained a plan to demonstrate his infinite love to his Son whereby he chose for him a bride. And as we look at Scripture we see that he chose them specifically by name and he recorded their names in the book of life, an elect group of sinners that would be hostile to him, that would be in desperate need for forgiveness and transforming grace, a vast multitude of humanity that would be pledged to the Son as a gift from the Father, a gift that would be sealed by the Holy Spirit. And in time, in the miracle of salvation the Father would then irresistibly compel each sinner to voluntarily exercise his will and repent of his sin and believe on the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, of course, central to the whole plan of inter trinitarian love and glory was the death of the Son, because he had to be the perfect substitute for each specific sinner whose name had been written in that book of life in order for them to be reconciled to a holy God. And these are the ones to whom Jesus refers, once again, in verse six as well as verse 24 as those whom thou hast given me.

You say, “Well, yes, but wasn’t his atonement sufficient to cover the sins of every sinner who ever lived?”

Well, of course it was. Christ’s death had unlimited, it had infinite value. There was nothing deficient about it. In fact, for this reason God offers pardon to all, to every person as many Scriptures affirm.

For example, in John 1:19 John the Baptist says, “Behold,” pointing to Jesus, “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”¹¹

To be sure, Jesus’ sacrifice for sin potentially reaches all of humanity without distinction.

1 John two and verse two we read, “And he is the propitiation for our sins.”¹² But it goes on to say, “And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”¹³

But you must understand the concept of world must be understood as the sphere, the mass of humanity from which God seeks reconciliation. And in one sense you might say that Christ has appeased the wrath of God temporarily for every human being, thus allowing them to live because we know that “The wages of sin is death.”¹⁴ And had he not done something, every man would die instantly.

But the efficacious effect, please hear this. The efficacious effect of the atonement is only for those who trust in Christ as Savior. And according to his eternal purposes, only the elect will respond and be saved. If Jesus actually paid the sins for everyone, everyone

¹¹ John 1:19.

¹² 1 John 2:2.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Romans 6:23.

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would be saved and there would be no need for hell. That is an error called Universalism that is being taught and frankly is advancing in many sectors of Christendom today.

Beloved, while it may seem contrary to our human reasoning and inconsistent with our very, very limited understanding of a loving God, I believe that Scripture teaches that the actual satisfaction and atonement was made only for those whom the Father gave to the Son, those chosen before the foundation of the world, not to those of whom he would one day say, “I never knew you.” Not to those, according to Romans nine, whom he hates, whom he hardens, those on whom he will have no mercy and no compassion, those vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.

Not of the, quote, world for which Jesus refused to pray here in chapter 17 and verse nine, but for all the undeserving wretches he chose in eternity past on the basis of his uninfluenced choice.

Can we not see this on the basis of verse two? He says, “Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life.”¹⁵

Now think about it. Jesus as we see here had the power and has the power to pardon all men or to judge all men if he should choose to do so. In fact, he says in Matthew 28 verse 18, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.”¹⁶

And, indeed, for this reason the gospel can and must be preached to all men. And, as we read in a number of passages, for example John three and 16, whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish but have eternal life.

So he has universal authority to save all men, yet we see that he chose to save only those who have been given to him from the Father.

So obviously the design of God’s plan is not a universal redemption, but a particular, specific redemption.

Now you say, “Well, but how can I know if I am numbered among the elect, if I am part of that group for whom Jesus died?”

The answer is quite simple. If you trust in Christ as your only hope of salvation, then you are, indeed, part of that elect number. If you don’t, you are not.

Ah, but how can we possibly reconcile God’s sovereignty with man’s responsibility? For Scripture teaches both.

¹⁵ John 17:2.

¹⁶ Matthew 28:18-19.

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Indeed, it does. And I would submit to you that we cannot explain it, but God can and in that I relax and I rejoice.

In fact, as I have said before, I cannot understand one single major doctrine of Scripture. I can't explain to you how he can speak things into existence in creation, but I believe he did by faith. I cannot explain the incarnation of Christ, how God can be fully God and fully man. I cannot explain the resurrection. And on and on it goes. But God can and I am comfortable in that. I relax in that and I rejoice in that.

For I fear if I could understand these things then my God would be small rather than glorious as he is.

So here Jesus' passionate prayer indicates a plan that was predetermined and personal.

But now today's focus is on the latter two aspects of his plan. It is also perfect as well as preeminent. And by perfect please know that we see this in numerous ways, but I am only going to have time this morning to expand upon just two ways in which his plan is perfect.

Notice verse four. He says, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do."¹⁷

Now here Jesus anticipates the cross and the perfect justice it would satisfy. And so first we could say that his plan is perfect because Christ accomplished the work of the Father that he was sent to do.

Notice verse five. He says, "And now..." In other words, now that the specified time of my death and resurrection, ascension and coronation is come, "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."¹⁸

And, of course, he is referring there to that estate prior to his humiliation in which he emptied himself according to Philippians two verse seven. Not that he emptied himself of his deity or even his attributes, but of the independent use of them.

So now Jesus looks beyond his humiliation and he prays for his coronation. He knows that his final hour is here, this final time when redemption would be accomplished whereby countless millions who would eventually be saved would ultimately bring glory to the triune God.

And I find it fascinating that just a few hours later when Jesus hung on the cross even though he was not physically at a point of death, as we study the gospels we read that he

¹⁷ John 17:4.

¹⁸ John 17:5.

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cries out with a loud voice. It is a shout of triumph. It is a glorious proclamation of the victory. And what does he say?

“It is finished.”¹⁹

It has been accomplished, the perfect plan.

And then the text says that, “He bowed his head and gave up His spirit.”²⁰

Literally he sent his spirit away.

As a footnote I might say that had they taken Jesus down off of the cross, he would have very quickly and fully recovered. We have no idea the recuperative powers of the unfallen body.

So Jesus sent his spirit away after he had cried, “It is finished.”²¹ And, of course, this is in keeping with Jesus’ earlier statement in John 10 and verse 18 when he says, “No one has taken it away from Me,”²² referring to his life, “But I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.”²³

Beloved, this is the Savior that we worship and that we praise.

So, indeed, it was perfect plan because Jesus accomplished precisely all that that predetermined, sovereign plan had asked him to do. All that he had decreed in the triune godhead, for this reason he could shout, “It is finished.”²⁴

Moreover, might I add that the resurrection was proof of God’s acceptance of his Son’s perfect sacrifice.

Think about it. In Romans chapter four verse 25 we read that he “...was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.”²⁵

Let me explain that. The phrase, “delivered up” that he was “delivered up for our transgressions” is a judicial term referring to a criminal that is being given over to his punishment. And, indeed, the perfect, the spotless Lamb of God was delivered up to the sentence of death because of our transgression, because of our sin. And then, as Paul says, he was raised up to provide the justification, the justification before God that we would never attain in our own power and our own merit.

¹⁹ John 19:30.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² John 10:18.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Romans 4:25.

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And so what he is saying is that the Lord's resurrection was confirmation that God accepted his Son's sacrifice, a sacrifice whereby all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be declared righteous. That is what justification means.

This is an amazing validation of the absolute perfection of the predetermined plan.

Wouldn't you love to hear this, by the way, on the news when they talk about Easter?

"By the way folks, just so you don't forget, here is what this is really all about..."

May I remind you of some of the magnificent theology here? Because often we just kind of overlook these things.

Think about God's plan. We read, for example, in Psalm chapter 19 and verse seven that, "The law of the LORD is perfect."²⁶

All right. It is part of this perfect plan.

But we also read in other passages that it could not save sinful man who violates the law. That is us, right?

So the Son of God had to come to do, according to Romans 8:3, "what the Law could not do."²⁷

Moreover, the law, the demands of the law could not in any way be relaxed to accommodate the sinfulness of man. Otherwise God would not be holy.

In fact, in Psalm chapter 89 verse 14 we read, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne."²⁸

So a righteous holy God is not going to relax his law to somehow accommodate sinners. So it was necessary for God to devise a plan to save sinners without any relaxation of the law. And, dear friends, herein is the very heart of the gospel, that Christ fulfilled the law.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate paid in full the penalty of our sin on the cross of Calvary. In fact, Paul says in Galatians chapter three in verse 13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us."²⁹

But, may I add that his death did more than save sinners, as wonderful as that is. His death also declared the righteousness of God.

²⁶ Psalm 19:7.

²⁷ Romans 8:3.

²⁸ Psalm 89:14.

²⁹ Galatians 3:13.

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Now, you say, “How so?”

Here is the answer. While he hung upon that cross we see not only the love of God for sinners, but also the righteousness and the holiness of God, because there he maintained the unalterable standards of his own law while at the same time saving sinners who were guilty of breaking it. Absolutely staggering.

Oh, dear friends, this is the glory of the cross, the perfection of his plan.

Again, it was a perfect plan devised by a perfect God. And it was carried out by a perfect Savior who died for sinners who violated a perfect law that we might become perfected in him.

And the resurrection was proof of the Son’s perfect sacrifice whereby we are justified, where by we are declared righteous in the sight of God on the basis of the righteousness of Christ.

So we are no longer under the penalty of the law. We are now at peace with God, Scripture tells us. We now enjoy the loving favor of the Father.

The great 19th century theologian Charles Hodge summarized this profound theology of the resurrection in this way. Quote, “With a dead Savior, a Savior over whom death had triumphed and held captive, our justification had been forever impossible. As it was necessary that the high priest under the old economy should not only slay the victim at the altar, but carry the blood into the most holy place and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, so it was necessary not only that our great high priest should suffer in the outer court, but that he should pass into heaven to present his righteousness before God for our justification. Both, therefore, as the evidence of the acceptance of his satisfaction on our behalf and as a necessary step to secure the application of the merits of his sacrifice, the resurrection of Christ was absolutely essential even for our justification,” end quote.

Dear friends, think about it. Whereas God once condemned because of Christ he can now acquit. Whereas he once would not allow us access into his presence, he now summons us with outstretched arms on the basis of Christ all because Jesus our faithful high priest suffered and died and he passed into heaven to present his righteousness before God so that we would be declared righteous.

Absolutely astounding. Oh that we would all grab hold of the riches of these theological truths and embrace them with all of our hearts and live consistently with them.

Here Jesus prays for this predetermined, personal and perfect plan to finally be completed. Again, verse five.

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“And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”³⁰

And, of course, for this to happen he had to go to the cross and then go to the grave, present his righteousness before God on our behalf, then be resurrected and ascend back to the Father to be coronated King of kings and Lord of lords.

May I remind you of yet another aspect of the perfection of this plan. What happened in the temple when Christ was crucified? We read it earlier in Matthew 27 verse 52. The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Now often when we think of a veil we think of a little curtain type of thing, but this was a massive thing. It was six inches thick history tells us, magnificent embroidery. In fact, periodically they would take it down for cleaning and it took 200 men to move it.

Now you will remember in the Old Testament that God was utterly unapproachable. No one could enter into his presence. And so a veil had to separate sinful people from their God in the holy of holies. But known because of Christ the veil has been rent. The final atonement was made. Everything was perfect. The merciful and faithful high priest became the propitiation for the sins of the people, satisfying the wrath of God, Hebrews 2:17.

So no longer do we need a priest to go into the presence of God. We have access into his presence because of Christ. That is a glorious symbol of the veil being rent.

In fact, in Hebrews four verse 16 we read, “Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”³¹

Now, before this to think that you could come into the presence of God was absolutely unheard of. But Paul reminds us in Romans chapter five and verse one, “Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand.”³²

Think about it. We have access to God through Christ. Now we can come into his presence and literally stand embrace. What an astounding thought. We are permanently secured by the Holy Spirit in this position of divine grace.

Such intimacy with God was unthinkable prior to this. We no longer fear God with a terrifying angst, do we? No longer, no. But rather we approach him as our heavenly

³⁰ John 17:5.

³¹ Hebrews 4:16.

³² Romans 5:1-2.

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Father. In fact, in Romans eight verse 14 we read, “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”³³

And the apostle goes on to say, “[We] have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’”³⁴

Papa. Intimacy.

He goes on to say, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children...”³⁵ Now this is staggering “...heirs also.” Did you catch that? I mean, this is staggering. “...heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”³⁶

So, my friends, this is the perfect plan, not only because Christ’s work was accomplished when he came and he did all that the Father sent him to do, but can I give you a second reason why it is perfect? It is perfect in that it cannot be thwarted.

Every individual the Father has given to the Son, every person for whom Christ died, every person whose name has been written in the Lamb’s book of life before the foundation of the world will be saved and secured forever.

Jesus goes on to pray to that end in verse nine through 16. There he intercedes for the preservation of all whom the Father had given him.

Notice verse nine.

He says, “I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine.”³⁷

Verse 10. “All things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.”³⁸

So this love gift of a redeemed humanity, all of these sinners belongs to both of them.

So as we see here, it is not then unsaved of the world that here occupies the mind of the Savior, but those who already possess eternal life, most of which have never been born yet, like us.

³³ Romans 8:14.

³⁴ Romans 8:15.

³⁵ Romans 8:16-17.

³⁶ Romans 8:17.

³⁷ John 17:9.

³⁸ John 17:10.

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He has already established the fact in chapter six and verse 37 that all that the Father has, quote, “given me,” do actually come to him. In other words, nothing can prevent that.

And each one who does come, according to verse 37 he says, “I will certainly not cast out.”³⁹

Grammatically in the original language this is a double negative which really makes the words forcefully emphatic. He is saying, “Each one who comes to Jesus will never under any set of circumstances never ever be cast out, never ever be turned away.”

Then, as if that promise of security were not enough, Jesus adds in verse 39 of chapter six, “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.”⁴⁰

“It” referring to each person who has died, but is part of the all of that text. In other words, all that he has given me, he will raise each person up on that last day, that time of future judgment.

Verse 40 he goes on to say, “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day,”⁴¹ except for those who later on choose to renounce Christ and lose their salvation.

By the way, I hope you notice that that parenthesis is not in the text. Here in these verses we see that the Spirit reveals to us the perfect unalterable plan of God to save and preserve and resurrect every single sinner who trusts in Christ as Savior?

For my brethren who would argue that a man once saved can lose his salvation, I must humbly ask you in all love: How can you read this text, not to mention many, many others, and still believe that man is the final arbiter in salvation rather than God? I would appeal to you. Let the clear text of Scripture interpret those that seem to be obscure. Anchor your theology in the obvious, not the tortured.

Man can no more lose his salvation than he can gain it.

Romans eight we read that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God.

As our brother quoted to us earlier this morning as we were singing 1 Peter one and verse three. We have “an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are...”⁴² now catch this, “protected by the power

³⁹ John 6:37.

⁴⁰ John 6:39.

⁴¹ John 6:40.

⁴² 1 Peter 1:4-5.

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of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice.”⁴³

Again, dear friends, this is God’s plan. It is not your plan. Do you really think that you can opt out of the plan? Would you be so arrogant? Do you really believe that you can somehow override his sovereign election, that you are part of the Savior’s bride, unless you decide you don’t want to be? Do you really believe that? Do you really believe that the securing work of the triune godhead is insufficient to preserve you to the end? Would you have me believe that mere man could thwart the decreed purposes of almighty God, that Christ’s work as Mediator on our behalf is somehow deficient and ineffective? Do you really believe that the Holy Spirit’s work can be undone?

When we come to Christ we are transformed. We are made a new creature in Christ. We are born again. Do you really think we can be untransformed and unborn again and unmade a creature in Christ however you would make that understandable? Do you really believe that?

We are told that we are made partakers of the new nature. Do you believe that you could somehow lose that and revert that back to the old nature?

The Holy Spirit has promised to indwell us forever, to seal us from the day of redemption to guarantee our future inheritance, to baptize us into union with Christ and into the body of believers.

Do you really believe that you can overrule him so that all of his works are invalid, that they all must be rescinded and reversed?

I have heard many people say over the years... many times I have heard people say, “Well, I know old so and so was saved and then he later on renounced Christ and so obviously he is not saved now.”

Well, my friend, my answer to you is you thought you knew, but you didn’t know. The disciples thought that Judas was one of them. But Jesus said he was a devil from the beginning.

The disciples had to learn very early on the power, the deception of hypocrisy.

So God’s plan has been perfectly accomplished. It cannot be thwarted by you, by me, by Satan by any demon. And it is for our preservation in the world that Jesus prays to his Father on his way to the cross.

Verse 11, he says, “And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the

⁴³ 1 Peter 1:5-6.

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world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are [one].”⁴⁴

In other words, “Father, they are going to be left in enemy territory as I leave. Plus, their flesh is going to tend to lead them astray. So, Father, protect them. Preserve them according to our predetermined, our personal and our perfect plan.”

And finally, in closing, briefly, we see that it is also a preeminent plan.

You know, all of the other plans of man and Satan are doomed to failure, aren’t they? Think of all the plans of our government and our politicians, the plans of the United Nations. I mean, it is to the point where it is idiotic. And, of course, they are ultimately designed to somehow advance the agendas of greedy, ambitious politicians and leaders, not to glorify God.

But, dear friend, God’s plan is preeminent. It is the most excellent. It is absolutely unrivaled. It is unsurpassed. It is unparalleled. Why? Because it glorifies the Creator and the Sustainer and the Consummator of all things, the triune God who is the essence of glory. And this is, of course, what captivated the Savior’s heart as he prayed for his disciples on that solemn night.

Again, verse one.

“Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee.”⁴⁵

Verse five.

“And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father.”⁴⁶

Verse 22.

“And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one.”⁴⁷

That is staggering. The question is: Do you live for the glory of God, a glory that Jesus later revealed to us through his servant John in Revelation 21. You will remember there he describes the splendor of the eternal state and the astonishing grandeur of the New Jerusalem that will descend from heaven.

And in chapter 22 he says this in verse 12:

⁴⁴ John 17:11.

⁴⁵ John 17:1.

⁴⁶ John 17:5.

⁴⁷ John 17:22.

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John 17:1-10

Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.⁴⁸

But, by friends, I invite you if you don't know Christ today to come.

And you say, "Well, yes, but pastor, I don't understand all those things that you were talking about there."

Well, let me make the gospel very simple to you. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Believe what? Believe the truth about your sin that you have violated God's holy law and you will never be able to enter into his presence unless you cry out for a righteousness that is not yours, a righteousness that was accomplished solely by the Lord Jesus Christ who paid your penalty on the cross and whose resurrection guarantees the resurrection of all who will trust in him and say, "Lord, I have nothing to offer you, but my sin and my weakness. You are my only hope of salvation. Save me, I beg of you."

And on the basis of Scripture we know that if you come to him in such a way you will I no way under any set of circumstances ever be refused. You will not be cast out. You will be saved. That is the truth of the gospel. And may I say to you that today you have heard it. May you never say in this life or the next, that you were never warned of the truth. May you never say that, "Well, I was never told of the gospel, because today you have been told."

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrected Savior and you will be saved.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for your predetermined plan. Lord, we cannot understand all of it. But we know that you are a sovereign God that has ordained the end from the beginning. You are a loving and a merciful and a gracious God, but we also know you are a God of wrath for all who refuse you. So, Lord, we cry out to you for mercy on those that do not know you. Lord, use us as instruments of righteousness to bring all those whom you have

⁴⁸ Revelation 22:12-17.

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John 17:1-10

given to the Son unto yourself. We pray these things in the precious name of Jesus our risen Savior and for his glorious sake. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to pastor, Bible teacher and author David Harrell. For more information or to order additional tapes or CDs of pastor Harrell's messages, please visit OliveTreeResources.org.

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