

ANGELS ON PROBATION

By C.W. Wood

June 2006

Our sermon this month will be a continuation of last month's message. I feel that there needs to be more explanation concerning the May sermon entitled "Election Verses Man's Responsibility." I am sure some thought that I was not giving GRACE its proper place in the Scriptures and the Message. Far be it from me to try and bring down Grace from its high and lofty position. My thought was to try and present man's responsibility so that the two doctrines could meet in the middle of the Spiritual Highway and be compatible one with the other.

My concern is that when Grace is preached while leaving out man's responsibility, there can easily be a wrong understanding enter the minds of unsaved people. When Grace is presented in such fashion as to leave man supposing that he has nothing at all to do with his own salvation, then there is a harmful unbalance. I felt strongly to restate what I believe to be a proper balance between the two doctrines. Man cannot come to God until he is called, and that is Grace. After he is called he may or may not come and that is his responsibility. When both Grace and man's responsibility are seen in their proper light, there is no danger to either teaching. Grace is left in its proper place, which is to fulfill the Scripture in John 6:44, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him; And I will raise him up at that day." This statement, as all other statements in the Scripture, is true. This leaves the lost man solely dependent on God's Grace to call him. Without the call, he is doomed forever in that he would

never come to Christ on his own. He is void of any desire for God, and only filled with the desire to satisfy his flesh-man, which he will do unless placed under conviction by the Lord.

And so, we see the Grace of God as the motivating factor in the Salvation of man. Without it, we are a doomed race. Now, if it pleases the Lord, let's look at man's side of the thing of Salvation. We have seen that God must instigate it, now let's see that once God has called a lost man, and shown him his need of a Saviour, then the man becomes responsible for answering God's invitation into the Kingdom. Jesus said in Matt. 13:15 that after God has called some people, they "CLOSE THEIR OWN EYES." It is forever true that they can't OPEN THEIR OWN EYES, but after they have been called and their eyes are opened to their need, then Jesus said, "They close their own eyes." They refuse to repent and serve God.

I pray that we can see that Grace must open our eyes, but also that after we are called we are responsible for repenting and receiving forgiveness and then the New Birth. To preach grace without also preaching man's responsibility is like a bird trying to fly with one wing. To leave a lost man supposing that he has nothing at all to do

with his own Salvation, at any time during the process, is to leave him doubting that God would ever think to save a vile creature such as himself. And this is exactly what the enemy would have him think, that there is no hope for one like him.

But if we can preach the Gospel and show that the will of God is that no man should ever be lost, then he will understand that the most evil person on Earth is welcomed into the Kingdom of God if he will repent and turn from his sins. II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERSIH, BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE." John 6:37, ".....he that commeth to Me I will in nowise cast out." Matt. 20:16, ".....for many be called, but few chosen." If God is not willing that any should perish, then we can know that He will give every person a chance at Salvation. We understand then, that all men are called at some point in their lives, and they must heed the call and repent in order to be saved.

This is his responsibility, and God leaves the CHOICE up to us, after His call! All the while He is warning us that He has set before us "Life and death, blessing and

cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deut. 30:19) If this is not true, then God has made man a robot, programming him to obey God's will without any say-so of his own. If man is so *programmed*, then he has no will of his own, and he is not a free-moral agent. We know this is not true. Man is responsible after God calls him.

To bring in the Scriptural fact of free-moral agency, we will now turn to the title of our sermon, "Angels on Probation." Free-moral agency did not start on Earth with man in his flesh body, but rather, it was implemented in Heaven when God created Angels. The Prophet said, "So my opinion, the first thing that He made was Angels.....that was before there was even a molecule in the earth; there was nothing." (CHRIST THE MYSTERY, PAGE 16) We can know that even the Angels themselves were not "programmed beings" created with no mind of their own about serving their Creator.

There is no way to get around the fact that God, Himself, confronted them with the CHOICE of serving Him, or the angel named Lucifer. We do know that Scripture says, "**God knew the end from the beginning.**" This being so, He knew Lucifer would rebel before He ever created him, yet He did create him and placed him in Heaven. God did not tempt Lucifer to sin, and we can be certain he warned him, even as He did Adam and Eve. At the same time, we should be able to see that these Angels were on probation as far as they themselves were concerned. God knew what they would do; nevertheless, they must make their own choices. And we know that one third chose wrong, while two thirds chose to follow their Creator. This is our proof that free-

moral agency was instigated in Heaven, and that the Angels were on probation, made to choose their own destiny! We can't miss this basic truth; it is simply Holy Ghost logic! God had created all the Angels in perfection. They were all in eternal bodies, straight from the Hands of their Creator, with no sins and no flaws. They were in bodies like His own Glorious Body, in His own likeness, and after His own likeness (Gen. 1:26-27). We know they were created in perfection because Verse 31 says, "**And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good—.**"

But although the Angels were "very good", God had not created them as His slaves, but rather with a free will so that they could CHOOSE the path they would take. Again, we say that God did not want *robots*, programmed to obey in spite of their choice. He desired to be worshipped by His Creatures based on their own free will. In this way He received glory, as they loved Him, worshipped Him, and obeyed Him because they desired to do so.

Now, one of the great revelations that God gave His Prophet is that the Bride of every age was at one time one of those Angels in Heaven that did not fall and follow Lucifer.

QUOTE: UNFAILING REALITIES OF THE LIVING GOD, PAGE 30, "Let me say one more thing. Creeds does not satisfy a hungry heart. Creeds won't satisfy. If a man is hungry for God, you tell him, say, "Say the Apostles' Creed, join the church, put your name on *here*, be sprinkled or immersed," or what ever you want to, that will never satisfy a hungry soul. Cause, they were predestinated, of God to search for Life. They was once the angels, they

was once an angel who did not fall. Two-thirds (Br. Branham meant one-third) of the angels of Heaven fell; that's these evil spirits working amongst people, very religious. You know the Bible says that. You was just not all always right here. You were once somewhere else."

"Remember, sin didn't begin on Earth. Sin begin in Heaven, when Lucifer taken and made it. He said, "I want a denomination, make a great big thing." went on the North Country and set up a bigger thing than Michael had. And he was kicked out of Heaven.

And those angels back there, them spirits. Well, that's the reason, "**When this earthly tabernacle be dissolved, we have one already waiting.**" See? And that's the reason "**Our name was put on the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world.**" "**All the Father has given Me, will come to Me.**" (End quote)

There are many more quotes in which the Prophet tells us that we were once in Heaven in another kind of a body, and we believe the Prophet. However, we base our final conclusion on the Scriptures themselves. Gen. 1:26-27, tells us that we were first created in a body like God's own body, but we know we are not in that kind of a body now. At God's time, we were placed on Earth in this flesh body, to till the soil. (Gen. 2:5-7) But, a part of us remained in the Heavens, still a Theophany. II Cor. 5:1, "**For we know that our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.**"

QUOTE: GOD'S ONLY PROVIDED PLACE OF WORSHIP, PAGE 14, "And we've got to have everything in three's to make perfection. See? And there's one body

here, then that body there which is the—the celestial body, and then the glorified body in the resurrection. See, that makes it complete. See? So it's a... It's not a myth; it's not an idea; it's not a spirit. It is a man and a woman like you are, just exactly." (End quote)

Our subject is "Angels on Probation." Our motive is to show that from the beginning, God has made His creatures *Free Moral Agents*, that is to say, with an ability to choose their own destiny. This fact is clearly shown in that His first creation, the Angels, having this ability, were made to use it and choose God or Lucifer. Therefore, we are showing that all God's creatures, from the beginning until the end, have been created with this ability, which is to say that man is responsible for his own destiny.

Now remember, Grace is left intact in that no man can come until he is called, but once he is called and sees his need of a Saviour, he becomes responsible and must choose his own destiny. This makes the doctrine of Election perfectly true, and at the same time leaves the doctrine of man's responsibility untarnished. No part of God's Word can be ignored. To preach Grace without showing man's part is unbalanced, and to preach man's part without showing Grace is unbalanced. But, to preach both sides of the page is to show that there will be a need for the Great White Throne Judgment.

If God had so programmed His People that they had no choice but to serve Him blindly, and without their own will in the matter, then we ask the question, "Why would God tell us in Rev. 20 that there is to be a Judgment Seat?" The truth is that **"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God."** (Rom. 14:12) If man has no say in

his own Salvation and if it is solely Grace, leaving nothing at all for man to do at any time, then a Righteous God could not judge us for failing to serve Him! We would be compelled to do so, and God could receive no glory from such.

And so, we restate the truth that there is a point at which man does become responsible for his own Salvation. We also know that before this point in time, God's Grace is our only hope! Therefore, God's Grace, and man's choosing to take advantage of that Grace, equals Salvation! In this way, God receives glory from His Creatures. We, without Grace, are doomed, but by accepting it we are saved. Those whom Grace calls (which is everyone), but who reject it, are lost. Because God saw the final decision of every creature He could Elect before the foundation of the world, and put our names in the Lambs Book of Life, never to be removed! In the same manner, He could also appoint some to damnation, having seen their final rejection of His Grace.

We must never preach Grace in such a way as to leave the lost person in doubt as to God's desire to save him. The fact that God knows who will and who will not be saved, does in no way change the fact that He will save all who turn to Him. As the Bride of Christ, let us put the two doctrines together so that the Scriptural Bird of Salvation is using both his wings! May we never do away with trusting in Grace that calls us, and may we never do away with our responsibility to answer that call.

Now, we will look again at the Angels who were on probation in Heaven. Two-thirds passed the test that God had set before them, in that they chose to continue serving Him. According to our Prophet, and the Scriptures, these Angels

were placed on Earth in flesh bodies, and the powerful revelation is that once here they were no longer on Probation! Having seen the end from the beginning, God had already placed our names in the Lamb's Book of Life. Eph. 1:4, **"According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be Holy and without blame before Him in love."**

We were put here to be redeemed, there was no question about it, the fact of our redemption had already been settled in Heaven. At our physical birth, God would, and did, place in these flesh bodies a Seed out of our Theophany. In order to serve God's purpose of proving His power over the power of Lucifer, we were allowed to be born lost, and separated from God. But God, knowing what He would do, placed His Seed in us, knowing that when he watered it so that it sprang into life in us, it would be Himself again walking the Earth in flesh! I John 4:2, **"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; Every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."** There is a double meaning in this verse. Jesus came in His own flesh body, and now comes in the flesh bodies of His Elect Saints.

God knows His own, and they were not placed on Earth still on probation. We were His in Heaven and we are still His, having been born in flesh. True, we have to be redeemed, but thanks be to God we were redeemable! All people are not redeemable, but only because their final choice was against serving the living God. We remember the parable the Prophet told about the little boy with the sailboat. He had lost it in the creek when the current took it away. Later, he re-

deemed it from a pawn shop saying, "Little boat, you are twice mine now." The Prophet was not speaking about sail boats, but about the Bride of Christ that was once His in Heaven, and who would be redeemed again on Earth, having then been twice His!

QUOTE: ADOPTION, PAGE 70-71, "And He made creatures, and creatures fell. And then God, by His infinite-cy, looked down through the stream of time and saw every man that would be saved. Every man, He knew it by fore--by foreknowledge. Therefore if He, by foreknowledge, knew who would be saved and who would not be saved, He could predestinate. The word's not such a bad word after all, is it? He could predestinate, because He knew who would and who would not. Therefore, in order to catch those who would, He had to make a--a propitiation for their sins. Oh, if we can, we want to get to it, just--just a few verses below. He predestinated us to Eternal Life, knowing that those who would lay aside everything, and no matter how indifferent it would look towards the children of the world, it wouldn't mean one thing to them, because they were children of God. And He called them." (End quote)

QUOTE: C.O.D. BOOK, PAGE 225, "JUDE: VERSE 4, "**For there are certain men crept in unaware, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation,**"....(How?).....turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.

Ordained of old... Not that God set back on the throne, and said, "I'll save this man, and I'll lose that man." That wasn't it. God died, and when Jesus died, the atonement covered the entire earth for every person. But God by foreknowledge... Not that He willed... He's not willing that any should perish. He wanted everybody to be saved. That was His--that was His eternal purpose. But if He was God, He knew who would and who would not be saved. If He didn't know, then He wasn't the infinite God. So the Bible teaches that." (End quote)

Another motive for our sermon is to establish the fact that since we came from God in our original creation (a chip off the Original Block, God) and were later put in flesh to be redeemed (brought back), we can now know that **"Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of His Son-- Moreover, whom He did predestinate them He also called; And whom He called, them He also justified; And whom He justified, them He also glorified."** (Rom. 8:29-30) Friends, if we know we were called, and that we answered the call so that He has changed our lives, and that old things have passed away and all things have become new, then we also know we will soon leave this world in the Rapture. Rapturing Faith is now being revealed!

Now we are confronted with the fact that Br. Branham said in one place that "Jesus did not die for

everyone, it was only His Elect that He came to save. But, as we have seen, He also said God did not want any to be lost! This is another place where his statements seem to be contradictory. How can He only come to save some when the Scripture says, **"And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved."** (Rom. 10:13) Truth is, Jesus already knew who would call upon His Name, and in one sense then, He only came to redeem those He had foreknown. But, we must not fail to preach that Salvation is for **"Whosoever will may come."**

QUOTE: C.O.D. BOOK, PAGE 226, "Then, in there, God could not--not say, "I'll take you, and send you to hell; and I'll take you, and send you to Heaven." God wanted you both to go to Heaven. But, by foreknowledge He knew that one would be a shyster, and the other one would be a gentlemen and a Christian. See? Therefore, He had to send Jesus to die, to save that man that He foreknew that wanted to be saved. Do you get it?" (End quote)

Rom. 8:29, **"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son; that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."**

May the lost turn to Jesus Christ at once and be saved, and may the ones who have been called and know they are changed, be encouraged to know that this knowledge is Rapturing Faith. Amen.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE (Courtesy of Br. J T Hise): www.dewitttabernacle.org

OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS:

DEWITT-TABERNACLE@centurytel.net

MAILING ADDRESS:

103 W. 6TH ST. DEWITT, AR 72042