

Hermeneutics—D.S. Garza

The Election Principle

J. Edwin Hartill defines the election principle as a divine revelation whereby God in working out His purposes set aside all firsts and established all seconds.

According to this principle, firsts represent the flesh; seconds represent that which is spiritual. Hartill writes that “in our first condition, we were without; in the second condition we are saved in hope. In the first condition we wandered in darkness and sin; in the second we are walking in the light. In the first condition we were rebels against God, but now we are ambassadors for Him. In the first condition we were hell-doomed sinners, but now we have the hope and assurance of heaven.”

Although Cain was the first born and by right should have received the inheritance, he was set aside for Abel who offered a more excellent sacrifice. Esau was set aside for Jacob for despising his birthright and selling his place in the lineage of Messiah for a meal. Rueben was set aside for Judah because he was unstable as water, unreliable, and a disappointment. He lost his place for going to his father’s couch. Saul, a man who followed the people was set aside for David who was a man after God’s own heart. The first Adam was set aside for the second Adam—”The first man *is* of the earth, earthy; the second man *is* the Lord from heaven” (1Co 15:47). “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit. Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual” (1Co 15:45-46).

In Genesis 48:8-19, the patriarch Jacob guided his hands wittingly as he crossed his hands to bless the two sons of Joseph—the right hand was placed on the younger; the left hand was placed on the elder. This displeased Joseph and he tried to remove his father’s hand from Ephraim’s head, but his father refused and the first was set aside for the second.

Our first birth must be set aside for our second birth. The first is of the flesh, the second is of the Spirit. What we were in the natural must be superseded by our Holy Ghost experience. What our culture was is not as important as what our culture is now. We need the blessing and we need to keep the inheritance. Cherish your second birth. Don’t sell it. Don’t despise it. Don’t live in such a way as to lose it.

Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics—J. Edwin Hartill

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A Call to Prayer—Galen Gregg

I feel a burden for prayer today. There is a call to prayer that a man should feel deeply in his soul.

I know we are all busy, but if we are honest, we will admit that we manage to do those things we really want to do. Lord, put the “want to pray” in my soul. We must pray—there is no legitimate excuse for not praying. If you and I are to be men of God we cannot do it without much, consistent prayer. In fact, I feel that a man should pray AT LEAST one hour a day, every day.

Prayer does not help us to do God’s work, it is God’s work. “Whatever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ...if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them ...” (Matthew 18).

“For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God ...” (2 Cor. 10).

“[When] the poor and needy seek water, and [there is] none, [and] their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them ... PRODUCE YOUR CAUSE, saith the LORD; BRING FORTH YOUR STRONG REASONS, saith the King of Jacob” (Isaiah 41).

“...yet ye have not, because ye ask not” (James 4).

We can pray money into our church accounts. We can pray the chains of sin off of the sinner. Prayer is a tool, a labor, a weapon. We can pray a city into agreement with our directions. We can pray God’s anointing on ourselves. We can pray the bad attitude out of our church. PRAYER WORKS. PRAYER CHANGES THINGS. WE HAVE TO PRAY. I may or may not study. I may or may not sing well. I may or may not speak well and use correct grammar. I may or may not have money. I may or may not wear nice clothes. I may or may not get the car washed, mow the lawn, read the newspaper, etc., but I MUST PRAY.

The greatest thing you and I can do for God’s kingdom is PRAYER. The disciples never asked Jesus to teach them to preach, sing, make money, . . . but they did ask him, “teach us to pray.”

The greatest success in prayer is to do it. The greatest people on earth pray. They don’t just talk about it or just explain it, they actually take time to pray.

When the disciples stood before the council, the council “took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Have we been with Jesus?

We have to pray.

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UPDATE FROM ELDER WHEELER

Preparing to Start a Church in Cambodia

We are preparing to start a new church in Cambodia next March. We are so grateful that Bro. Joey Waldrep and family have agreed to help on this exciting project for the first three months. We believe their help will be a great blessing to this new work. Bro. Waldrep will be working with Bro. Hong who is from Cambodia. Bro. Hong will be graduating from three years of training in the Philippines next February. Bro. Nhut, who is from Vietnam will also be graduating from a three-year-training program in the Philippines. Bro. Nhut has agreed to help start the church in Cambodia before he goes back to Vietnam to start a church there. Our elders and leaders in the Philippines give us regular reports on the progress of these two men. Each report tells how God is using these two young men. We included a picture of Bro. Hong testifying about how God supplied their needs earlier this year when he and Bro. Nhut were giving Bible studies in Cambodia.

Bro. Kong Her from Laos is in his first year of training in the Philippines. He has agreed to help us for three months as we start the church in Cambodia. We are thankful to have this young man in training. He seems to be sincere and is faithful to our training program. In the picture where he is seeking the Holy Ghost, you can see Bro. Nhut and Bro. Hong working closely with him. Bro. Vince Dacles is also praying with Bro. Kong Her. Bro. Vince is a Filipino who, along with his wife Sis. Marilyn, graduated from our Bible school earlier this year. Both have a great burden for our foreign (non Filipino) students. They work diligently, learning Vietnamese; communicating with former students; reaching out to prospective students; and helping in Bible school.

The excitement mounts as the time draws nearer to start a new church in Cambodia. Much labor and preparation have been invested in this very important venture. Each time I go to Cambodia, I am deeply touched by the hunger I sense in the country. Each time I visit, more people attend our services there. I believe this is a great opportunity for the Gospel. I plan to use this church as a hub when we reach out to other countries of the region. This worthy project needs your prayer and support.



Bro. Kong Her from Laos, seeking the Holy Ghost



Bro. Hong testifying, Bro. Nhut leading testimony service.



Mission Statement

Since our first publication in the early eighties, our mission has been to provide "doctrine and instruction in righteousness" to the churches in the Philippines (2 Timothy 3:16). By request, we are expanding our circulation, trusting that God will bless and use it for the benefit of His kingdom.

Interpreting Revelation 5:7—Thomas Weisser

The book of Revelation is one of the most fascinating ever written. It has been the object of much speculation and controversy. Most books about this book deal with its relationship with future events. They sell by the millions, but seem to bypass what I believe is the main theme of Revelation. I believe its primary message is the identity of Jesus Christ.

The gospels reveal to us a unique individual Who appears in the course of human history. He is identified as God and as man. The human part of this individual is obviously subordinated to His divine part in the Gospels. After His resurrection and ascension the distinction blurs while still present. This intensifies when we get to the book of Revelation.

At the beginning of this fascinating book, we are introduced to John on the island of Patmos. While in prayer, he sees a powerful individual. The One who appears to John is designated, "Alpha and Omega and First and Last." The singular God is indicated and the identity of Christ with God is undeniable. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (1:18).

Symbolical descriptions abound in this book. One of those that apply to Christ is the individual seen by John in chapter one. He is designated Lion as well as Lamb. The designation Lamb invariably takes us back to the cross and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8).

In chapter four, we are introduced to a throne in heaven. The One sitting on the throne is compared to precious stones. The 24 elders near the throne, worship the One, on the throne.

In chapter five our attention is directed to a book in the right hand of Him on the throne. There is perplexity about who can open the book. Then one of the elders says the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is identified as a Lamb, is able to open it.

Then the vision of the Lamb taking the book out of the right hand of Him on the throne is given. Immediately after this, the 24 elders fall down before the Lamb and worship Him as Redeemer. Verse 13 says, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and (even) unto the Lamb for ever and ever." As the chapter ends, we see the 24 elders falling down and worshipping Him (singular) that liveth for ever and ever.

The carnal tendency when reading Rev. 5:7 is to make two beings of Him on the throne and the Lamb. The problem with this interpretation is that it violates general biblical truth.

The clear biblical truth concerning the Saviour is that He is alone, and He is God. "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isa. 43:11). "Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me" (Hosea 13:4). In the New Testament we read at the end of Jude's epistle, "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" (Jude 25).

Whatever is meant in Rev. 5:7, it could not mean that one Saviour is giving another Saviour the book.

Another problem with saying He on the throne is distinct from the Lamb are the scriptures that emphasize the singularity of God and the fact that worship should only go to Him. "For thou shalt worship no other god; for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Exod. 34:14). (See also Dan. 6:13 and Matt. 4:10.) The 24 elders fall before Him on the throne in 4:10 and before the Lamb in 5:8.

The only logical solution we can come to is that the One on the throne and the Lamb designate the same being. In 7:17 we see the Lamb in the midst or middle of the throne. In heaven John saw the throne (singular) of God (even) of the Lamb. William Penn saw no distinction between God and the Lamb after reading 21:23, "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." This scripture obviously gives us the picture of the glory of God emanating from the Lamb. In chapter 21 the One on the throne is identified with the One in chapter one Who we have established is Christ. "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new . . . And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 21:5-6).

Men of Strength—William Weidner

Judges 11:1-3

America is in trouble because her homes are in trouble. The homes are in trouble because men have failed to be the men of God that they ought to be. Someone asked a man, what are you a man or a mouse? He said, “I must be a man; my wife is afraid of a mouse.” The church needs men!

Jephthah was mentioned in Hebrews 11:32 as a man of faith. We are going to find the marks of his character. What made him such a mighty man of faith, and strength?

Character in the Face of Difficulties

You need to learn today to be unshackled by the past. To quit making excuses for your background. To stop blaming your circumstances.

Jephthah was an illegitimate child. (There are no illegitimate children in the truest sense of the word, only illegitimate parents.) Every child has a right to live. I am glad he wasn't aborted. His half brothers disowned him. He was exiled, kicked out. They didn't want to share their inheritance with him. He was in a bad environment with vain fellows. All he had known was failure, rejection, and poverty. Today society would say, “We don't expect much out of Jephthah, he has an excuse to turn out bad. He's not to blame, it's somebody else's fault. He is a creature of his environment.” Otherwise there is a war on GUILT, nobody is to be responsible anymore for what they do wrong. To be guilty is an affront to our dignity and self-esteem. “Me-ology” has taken over theology. We live in a no-fault society. We have a generation today of victims and casualties. I am not an alcoholic or a druggie; I have a chemical dependency. I am not a glutton, I have an eating disorder. The therapy “to tell” industry is booming, people spend millions for therapists to tell them that they are not sinful, they are sick; they are not responsible for their actions. Today, we have sex addicts, gambling, anger, nicotine, wife beating, child molesting, high debt, self-abuse, envy, failure, over eating addicts, etc., (JESUS DID NOT DIE FOR MISTAKES; HE DIED FOR SINS.)

The Bible teaches that guilt is real. That we are responsible for our actions. But the Bible also teaches that grace does much more abound, and forgiveness is free and full.

Here was a man that had a bad birth and background, but the Bible teaches that if we were born wrong the first time, we can be “Born Again.” John 3:7,... Ye must be born again.

Joseph also went from the pit to Potiphar's house, to prison, and then to power. His abasement was God's plan for his advancement. Many times the Lord will humble a man before he exalts him. God often uses the sword that Satan has sharpened to cut off Satan's own head. Just like David cut off Goliath's head with Goliath's own sword.

You must know that the power of God is greater than all the odds that are stacked against you. And the grace of God is greater than all of your sins.

Jephthah had a bad background, but he is listed in the hall of faith!

Confidence in the Face of Danger

Judges 11:4-11

Here was a man who came from a bad background but somehow had an insight (faith) into the things of God. He had confidence in God. The foe did not faze him. He said if I deliver you, will I be your head, or will you follow me? (This sounds like Jesus, If I deliver you, will you follow me?)

In verse 11, Jephthah goes to God in prayer before the battle begins. (PRAYER WAS NOT HIS LAST RESORT, IT WAS HIS FIRST THOUGHT.) You can't be a person of strength if you are not a person of prayer.

1. Jephthah was not bound by the past.
2. He was not bound by fear of his enemies.

He could unshackle himself from the past, and refuse to let present danger intimidate him.

Commitment in the Face of Disappointment

In verses 29-36, he made a vow because he needed a victory over the enemy. He did not sacrifice his daughter as a burnt offering. The Bible condemns human sacrifice. This is clear from Deuteronomy 12:31, in which, God expressly forbade human sacrifices.

And Judges says, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah. So Jephthah was led by the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God would never lead him to contradict the Word of God.

This is the answer to his vow. In the original text from the Interlinear Hebrew-English Bible verse. 31 reads, “and I will offer it instead of a burnt offering.” In other words, it will be consecrated to you Lord, for your service. He did not know what would come out of his house. He wouldn't have killed his own daughter.

Then why was this such a great disappointment to him? Here was a family man who never knew the joys of a family when he was a child. He had hoped, like every Hebrew, that the Saviour would be his descendant. Every girl in Bible times wanted the true value of being a wife and mother. Jephthah would never have grandchildren. He gave his daughter over to being a perpetual virgin. She was to be separated, never to get married, but to serve the Lord. In verse 37, she went two months to mourn her father's vow.

It was a custom for someone to be set aside for perpetual virginity, to serve the Lord. Today perhaps we would call this a nun.

In verse 40, they don't speak of her as dead here. Here, to lament could mean to go talk to her or to see her yearly for four days.

Why was Jephthah mentioned in Hebrews 11, the Faith Chapter?

1. He was . . . a man of faith and strength.
2. A man who refused to be shackled by his past.
3. A man who refused to be frightened or bound by his enemies.
4. A man that was bound by his word. And, he had....

1. Character in the face of difficulties.
2. Confidence in the face of danger.
3. Commitment in the face of disappointment.

Regardless of the Catholic “Petrine Doctrine” Peter and Paul were in Rome—William Chalfant

In supporting the historical evidence that the apostle Peter (as well as the apostle Paul) were involved in the establishment of the congregations of the church at Rome, I do not support the Catholic Petrine Doctrine, which is based upon their false assumption that the first 14 bishops of Rome were “trinitarian” and “Catholic.” This is patently untrue and can be proven from historical records.

The strong Oneness stand of the early Roman Church (a district of a number of congregations, some primarily Jewish and others primarily Gentile) came from a strong doctrinal foundation afforded by the presence of two great teachers, Paul and Peter.

Early writers (Irenaeus AD 130-200; Hippolytus AD 160-235, and Jerome AD 347) all insisted that Peter came to Rome as early as AD 42. Of these three, only Jerome would have been considered a full-blown Catholic. There was no “Petrine Doctrine” in the days of Irenaeus and Hippolytus. They would have had no “axe” to grind in that area.

G. B. Rossi’s, *Bullettino di Archeologia Christiana*, 1868, p.1ff; 1874, p.174; 1877, p.77ff, notes that a representation of Peter striking a rock, “out of which flow the waters of cleansing through baptism in the name of Jesus Christ” was found in the catacombs of Rome dating back to either the first, second or third centuries, well before the Roman Catholic Church (which did not even have control of the Roman district until at least AD 222) established its “Petrine Doctrine.” Behind the figure striking the rock is the word “Petrus.” Another indication that Simon Peter was in Rome on at least a couple of occasions between AD 42-67. The historical tradition that Peter and Paul died in Rome is very strong.

The Ebionite (Jewish Christian) apocryphal *Preaching of Peter* produced c. AD 100-110 states that Peter preached and labored at Rome. This was perhaps ten years after the apostle John died, and long before there was any thought of a “Petrine Doctrine.” It was written about 30 to 40 years after Peter reportedly was crucified in Rome! Why would anyone want to establish a falsehood at that point? Especially when there were men and women living, who would know the truth!

Irenaeus (AD 130-200) and Papias (c. AD 61-163) both state that Mark was Peter’s interpreter at Rome. Strong tradition among the ancient writers has it that Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark from Peter’s dictation while both were in Rome. We definitely know that the Gospel of Mark is the earliest Gospel.

Caius of Rome (c. AD 170-235) wrote this about the apostles Peter and Paul: “If thou wilt go to the Vatican (pre-Catholic location) and to the Ostian Road thou wilt find the trophies (tombs) of the founders (Peter and Paul) of this church (Rome).” It was common knowledge that both Peter and Paul were involved in the establishment (and building up) of the churches in the Roman district. This is not to say that Peter started the first home missions work in the metropolitan area, but even those who oppose the “Petrine Doctrine” admit that Peter was in Rome c. AD 64-67, and that he was martyred there under Nero. And if this great apostle was in Rome even for a few years, there can be no doubt that this prominent member of the Twelve would have authority and would be honored. Thus, it is illogical to think that he would have no influence over who would have the preeminent authority in Rome. By that, it makes sense that he could have helped to choose the next bishop of Rome. This does the Catholic “Petrine Doctrine” no service, since it can be shown that the first 14 bishops of Rome were not Catholic, but were rather apostolic in doctrine.

Jaroslav Pelikan, a well known American historian, in his *The Riddle of Roman Catholicism* (NY: Abingdon Press, 1959) wrote: “The archeological researches of Protestant historian Hans Lietzmann, supplemented by the literary study of Protestant exegete Oscar Cullman have made it extremely difficult to deny the tradition of Peter’s death in Rome under the Emperor Nero” (p.36). And, indeed, why would apostolics wish to deny it? It was the Protestants who rose up against the presence of Peter in Rome because of their rebellion against their mother church. It has nothing to do with apostolics.

I think the reluctance of apostolic Christians to admit that Peter and Paul were in Rome stems from their aversion to accept what they think is Catholic mythology. But it does not make sense to allow a Protestant aversion to Catholic claims to deny the solid historical tradition, known and accepted by the ancient world, that Peter and Paul ministered in Rome and were considered “founders” of the apostolic church there. The Catholic church did not assume control of the great Roman district until at least AD 222. The strong tradition and accepted reports by ancient writers concerning the fact that Peter and Paul labored in Rome were well established before that date. Why not accept what these ancient writers accepted as fact?

Two Armies, Two Philosophies, One Victor—Jerry Trevino

The two armies that faced each other in the Mexican War may have been those of the most disparate in modern history—in arms, in purpose, in leadership, and in philosophy. It is said that Santa Ana’s idea of training soldiers was that there was little need for it; they would get used to gunfire on the battlefield. The Mexican muskets had no sights on them and there was no command of “Aim” in the Mexican Army! This obviously led to ineptness in the Mexican Army as well as a high mortality rate due to friendly fire casualties on the front lines. To top off the folly, the Mexicans shot from the hip because they overloaded their muskets with powder and were thus afraid to fire from the shoulder, for fear of breaking a bone.

In contrast, the U.S. Army was composed of many men who grew up on the American frontier, toting firearms since they were young. It was said that in a nation of young men who idolized marksman such as Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and Daniel Boone, that they had only one god among them—accuracy with firearms. This attribute amongst the American soldiers aided in victory after victory over the opposing army.

In life, it also seems that the achievers are set apart as those who have an aim in their lives. Those in the church who survive are those who put a goal in their mind and then pursue it. Many who begin living for God take it in a haphazard approach without ever setting a goal for themselves, without ever lifting their eyes to higher heights. They saunter through salvation and take what comes their way and nothing more. It is often these who fall short of the mark and lose out with God.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:14

The word *mark* in the above reference is from the Greek *skopos*, from which we derive our word *scope*. Paul had something in his sights and he endeavored to obtain it. Scope can also be defined as the range of one’s perceptions and thoughts. Do we have a mark we are pushing toward? How far do your thoughts reach concerning God and His kingdom?

God has made this salvation in such a way that there is always something more. His presence creates in us a hunger to enter into it again, His Word has depths that have yet to be searched, and what shall we say of the many chambers of prayer that await our entrance? Are you living for God? Then press to be something, press to do something for God! Are there souls unsaved in your city; reach for them! Are there seats empty in your sanctuary? Fill them! There is no time to waste; the Goodman is soon to return. May He find us working when He comes again!